

## Cues in Igbo Cultural Matrix: Analysis of Achebe's *Arrow of God*

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### Abstract

Cultural studies have been found to be invaluable, owing to its ability to give whosever cares, the complete definition, insight or intimation about the life and existence of a particular people under study, without necessarily having to practically live with such a people or understudy them. Literature on one hand, offers itself a threshold of accessing such experiences. However, one can easily be marooned in the thick woods of deep cultural observances, especially if one is not familiar with the cultural milieu. Such could be the experience of many, who are not conversant with the Igbo cultural practices, as generously explored in *Arrow of God*, one of Achebe's earliest novels. It is therefore the intention of this paper to shed light on the socio-cultural, political, and economic implications of some of the cultural cues used in the novel, in order to enhance knowledge and a better appreciation of the Igbo world and the age long novel.

**Keywords:** Cues, Igbo Culture, *Arrow of God*

### Introduction

Of all the creative works of Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* can best be described as the Spectrometer of the Igbo cultural world. This description is sequel to their profound capturing of the dominant life style of the colonial and pre-colonial Igbo nation. A perusal of any of the duo brings one to the appreciation of the Igbo world before the erosion of colonialism. In fact, it is the abdication of the cultural identity which Okonkwo, an avowed repository of the cultural mores decried in *Things Fall Apart* that gave the popular novel its title. As if *Arrow of God* is a continuation of the *Things Fall Apart* story, with just a change of locale and characters, the cultural dynamism that trails the succession of the two novels is a thing of interest. While for instance, *Things Fall Apart* captures some deep cultural behaviours like human sacrifice, inter-communal wars, display of magical powers and blood-letting attitudes, *Arrow of God* takes a differential view about them. It captures a people that are at the precipice of cultural renaissance with a level of ambivalence between the traditional way of life and life proposed by the White. It is the same euphoria of ambivalence that prompted Ezeulu to send one of his sons to learn the ways of the white man and the new religion, which doctrine is completely at variance with the traditional cultural practices, which Ezeulu is the chief ambassador. The criticism that trailed that attitude becomes part of the major conflicts that navigates the novel to the shore of literary interest; exploring rich Igbo cultural cues as it paddles on. Most, if not all these cultural cues are very much popular with Ndi-Igbo till date, and are very much welcome even by the so called white man religion, especially those that do not contradict the biblical dictum. These cultural cues serve as directory to the understanding of the Igbo nation, as most of them connote deep cultural implications that cannot otherwise be explicated.

### Concepts

#### *Arrow of God*

*Arrow of God* is the third play in the strip of plays written by Chinua Achebe after *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*. The novel is set in the colonial era of a traditional Igbo community, Umuaro. Before the intrusion of the white man, the people had no recourse except on the stipulation of the traditional customs, adjudicated by the elders' council under the leadership of the chief priest of Ulu, the native deity. The forthright attitude of Ezeulu that led to the lost of the disputed land between his community and the neighbouring Okperi endeared him to the white man, Winterbottom, who in turn wished to reward him for such uncommon attitude by proposing to install him with a warrant chief. Ezeulu's refusal of the Warrant chief title and his consequent incarceration set the stage for the turn of event that gave the novel its tragic essence.

Throughout his days in prison in Okperi, what occupied Ezeulu's mind was how to punish Umuaro for the lack of solidarity with the plight of their Chief Priest. Not knowing how best to achieve this, he settled for a refusal to eat up the sacred yams, which was prerequisite for the lifting of embargo on the year's harvest, insisting that Ulu would not hear of it. As the situation takes a precarious turn: the people of the land continued to starve as a consequence, the new religion takes advantage of the situation to popularize its doctrine among the people by offering alternative security for a safe harvest. Ezeulu continued to lose popularity, and at the end, his son, Obika died, running ogbazuruobodo for a dead kinsman; thus the arrow which Ezeulu sharpened to pierce the people bounced back and devastated him.

### Culture

According to Edward Tylor quoted in Nanda (1984),

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art law, morals, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. It is a patterned way of life shared by a group of people; a learned and shared pattern of behavior. Gergen (2000).

