

Literary cum Philoso-Religious Periscope on the Nature of Man

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Abstract

The self-evident truth that man is a mystery to himself generates justifiable intellectual curiosity. Giving expression to such curiosity would help to further unravel the mysterious nature of man by means of philoso-religious investigations into the personality of some purposively selected major characters in the literary works of prominent African and non-African writers. Consequently, this study undertakes to investigate some creative works of world-acclaimed fame. Purposively selected for the study in this regard include Profs. Chinua Achebe and Isidore Okpewho's fictions, Prof. Ola Rotimi's *The gods Are not to Blame*, George Orwell's narratives, Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Micere Githae Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Marie Correlli's *The Sorrows of Satan* and Cheik Hamidou Kane's *The Ambiguous Adventure*. These classics are selected, because besides being philoso-religiously oriented, their geographical settings cut across the world to validate the findings of the study. The objective of the investigation focused on the selected works is to help man understand himself now more than previously ever, especially in relation to the will of God, his creator. This objective is pursuant to the expectation that achieving it would significantly improve the quality of life on earth, and by extension, man's eternal destiny. The theoretical premise which drives the investigation of man and his nature in the novels used for the study conceptualises man in relation to ethics and the metaphysical world. It, therefore, provides appreciable insights into man's identity profile which distinguishes between the created man as an enemy of God and the redeemed man as a friend of God. Relying on some scientific basis, the theoretical framework establishes that God is an undeniable reality, concluding, therefore, that it translates to stark ignorance or gross senselessness not to know Him. The analysis done as part of the study confirms its hypothesis, namely, that literature is a mirror of life which is largely a reflection of the natures of the created man rather than those of the redeemed man. The confirmation of this hypothesis proves that humanity is farther away from God than she is close to Him. In other words, the final destiny of mankind, hereafter, is largely threatened. The pragmatics of this worrisome major finding is that the near-countable redeemed people of God in this generation, especially the clergy, should and must commit themselves to intensified effective creative evangelisation to forestall evil from overtaking the world. Positive response to this clarion call by the redeemed people of God found in all authentic religious sects is imperative, else, evil will eventually overtake the world and provoke God's devastating wrath on humanity.

Keywords: literary, philso-religious, periscope, the nature of man

1. Introduction

Common biological knowledge identifies man, the homo-sapiens, as a pre-eminent member of the animal kingdom. As such, he dominates other countless members of the kingdom just as he controls the plant kingdom. In other words, man takes perpetual dominion over the earth. Man rules the earth, courtesy of divine empowerment as noted in the holy Book of *Genesis*. Man's divine empowerment accounts for his exclusive superior intelligence, being made in the image of God (Gen. 26.1), the creator credited with infinite intelligence. See catholic pastoral edition of *Christian Community Bible*, Collier (2007) and Hill (1983).

In all authentic religious sects, God is perceived to be a stupendous mystery which explains the holistic mysterious nature of life on earth and the entire universe, of course. This assertion pragmatically means that God's creatures on earth are substantially mysterious, especially the animate ones. In other words, living

organisms including man are largely complex beings. Man, particularly, is so complex that he is considered across disciplines, especially in Philosophy, to be the knottiest earthly mystery. The consensus about man in this regard is that he is next to God in mystical magnitude. Hence, he is socio-psychologically regarded to even be a mystery to himself.

The self-evident truth that man is a mystery to himself generates justifiable intellectual curiosity. Giving expression to such curiosity would help to further unravel the mysterious nature of man by means of philoso-religious investigations into the personality of some purposively selected major characters in the literary works of prominent African and non-African writers. Consequently, this study undertakes to investigate some creative works of world-acclaimed fame. Purposively selected for the study in this regard include Profs. Chinua Achebe and Isidore Okpewho's fictions, Prof. Ola Rotimi's *The gods Are not to Blame*, George Orwell's narratives, Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Micere Githae Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Marie Correlie's *The Sorrows of Satan* and Cheik Hamidou Kane's *The Ambiguous Adventure*. These classics are selected, because besides being philoso-religiously oriented, their geographical settings cut across the world to validate the findings of the study. The objective of the investigation focused on the selected works is to help man understand himself now more than previously ever, especially in relation to the will of God, his creator. This objective is pursuant to the expectation that achieving it would significantly improve the quality of life on earth, and by extension, man's eternal destiny.