On his own, Dare (2008) saw culture as

The pattern of behaviour and thinking that people living in a social group learn, create and share. It is also a maker of language, identity, nationhood, economy, etc. A people's culture is their life, living and dying. He sums up culture as the index of growth and development and its index of civilization also. That is that culture controls tradition, custom, beliefs, morals and values of society. It is the art, religion, philosophy, patterns of behaviour and thinking, created and acquired by people living in a social group. He maintains that culture is the life, living and dying of a people- their utterances, their looks, their food, their shelter, their birth, and burial, their marriage and health; everything that makes up living and dying.

The definition from the University of Manitoba web page puts it this way:

Culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning.

And according to (Webster's New World Encyclopedia, 1992) Culture is the way of life of a particular society or group of people, including patterns of thought, beliefs, behavior, customs, traditions, rituals, dress, and language, as well as art, music, and literature.

And finally, the cultural policy of Nigeria sees culture as comprising of material, institutional, philosophical, and creative aspects. The material aspect has to do with artifacts in its broadest form (housing, utensil, food, medicine, food, clothing etc); the institutional deals with political, social, legal, and economic structures erected to help achieve material and spiritual objectives; while the philosophical is concerned with ideas, belief, and values; the creative concerns people's literature (oral or written) as well as their visual and performing arts which are normally molded by as well as helped to mold other aspects of culture. There are however two types of culture: material and non-material culture.

Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture. These include homes, neighbourhoods, cities, schools, churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, offices, factories and plants, tools, means of production, goods and products, stores, and so forth.

Non-material culture on the other hand refers to the nonphysical ideas that people have about their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions. For instance, the non-material cultural concept of religion consists of a set of ideas and beliefs about God, worship, morals, and ethics. These beliefs, then, determine how the culture responds to its religious topics, issues, and events. ([http://www.thespiritwiki.com/index.php/Material\\_Culture\\_and\\_Non-material\\_Culture](http://www.thespiritwiki.com/index.php/Material_Culture_and_Non-material_Culture). Retrieved 28 September, 2011).

By all indications and in line with all that has been said about culture, *Arrow of God* can be said to be a cultural narration of the Igbo world of the colonial epoch. It captures all the aspects of the lives of the people, their communality, their differences, life, pattern of existence and death.

Above all, some cultural behaviours which have no other method of explication are captured by the use of cues. Cues are things said or done that provide the signal for somebody. They are things that prompt or remind somebody to do something (Microsoft Encarta 2009).

### **Cues as Signifiers**

The signifier is the pointing finger, the word; the sound-image. A word is simply a jumble of letters. The pointing finger is not the star; it is in the interpretation of the signifier that creates meaning. (<http://www.filolog.com/crossculture/Whatculture.html>)

Myriads of these cultural cues (signifiers) are copiously used in the novel and until proper interpretation is given, meaning might be risked. As one reads through the novel, some of the words or objects as we shall start isolating, stand out, but may not convey any meaning that could aid the understanding of the novel as they stand for some other things, not being ends on their own but means to an end. Some of them are:

### **Kolanut (Oji)**

The kolanut is a reddish nut from the fruit of the cola tree. It is mainly grown in the western region of Nigeria. The kolanut has two major edible species, one that is constantly double-lobed (gworo) and the other with varying number of lobes (oji-Igbo). Oji-Igbo can have as many as eight to nine lobes carefully lined inside one nut. As it

is fondly known, the kolanut is grown in the west, eaten in the North and celebrated in the East (Igbo land). True to this postulation, the kolanut has deep and far-reaching implications in the Igbo cultural planet. Unlike gworo, anyone, women and children inclusive, may get and eat at will, extreme care is taken in case of Oji-Igbo. Before one breaks oji-Igbo, one usually makes serious prayers as the number of lobes contained inside the nut determines whether or not one is qualified to eat the oji or not in the first place. If a nut of oji contains a number of lobes from one to three, it is not eaten by ordinary persons. For instance, if a nut of kola contains one or two lobes, which is a constant equivalent of gworo, the kolanut is said to be dumb (oji-ogbi). It is given to the chief priest or a very elderly person around, who returns it to the gods since by implication they (the gods) wish not the kolanut to be eaten. The elder does some incantations to placate the gods as the nature of the kola could obviously portend ominous signal of an undoing in the part of the person that broke it or a message to the entire people. It could also be a harbinger of ill luck. Inquiries are necessarily made to ascertain the actual reason and poise for appropriate propitiation. If a nut contains three slices, it is said to be oji-dike (warriors-kola) and it is given only to warriors, as the name indicates. An ordinary fellow can only eat kolanuts whose slices range from four and more. And each of the numbers from four has their various connotations. A four lobed kolanut can signify peace as much as a seven sliced kola can signify peace and fertility (oji udo na omumu) respectively. In the novel the dialogue that ensued between Ezeulu and his friend, Akuebue sheds more light on oji and the substance of its number of lobes:

AKUEBUE: Must you worry about kolanuts every time? I am not a stranger.

EZEULU: I was not taught that kolanut was the food of strangers. And besides, do not our people say that he is a fool who treats his brother worse than a stranger... (Nwafo was soon back with a kolanut in another bowl). Show it to Akuebue.

AKUEBUE: I have seen it.

EZEULU: Then break it.

AKUEBUE: No, the king's kolanut returns to his hands.

EZEULU: If you say so.

AKUEBUE: In deed I say so. (Ezeulu took the bowl from Nwafo and set it down between his legs. Then he picked up the kolanut in his right hand and offered prayer. He jerked the hand forward as he said each sentence, his palm open upwards and the thumb holding down the kolanut on the four fingers...then he broke the kolanut by pressing it between his palms and threw all the lobes into the bowl on the floor).

EZEULU: Oo-o o-o o-o! Look what has happened here. The spirits want to eat.

AKUEBUE (craned his neck to see): One, two, three, four, five, six. Indeed, they want to it. (Ezeulu picked one lobe and threw it outside. Then he picked another one and threw it into his mouth, Nwafo came forward, took the bowl from the floor and serve Akuebue (p 94-95).

The fortune or otherwise associated with the number of lobes of a broken kolanut has a direct bearing on the person that broke it as well as on the entire people most of the time. That may explain why visitors are usually skeptical of breaking kolanuts before their host(s).

Subsistent in all parts of Igbo land, every visitor is first presented with kolanut which must not be rejected for whatever reason. If however, on account of some reason, health and others, the visitor does not eat kolanut, he says so and quickly kola substitute is arranged by the host. The substitutes can be in form of garden egg, bitter kola, dry meat and so on. This is however admissible only in informal occasions or gatherings. On the other hand, if for any reason, the visitor rejects the offer, the host becomes alert as the purpose of visit may be serious or grave.

In the novel, as the emissaries from Umuaro led by Akukalia arrived Okperi; after exchange of pleasantries, the next thing their hosts Udezue and Otikpo did was to offer them kolanut.

When they came back Otikpo brought a kolanut in a wooden bowl. Akukalia thanked him but said that he and his companions carried such heavy loads on their heads that they could neither eat nor drink until the burden was set down (p 22).

The hostility and chaos that followed this visit as a result of the rejection of the kolanut despite its original intent is an eloquent demonstration of the height of undoing of the emissaries against a tradition that is so revered by the people. This is accentuated by Akakalia's personal flaws and lack of cultural understanding epitomized first by rejection of kolanut. Notwithstanding the gravity of the message, Akukalia and his allies should have accepted the kolanut offered them. If they would not eat, they could take the option of taking the kolanut home, and wait until they are offered Nzu (chalk) to express how momentous and critical their message was. Its refusal made their hosts to start seeing them as enemies instead of friends. It also denied them the possible assistance

that would have made their journey smoother. Nothing on earth could have saved a man that harms emissaries, let alone Akukalia, who was a grandson of the clan. Grandchildren are excused all indulgences, but not when their disposition is a potential threat to the continuous existence of their motherland. Hence, Akukalia died the death of blame leaving no legal grounds for redress or retaliation.