The works of George Orwell and Marie Correlie are representative of non-African writers just as those of Profs. Chinua Achebe, Isidore Okpewho, Ola Rotimi, Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Micere Githae Mugo represent African writers. The global spread of the writers serves to make the study globally relevant as it addresses their largely universal thematic thrusts which focus on life matters, generally. In the light of the foregoing objective and its justification, the analysis section of the study anchors on relevant philosophical cum religious theoretical premise as expounded in the next section.

2. Theoretical Premise: Man, Ethics and the Meta-physical World

The purpose of this section is to provide the theoretical premise which drives the investigation of Man and his nature in the novels used for the study. For avoidance of doubt, *man* in the context of this theoretical premise is generic in meaning along with its pronominal collocates: *he, his, him and himself*. Hence, together with these pronouns, it refers to men and women; boys and girls, i.e., humanity in general.

Man refers to the specie of mobile natural beings that has long been identified as "the homo-sapiens" as already stated. Homo-sapiens literally translates to "the man wise" or in proper syntactic sequence, "the wise man." Hence, he is biologically regarded as the omnipotent king of the animal kingdom. As such, man is the only animal in the kingdom with superior intelligence (wisdom) by means of which he dominates other members of the kingdom to his maximum satisfaction. By this same means, man also dominates the plant kingdom to his greatest advantage and provides himself with maximum convenience and comfort in relation to his foods, clothing, shelter and mobility. This biological factual projection of man proves right, the Biblical notion of man as the human being solely and solemnly mandated by God "to till, populate and dominate the earth as seen in Gen. 1:26-29." The foregoing in this paragraph indicates that man can, indeed, do all things humanly possible. In other words, man's omnipotence in earthly terms is indisputable.

Mmadu, the Igbo Language term for *man* as a lexical item in English lexicon expands to "mma ndu" as analysed and decoded by Ekei (2001, p. 133). From this Igbo etymological perspective, *man* translates literally to "the beauty of life" or "the goodness of life." Ekei, therefore, perceives man as "the synthesis of all that is good." Ekei's impression of man strongly suggests that when God endowed man with temporal omnipotence, He anticipated no evil from man. However, Ekei proceeds to identify man as a social being capable of co-operation and competition, and according to him, man's capacity for co-operation and competition makes him ambivalent. Ambivalence as man's attribute identifies him as a human person capable of doing what is good and what is evil. However, in the light of this identity of man, he can no longer be seen as the synthesis of all that is good. He is rather the synthesis of everything good and everything bad. The story of Cain and Abel, unfolded in Gen.4:1-16 of *The Holy Bible* is an unequivocal demonstration of the foregoing assertion. Consequently, Abel offered an acceptable and accepted sacrifice to God, whereas Cain offered an unacceptable, and so, a rejected sacrifice to God following which he murdered Abel as a result of jealousy in violation of the first commandment of God in the Decalogue (Exod.20:1-17).

The personality of Cain, taken together with the fall of man in the garden of Eden, no thanks to Adam and Eve's frail identity, depicts man from Divine perspective to be unilaterally a synthesis of all that is evil. This merged deconstruction of Cain's personality and the story of Adam and Eve stems from God's fiery, albeit, merciful

reactions to the offenders in each of the referenced Biblical stories above: the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden coupled with the multiplication of their earthly suffering (Gen.3:16-24) and rendering Cain a wanderer (Gen.4:11-12). God's anger is so fiery against man in the stories, because as already stated, He anticipated no evil from man, hence, man's excommunication from His kingdom as reflected in the punishments captured above. God rather expected unwavering self-control from man, having granted him willpower or self-will. Man's lack of the ability for self-control, as already evinced, is rooted in his abuse of willpower and goes to identify him as a psychologically weak social being. Moreover, man's abuse of willpower is a product of pride as a manifestation of power intoxication. In other words, God's gross disappointment in man translates to man's pragmatic way of telling God that "the power of omnipotence" which He granted him is simply too much for him. Observe that man's weak nature as a social being concurrently renders him a weak wise man. It must be stated, at this juncture, that God's gross disappointment in man explains the fact that He regretted creating man as noted in Gen.6:5-7, having found the heart of man to be replete with evil, most contrary to His expectation.