The ritual involved in the breaking and sharing of oji depends mainly on the occasion and the caliber of persons involved. As earlier stated, during all formal gatherings, adequate care is taken for the strict compliance with protocol. In any case, it is usually on the onus of the owner of the house or convener (s) of occasion to provide, present, bless and break kolanut. This does not however strictly apply when it is the gathering of titled personalities. Instead of the host blessing and breaking the kola, each titled man takes one kola and blesses and breaks it, but would have to necessarily return all the lobes in one bowl before taking his portion. This is what obtained during the visit of the leaders of Umuaro to Ezeulu:

Then he brought them three kolanut in a wooden bowl. A short formal argument began and ended. Ezeulu took one kolanut, Ezekwesili took the second and Onenyi Nnanyelugo took the third. Each offered a short prayer and broke his nut. Nwafo carried the bowl to them in turn and they first put in all the lobes before selecting one. Nwafo carried the bowl round and the rest took a lobe each (205-206).

In occasions like marriage ceremony or new yam festival, where traditional rulers and other title holders from different clans or communities are in attendance, oji-breaking and sharing takes a little deviation from the above protocol. In this case, all the traditional leaders, titled men or community representatives are called in turn to pick unbroken kolanut. Each is entitled to pray in turn; but to conserve time, they may settle with appointing one of the traditional rulers, especially the host traditional ruler for prayer. After which he breaks his own kola, while others take theirs with them. The rationale is for the visitors to show to those that sent them and those that knew about their movement that they were adequately represented and that their host appreciated their coming. They are also free to eat from the broken kolanut.

It is pertinent to know that though oji in all its appearances signify peace and acceptance, if in any case, especially as it relates with communities or even individuals, one sends kola to another, which ordinarily could mean an invitation for the settlement of whatever difference they had and adds akiilu (bitter-kola), the original signification is immediately altered to mean that the sender is still very much bitter with the receiver, despite any previous attempt at reconciling them. This however does not apply if the bitter-kola is presented to a visitor directly by his host. Finally, kolanut can be offered to anyone and anywhere, not necessarily when one pays a visit. It might come as a friend meets a friend and the significance remains the same, peace and acceptance.

### **Nzu (Chalk)**

Apart from kolanut, another very important cultural practice that is fast going to extinction is the offering of Nzu to visitors. In the Igbo cultural mold, tokens which are necessary signifiers are more often used in expression of intents than words. Even when words are used, they are sparingly applied and do not come in plain languages but in riddles and proverbs, especially when the issues have sweeping implications and involve elders.

As soon as a visitor is served kolanut, the next is for the guest to explain his purpose of visit, which he may be permitted to speak out but not until it is clear that his intentions are good towards his host. This can only be demonstrated by the use of nzu. The owner of the house presents his visitor with a piece of chalk to make this known. If the stranger draws all upright lines and paints his big toe with the chalk before rolling the chalk back to the host, it means that the stranger's visit is generally peaceful and devoid of any intention for provocation. It could mean a visit for a chart, solidarity or expression of concern in case there is an initial reason for the visit.

As he said this, he reached for a lump of white clay in a four-sided wooden bowl shaped like the head of a lizard and rolled it on the floor towards Akuebue who picked it up and drew four upright lines with it on the floor. Then he painted the big toe of his right foot and rolled the chalk back to Ezeulu and he put it away again in the wooden bowl (p 94).

In this excerpt Achebe lets us into a very important cultural observance with Ndi-Igbo. Without saying a word, Akuebue makes us to understand what the purpose of his visit was, friendly and devoid of any intentions for arguments or altercations, hence, the drawing of all straight lines. On the other hand, if a visitor rejects the chalk or draws flat lines, his purpose could be interpreted to be serious or dangerous. When this is the case, the host would remain apprehensive until the visitor lets out what the issue was. The host may also go as far as arming himself or inviting more people around before the stranger opens his mouth. This idea is fully explored in the novel as the Umuaro emissaries meet with their Okperi hosts. A dramatization of the story may aid understanding:

AKUKALIA (impatiently): We have an urgent mission which we must give the rulers of Okperi at once.