That man is a weak wise man means that man is deficient in wisdom. Man's deficiency in wisdom explains his gross inability to foresee the consequences of his negative actions, hence, his attraction to competition, the root of his failure on morality and ethics by extension. Man is, indeed, a failure on morality as well as ethics and can rightly be regarded as an amoral overlord. The amoral nature of man is conspicuous in his relationships with other members of the ecosystem and even in his relationship with himself.

At this juncture, it must be noted that man's amorality portrays him as a being incapable of being good, even to himself except by chance or for self-interest. The pragmatics of this assertion is that man is a slave to his whims and caprices which tie him to evil habits, more often than not. Consequently, his thoughts, attitudes, actions and deeds are those that tickle his fancies. Thus, he does not care about God, morality and ethics. In other words, it does not bother him whether what he does or does not do, thinks or says is right or wrong. Man's failure, nay, refusal to submit himself to Divine authority pragmatically means that man is his own lord and master, and so, denies himself Divine guidance. Man denies himself Divine guidance in this manner, because God, by His nature, cannot impose Himself on man, having restrained Himself from doing so, ab initio. This nature of God explains His gift of willpower to man. In the final analysis, because man lacks Divine guidance, he is completely incapable of doing what is right both morally and ethically. Consequently, Onyemelukwe & Fatuase (2012, p. 50), with reference to *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, identifies man's abuse of free will (willpower) to be the root cause of evil in life, generally.

For avoidance of doubt ethics, in this study, refers to the morality of professional conduct. It, therefore, incorporates the totality of the rules that govern workers' conduct in various places of work. In the words of Thomas Hobbes as cited by Omoregbe (2012, p. 54) ethics which he considers to be synonymous with moral philosophy is the "science of virtues and vices" in relation to the labour world. In the same vein, morality, in the context of this study, is the science of virtues and vices in connection with human behaviour inside and outside the labour world as they relate to non-labour matters. It is also the position of this study that both moral and ethical codes of conduct are directly and indirectly defined by God, respectively. In other words, God is the originator of the codes as the Pure Being or the Being Qua Being as asserted by Aristotle more than a century ago (Omoregbe, 2012, p. 33). That God is the indirect author of ethical codes of conduct means that man is the direct author. In other words, man articulated the codes, following Divine dictates. Hence, ethics is strongly rooted in morality. The correlation between ethics and morality is such that the only dividing wall between them is domain of authority. Ethics' domain of authority is narrow, while that of morality is virtually all encompassing.

It must here be noted that both ethics and morality are in place to strictly protect the interest of man. This assertion explains why man is not opposed to any of them in principle. Nevertheless, man tinkers with their specific pragmatics selfishly in search of misconceived higher measure of happiness at the expense of himself as evident among individuals who engage in hostile competitions, nay, unhealthy rivalries such as those found between any two or more co-wives or politicians with clash of domestic and/or political interests. Observe that the foregoing elucidations in this paragraph capture and foreground the peak of man's ambivalent nature, namely, that man is so ambivalent that he even acts against his interests despite being a co-author with God of ethical codes of conduct and despite being the sole beneficiary, in relation to God, of moral codes.

In the context of this study what is right is strictly what pleases God and what pleases God is strictly what does not violate His immutable holy will espoused and executed in voluntary and conscious demonstration of love for Him and in appreciation for His own undying priceless love. The practical implication of this assertion is that man, for lacking Divine co-operation, can only do what seems to be right and never what is right. What seems to be right refers here to the good man does for himself and others by chance or volition, i.e., man's lines of action which do not basically violate Divine will, but executed neither in demonstration of love for Him nor in

appreciation for His infallible love. Man executes such lines of action, usually, for the purpose of self-glorification.