UDEZUE... I do not want to delay your mission, but I must offer you a

piece of kolanut (he made to rise).

AKUKALIA: Do not worry yourself. Perhaps we shall return after our mission. It is a big load on our head, and until we put it down we cannot understand anything we are told.

UDEZUE: I know what it is like. Here is a piece of white clay then. Let me agree with you and leave the kolanut until you return (but the men declined even to draw lines on the floor with the clay. After that there was nothing else to say. They have rebuffed the token of goodwill between host and guest; their mission must indeed be grave. (Udezue went into his inner compound and soon return with his goat skin bag and sheathed machet). I shall take you to the man who will receive your message (p 21).

Apart from registering his reservation over the insistence of Umuaro over the ownership of the disputed land between them and their neighbours, Okperi, Ezeulu was among those who were hesitant with the choice of Akukalia as the leader of the envoy. Akukaia's display of impudence expressed in the manner he handled the issues justified Ezeulu's initial position of lack of trust on the man. No man in his right thinking senses rejects nzu which is a token of good will. By this, it becomes evident that apart from the shooting of Akukaia which is the immediate cause of his death, there is the remote cause of rejection of the token of good will. In other words, Akukalia was dead already, killed by the gods and the tradition he defiled before he was shot. Little wonder he never had any support.

Apart from being a signifier of intents, the position of the chalk lines could be used to indicate the signature of individuals, especially titled men. Each titled man has a peculiar way of representing himself using the chalk. This practice is accentuated in the visit of the leaders of Umuaro to Ezeulu (all titled men).

Ezeulu presented a lump of chalk to his visitors and each of them drew his personal emblem of upright and horizontal lines on the floor. Some painted their big toe and others marked their face (p 205)

This further explains the difference between the lines Akuaebue drew when he visited Ezeulu and the lines Ezeulu as a titled man and chief priest drew when he paid back the visit.

Ezeulu picked up the chalk and drew five lines with it on the floor—three uprights, a flat across the top and another below them. Then he painted one of his big toes and dubbed a thin coat of white around his left eye (p 111).

The painting of the toe signifies that the visitor stepped into the house of his host in peace and intends to sustain the peace. As it is in the Igbo proverb "Let my visitor not kill me with his visit and when he shall leave, may he not be struck with hunchback". The dabbing of the eye with chalk is popularly associated with men of medicine. Apart from the role nzu plays in occasions earlier described, it serves various other cultural purposes. For instance, it is the rubbing of nzu that points to the average Igbo where a child has been born, because everyone that comes to felicitate with the family goes home bearing the mark of fertility and fortune, nzu all over his body. Nze also plays a dominant role throughout the period of pregnancy as the pregnant mother continuous to eat it until the day of delivery. Though the Igbos do this without any medical prompting, modern medical science has proven that the component is very rich in calcium which aids in the bone formation of the foetus, making it impossible for the child to be born with any form of bone mal-formation or rickets (rachitis). Thus, nzu becomes a cue of pregnancy as any woman taking it is suspected to be pregnant even when the signs of pregnancy are not evident. Unmarried males and females that take it are taunted with accusation of pregnancy too.

### **New Palm Leaf (OMU)**

The omu is a yellowish cylindrical plume of the palm tree. It is the tender palm frond always at the pinnacle of the palm tree. Omu stands as serious signifier wherever it is placed. Apart from the awesome aura it exudes, omu is used as warning signals. If there is a ban on a particular area or portion of land, the omu is the only means through which the message of ban on the land can be conveyed to the warring parties and to the other members of the community. If there is an encroachment in one's land or property, one calls the attention of erring partner by placing omu on the portion of the land or property. On seeing the omu, the partner dares not to make further moves into the property until the dispute is fully resolved. If the man that puts the omu eventually loses the case, the winner has to wait for the man that placed the omu to also remove it before further action. No one dares to remove omu he did not put in a place. The presence of omu could also signify that the place where it is place is under a spell. It can be used to mark an unsafe area or a restricted area. It can also be used as a protective device to ward off evil. The potency of omu in checking evil attacks is popular with Ndigbo. In short, Omu is the traditional red-tape of the Igbo nation. Wherever it is placed, actions and movements are restricted.