Man's aversion for what is right plunges him into occultism (cultism, henceforth). Cultism refers to the body of esoteric knowledge tagged "curiositas" by the magisterium. The magisterium designates the teaching authority of the catholic church. Societies preoccupied with the pursuit of such knowledge are commonly categorised as secret societies, because such body of knowledge has long been outlawed by the magisterium. Cultism remains outlawed at all times for being exclusively concerned with abstract variants of knowledge with largely if not wholly negative effects. Such variants of knowledge include but not limited to soul travel, telepathy, hypnotization, bewitchment, sorcery, necromancy, soothsaying, palmistry, astrology, monetary magic, affliction and witchcraft. In the wisdom of the church as the voice of God on earth, cultism is totally diabolic. Consequently, man by plunging himself into cultism pledges allegiance to that fallen angel known as lucifer who became satan after rebelling against God.

Insights from the paragraph immediately before this show that man is not truly his own lord and master as he claimed, *ab initio*, soon after disaffiliating himself from Divine authority. In other words, "the unobtainable absolute freedom" man yearned for by disaffiliating himself from God, he lost to satan: freedom from control. This is the unfortunate fate of man, because unknown to man the guided and guarded freedom he actually needs is obtainable from God alone. Ignorance is, therefore, the root of man's fallen nature. Ignorance basically accounts for man's fallen nature compelling him to abuse his willpower along with psychic cum cognitive weakness and indifference. Hence, being psychically and cognitively weak, man does not know what freedom entails, even as he desires it with unimaginable relish for the purpose of achieving "unlimited happiness". Man also lacks every bit of the knowledge of the nature of God as already captured before here. For the same reasons of ignorance and weakness man appears indifferent regarding the consequences of his evil deeds on earth, and by extension, his final destiny hereafter: eternal blissful life in heaven or eternal perdition in hell. For the same foregoing reasons, man wallows in the delusion that heaven and hell are not real, thus, complicating his case with God.

Man's belief that heaven and hell are not real is a superlative delusion, because to hold the belief is to deny the reality of God which nobody can rightly do in the light of the acclamation of same reality in all sacred scriptures -Christian and non-christian alike, especially as prominent philosophers such as Aristotle and Hegel perceived, acknowledged and logically expounded God as an undeniable reality. This assertion, rooted in Omoregbe (2012, p. 34), Collingwood (1940, p. 9) and Coppleston (1952, pp. 34-52) explains the "Aristolian" notion that Metaphysics is synonymous with Theology—the study of God as Pure Being (Omoregbe, 2012, p. 33). As also noted in the foregoing references, it is pertinent to state here that Plato, another eminent philosopher, shares Aristotle and Hegel's conviction about God as an undeniable reality, the Being Qua Being, except in designation, designation regarding the discourse field under which God is studied as the most complex mystery, the Mystery of mysteries, being the first Mystery. Consequently, what Aristotle and Hegel call "Metaphysics," Plato terms "Dialectics." Furthermore, the perception of God as an undeniable reality anchors firmly on the infallible logic of intertextuality in relation to the disclosures of sacred scriptures about God. See Onyemelukwe & Alo (2013) as well as Onyemelukwe (2014, pp. 168-188, 202-204, 206-210) for more insights on intertextuality.

Onyemelukwe (2014, p. 208), relying on the logic of intertextuality to ratify Chinua Achebe and George Orwell's proposed radical panacea for third-world socio-political bottlenecks declares:

...If intellectuals across the globe produce similar or same ideas for resolving issues relating to governance without having a common forum, it naturally follows that the ideas are impeccable, and so, must not be neglected...