In the novel, during the sacrifice that metamorphosed Obika's wife from maiden-hood to womanhood, omu becomes a veritable ingredient because the sacrifice was carried out in the night.

On his left hand Obika held a very small pot of water by the neck. His half brother had a bunch of tender palm frond cut from the pinnacle of the tree (p

118).

The involvement of omu in an adventure like that is sequel to the belief that it has the potency to drive away intruding spirits.

### **Onwa (the Moon)**

The moon means more than just its universal literal interpretation in the Igbo world. Its appearance is a transitional cue from the present month into another. While the Igbo world of *Arrow of God* did not have access to the calendar, watch or clock, they did not lose count of the months, sequel to the adherence to the promptings of the moon. Outside this general relevance of the solar component, its appearance here means a different thing to the people of umuaro in the novel. It is a cue to the eating of one of the twelve sacred yams, which on its own is a signifier of hope of harvest. For instance, until all the yams, which must be eaten one each month, and on the prompting of the moon is finished, no one dares to go to the farm to harvest yam. Apart from this obvious reason, the posture of the moon, its position or shape on appearance means a lot to the people. This makes the sighting of the moon an exciting, as well as an anxious moment. It can be a doyen of good fortune or a harbinger of evil. If the moon is not properly sited at appearance, it sends sinister feelings down the people's spines as it is obvious that all is not well that month. The dialogue between two of Ezeulu's wives following Ezeulu's announcement of the appearance of the moon lays more emphasis:

EZEULU (beating the ogene): gome! Gome! Gome! Owa atuo!...onwa atuo!... Onwa atua!

MATEFI: Moon may your face meeting mine bring good fortune.

UGOYE: Where is it? I don't see it. Or am I blind?

MATEFI: Don't you see it beyond the top of the ukwa tree? Not there. Follow my finger.

UGOYE: Ohoo, I see it. Moon may your face meeting mine bring good fortune. But how is it sitting? I don't like its posture.

MATEFI: Why?

UGOYE: I think it sits awkwardly-like an evil moon.

MATEFI: No, a bad moon does not leave anyone in doubt. Like the one under which Akuata died. Its legs were up in the air.

Ezeulu went into his barn and took down yam from the bamboo platform built specially for the twelve sacred yams... he had already eaten three and had the fourth on his hand. He checked the remaining ones again and went back to his obi, shutting the door of the barn carefully after him (p 2-3).

By telling us how many yams Ezeulu had eaten and the ones remaining, Achebe implicitly lets us into the very month in which the event took place. Since the Igbo traditional calendar begins in March every year and ends in February the next year, the event may have taken place between the months of June and July that year. That means that the people would have starved for more than seven months, assuming the last harvest was concluded between September and October the previous year.

Apart from prompting the chief priest of Ulu to eat the sacred yam, the appearing moon gives the people the awaited opportunity of monthly ritual-cleansing, the festival of the pumpkin leaves:

As he waited it to roast he planned the coming event in his mind. It was Oye... the festival of the Pumpkin Leaves would fall on the third Nkwo from that day. Tomorrow he would send for his assistants and tell them to announce the day to the six villages of Umuaro (3).

The Igbo calendar has four market days that make up one week, Eke, Orie, Afo and Nkwo. Each of these days is a signifier of various actions and activities. Most of the major events in the Igbo culture, like ritual cleansing, sacrifice, marriage and so on cannot take place on certain market days, like Eke. Some farms and water abhor visit on certain days.

Everybody in Igbo land knows that Okperi people do not have other business on the Eke day. You should have come yesterday or the day before, or tomorrow or the day after. Son of our daughter, you should know our habits (22).

The sacredness that is associated with these market days however varies from community to community and from deity to deity. On such days, it is speculated that the spirits in charge of the market, water or farm land would not wish to be disturbed, so everybody stays at home or goes to other places. This is analogous to the Christian observance of Sunday or Saturday as the day of rest.

Of all the concerns in the situation of Ezeulu throughout his prison days in Okperi the thought of the new moon and its attendant responsibility burdened his mind most. It is a time everyone in Igbo land looks curiously for:

As he ate his food that night, he heard the voices of children welcome the new moon. Onwa atu-o-o-o! Onwa atu-o-o-o went up in all sides of

Government Hill. But Ezeulu's sharp ear picked out a few voices that sang in a curious dialect... the first time Ezeulu heard the children voices his heart flew out. Although he had expected it, when it came, he was not ready. His mind has momentarily forgotten but he recovered almost at once (p 162-163).

The moon is a cue for new expectations and plan. Those who were not favoured by the receding moon pray to the new one to bring fortune, wishing not to be treated the same way as the past one; while those who were favoured by the old employ the new to take a cue from the former.

Apart from these inanimate objects serving as cues in the Igbo world, some animals and birds though not highlighted in the text, through their characters exhibit important signs that are of significant with the Igbo people. One of such animal is the Rabbit. In its character, the rabbit is a nocturnal animal. It is believed that rabbits have the ability to see only in the dark; as a consequence, it does not come out in the day to avoid light. Many believe that to track down the animal at night, one has to direct a very bright light in its eyes, otherwise, the only way to hunt rabbit is to dig its hole which it does not leave in the day. However, it may not be completely out of place to see rabbits in the day, if for instance, there is a threat to life in its hole. Nonetheless, the Igbo world does not accommodate any excuse that will warrant the sight of the rabbit openly in the day; except it is sure that something is at the rabbit's trail. Its appearance is an ominous signal. When that happens, the village heads will immediately organize themselves for an onward inquiry with the seer, as this is one of the ways the ancestral world draws the attention of the world of the living for an interaction or a direction or warning. The actual meaning of the appearance will be interpreted by the medicine man.

**The Cock:** This species of bird plays a very important role in reconciling and propitiating of the living and the dead in Igbo culture. The myth surrounding its fate accuses the cock of absenteeism from a very crucial meeting of the animal kingdom against the onslaught of the human kingdom, where a permanent solution was to be sought. The cock went on its business with the promise that it will abide by whatever decision reached at the meeting. And so, the animals signed a memorandum of understanding with man to always use the fowl for sacrifices.

Apart from this interesting role, the cock is saddled with the responsibility of alerting man with time of activity. The Igbo believe that the day breaks at three am and sets at six pm every day. Even when the Igbo world of *Arrow of God* did not have watches and clocks, they never lost count of the time. The moment it is three am, (cockcrow) all mature cocks anywhere start crowing. And at six pm, every fowl must come back to roost. However, if for any reason, the cock crows before three am; that cock is labeled evil and is immediately killed by the nearest adult, in spite of the owner; and eaten amongst men.

### **Conclusion**

World view is a common concept of reality shared by a particular group of people, usually referred to as a culture, or an ethnic group. And no one world is superior to another.

The Igbo socio-cultural mold is a coded world bound with strings of cues. *Arrow of God* captured the communal life of the Igbo existence. One significant life of the people captured in the novel is their communality. What affected one person affected the other, yet, that did not rule out the possibility of misunderstanding and altercations. It is also regrettable that the severest suffering in the history of the people in the novel did not come from the colonial masters but by the deed of a kin's man. When therefore Ola Rotimi said "The Gods are Not to Blame" (referring the white as the gods), it is to say the least, because majority of what Africans suffer are self inflicted injuries. There are several cases of one trying to eliminate another, unhealthy rivalry and competition was the bane of development of the people. Not even the chief priest of Ulu could muster the courage to forgive erring kin's men. It was in pursuit of vengeance that he lost everything, including his reputation and the common essence of the people, which he was in the best position to preserve.

As if we have moved an inch away from these abysmal acts, the slave trade of those days in which our own people captured their relatives and friends and sell them for just a token is analogous to the kidnapping menace of today, the only difference being that the victims are sold back to their own families for a ransom. Some of these issues are encoded in the novel and can only be accessed by the interpretation of cues. That is what this essay has done.

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