In the same vein, if Divinely inspired writers across the globe communicate similar or same revelations about God by God in sacred scriptures without having a common forum it naturally follows that the revelations are impeccably authentic, and so, credible and must be accepted. This logic explains the absence of material contradiction in the seventy-four books of the catholic pastoral edition of Christian Community Bible written by seventy Divinely inspired writers at various times and places with no common forum, whatsoever. In the light of the same logic, man is grossly mistaken, considering God, heaven and hell to be non-existent especially in view of his allegiance to satan by means of his occult practices. If the earth is totally under the control of satan without God in heaven and on earth, who can survive the next twenty-four hours? The obvious answer to this rhetorical question certainly highlights the Divine revelation in the Holy Bible that satan (the devil, noted as the thief in the referenced scripture below) has no business in the world other than to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

Besides, with reference to Christianity, to debunk the undeniable reality of God, heaven and hell one must first

nullify the historical evidence about Jesus Christ—a herculean uphill (impossible) task. To debunk the undeniable reality of God, heaven and hell is absolutely impossible, because the three distinct but interlinked realities constitute time-honoured self-evident truths and no truth is suppressible. This assertion is validated in Flavius Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, Professor Simon Greenleaf's detailed analysis of the historical evidence for the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ and those of Sir William Ramsay (1953) and Professor Merrill F. Unger as well as Dr. James Smith's (1843) *The Christian's Defence* and Dr. G. R. Jeffrey's (2002) *The Signature of God*. Based on verifiable research evidences, especially in History as a course of study, each of these authorities has established that the Divinely ordered life of Jesus Christ (his incarnation, ministry, passion, death, resurrection and ascension) is a historical fact.

At this juncture, a distinction should and must be made between the created man, personified by Adam and Eve in Christianity and the redeemed man, epitomised in every true disciple of Jesus Christ, every genuine baptized faithful Christian or every non-christian who fears God by choice, worshipping him in spirit and truth. The nature of man as so far expounded in this theoretical framework applies to the created man, nay, the fallen man or the carnal man as opposed to the spiritual man. The carnal man has been found before this paragraph to be ambivalent, unilaterally evil, temporally omniscient and omnipotent, an atheist, amoral and occult. He has further been found to be unethical, ignorant, psychically and cognitively (spiritually) weak and indifferent, nay, blind regarding the consequences of his evil actions. Moreover, the fallen man is immoral and self-antagonistic as evident in every case of arson, murder, rape and other violent crimes. Putting everything together, the unredeemed man is wholly an enemy of God and a bundle of self-contradictions, and therefore, a mystery to himself as already asserted in the introductory section. Man as a mystery to himself is illustrated by the undeniable truth that deep down his soul is constant longing for God and His spotless goodness which is always overwhelmingly suppressed by his obsession with the pursuit of fleeting pleasures grossly mistaken as happiness. The nature of man as a mystery to himself embodies the most unfortunate paradox about his life as captured by Pope Benedict XVI when he declared: *Everyone longs for a better world, but the world that keeps running away from God will never get better* (as cited by Rev. Fr. Francis Ekwugha in *Catholic Weekly Independent*, January 24, 2015, p. 21). This paradox explains the created man's perpetual virtually negatively skewed chequered fate on earth as he keeps running away from God, the eternal source of true happiness, even as he continuously searches for the same happiness. Hence, the pragmatics of the paradox is that man is in pursuit of happiness without even the least knowledge of what happiness consists of just as the womenfolk cherishes being fashionable without the least knowledge of what it means to be fashionable, hence, the offensive nude dressing generally characteristic of girls, ladies and women in the name of being fashionable.

The redeemed man is the direct opposite of the fallen man in every respect. As such, he is gloriously exalted for being wholly a friend of God with the ultimate hope for eternal heavenly life. Hence, the redeemed man is a personification of virtues ("mma ndu" or "the synthesis of all that is good.") which are products of his all-time co-operation with God and himself, contrary to the fallen man's perpetual competition with God and himself which yields nothing but putrefied vices. Note-worthy about the redeemed man is that his life, anchored on the wisdom of God, collapses the gigantic dividing wall between patriarchy and feminism to establish a most harmonious relationship of non-absolute equality directed (not ruled) by men and not piqued by women, but co-directed by them according to the immutable will of God, and therefore, does not subjugate or enslave women to men. This assertion tallies with Onyemelukwe, Ogunnaike, & Ekechi's (2013) notion of complementary roles of men and women in families and the larger society which recognise men as the "primus inter pares" as applicable to the Holy Family of Nazareth between Joseph and Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The representative literary texts purposively selected for this study will, subsequently, be investigated to identify and explain the specific nature or natures of man unfolded in them. The investigation is necessary to accept or refute the hypothesis of this study, namely, that literature is a mirror of life which is largely a reflection of the natures of the created man rather than those of the redeemed man. Confirming or debunking this hypothesis will serve to determine how far from God or how close to Him man is here on earth, and by extension, his final destiny hereafter. In the course of the investigation, analytical attention will largely be focused on the protagonists of the texts with occasional references to their antagonists and/or some other major characters as may be necessary.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion: The Nature of Man as Reflected in Major Literary Classics

As already hinted in the introduction and theoretical frame work, the life of the major characters in the works selected for this study, on close examination, is demonstrative of the nature of man, generally—the created man and/or the redeemed man. Consequently, this analysis section of the study serves to closely examine the major characters as may be identified in each selected work with analytical attention chiefly focused on their

protagonists and antagonists. Analytical attention is chiefly focused on the protagonists and antagonists, because the story of each of the narratives revolves round them such that they constitute the pillars of their respective plot structures, especially the protagonists. That the protagonists and antagonists constitute the pillars of their respective plot structures means that their life is archetypically symbolic of societal life in the various geographical settings of the stories they dramatise which in turn mirrors actual life in the real worlds of experience from which the authors of the narratives sourced their raw materials.

The following protagonists anchor Achebe's narratives in his fictions: Okonkwo (*Things Fall Apart, TFA*), Ezeulu (*Arrow of God, AOG*), Mr. Nanga (*A Man of the People, AMOP*), Obi Okonkwo (*No Longer at Ease, NLAE*) and His Excellency (HE) (*Anthills of the Savannah, Anthills*). Okonkwo's personality profile evident in *TFA* is certainly a reflection of the created man's nature. Specifically, applicable to him is the attribute of ambivalence. His ambivalence projects his good side in his rising most promptly to become one of the lords of the land quite unlike his father, Unoka, a loafer. His good side is also mirrored in his uncommon appreciative nature as for his valour, especially as it relates to his status as a renowned wrestler for throwing Amalinze, the cat. His valour in relation to his status as a warrior is the root of the vicious side of his ambivalence. This assertion is indisputable, because it explains his uncommon pride which connects his several other specific vices such as drinking with the heads of his war victims, breaking the week of peace in anger, calling Osugo a woman at a kindred meeting for not being a title holder and hyperactively wasting the life of a sixteen-year old boy during the boy's father's funeral ceremony. Okonkwo's ambivalence also portrays him as lacking wisdom. Hence, he sensed no wisdom in Obierika's friendship cum wisdom advice to him to have no hand in the death of the boy (Ikemefuna) who calls him "father." Consequently, he killed Ikemefuna just because "Agbara" had decreed his death, even as Agbara never decreed that the boy must be killed by him as rightly observed by Obierika. In truth, however, he killed Ikemefuna as a further demonstration of the pride in him, since, as remarked by Achebe in the narrative, he killed him for fear of being considered weak. Inversely, for the glamour of being considered a great man of valour, he cut off the head of the white man's messenger for delivering his master's fiat against the meeting of Umuofia lords, summoned to take a common stand against real and perceived threats posed by the colonial administration in the land, thus, endorsing his own self-executed death sentence.

Onyemelukwe, Ogbechie, & Ibeana (2013) which deconstructs Achebe's *AOG* as a pragmatic demonstration of "God's case, No Appeal" contains the following abstract:

Most aptly, the story of *AOG* shows how Nigerian ethnic communities gradually transformed from crude indigenous societies to form parts of modern nation-states. Achebe was inspired to write the novel in 1959, when he was told the story of a chief priest imprisoned by a district officer. Consequently, he creates in the novel, a protagonist that is a chief priest who is also an ex-prisoner. The protagonist, Ezeulu, is the priest-king of Umuaro, the geographical setting of the events of the novel whose historical realities occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ezeulu, Umuaro's traditional socio-political/religious leader lacks the ideational capacity required to come to terms with the reality of the usurping British colonial administration in Umuaro and its environs as well as the internal power tussle in his domain. Hence, like Okonkwo in *TFA* and Obi in *NLAE*, he rashly leads his people in defence of their native socio-cultural cohesion against the colonial masters. Faced with a formidable internal opposition led by Nwaka, his supposed communal rebellion against British colonization of Umuaro becomes an imminent tragic failure that remotely pulled him down and disintegrated the communal unity of Umuaro natives in triumph of Christianity, and by extension, the colonial administration. What accounts for this tragic collective disintegration of a people known for celebrated communal cohesion? *AOG* as a metaphorical title strongly indicates that an invisible power superior to the god-power of Ulu, Umuaro's deity, was at play. This paper, therefore, sets out to analytically expound the foregoing terse rhetorical deconstruction by means of situational contextual interpretation of Achebe's evangelistic narrative in *AOG*. The study hinges on the contextual theory of meaning to pragmatically achieve the foregoing objectives. A major finding of the study is that everything that transpired to pull down Umuaro socio-cultural heritage in perpetual triumph of Christianity is God's own doing. Another major finding of the study is that colonial administrators in Umuaro as well as the missionaries served as lethal arrows which God utilized to dismantle the vehement opposition to Christianity in the ethno-linguistic community as virtually in every real African homeland. Consequently, the study concludes that to wage a war against Christianity is to fight God which is a suicide mission. Hence, every reader of *AOG* is solemnly enjoined not to ever fight God.

The pragmatics of the trio of Onyemelukwe, Ogbechie and Ibeana's substantiated conclusion above is that Ezeulu waged a war against God, consciously or unconsciously, by fighting against Christianity and decimated himself, consequently, no thanks to his infectious arrogance. This assertion explains and justifies his rejection by

Umuaro, following his insanity. It is, therefore, obvious that Ezeulu's life is an apt dramatisation of the nature of the created man—the created man as God's antagonist with no trace of actual godliness as an idol worshipper.

Mr. Nanga is the overtly vicious protagonist of *AMOP*. Hence, his personality profile as unfolded in the political novel demonstrates the nature of the created man. Being wholly a vicious politician, he is an outright enemy of God even as he fraudulently earns the accolade, “a man of the people” to project a deceptive positive impression of his personality. Indeed Mr. Nanga is wholly evil, being first and foremost an insatiable man. In the fictional world of the young independent nation, whose political misfortune is unfolded in *AMOP*, he is the minister of culture, but still fights tooth and nail to be elected a parliamentarian in the next republic. Consequently, he master-minds the deadliest political campaign in the history of the nation aimed at eliminating his strongly determined opponents, namely, Max, the young Odili and several others. The campaign is crafted under the auspices of the ruling People's Organization Party (POP). To ensure its success, every bit of party paraphernalia and Mr. Nanga's personal resources was mobilized. Hence, at the end of the day, he succeeded through his stooges, killing most of his major opponents including Max and maiming others including Odili—Odili whom he took to the city as a secondary school teacher to help land a choice government employment. He maims and hospitalises Odili after failing to bribe him with two hundred and fifty pounds to make him step down for him. Having thus paved his way, he was elected unopposed on the day of election. The foregoing horror story about Mr. Nanga, doubtlessly, identifies him to be unilaterally evil, nay, a synthesis of everything devilish. As such he neither knows or believes in God nor fears God, and of course, does not care about heaven and hell.

Obi, the protagonist of *NLAE* is, doubtlessly, an exact image of corrupt neo-colonial African in the institutional context of the civil service. Like Otis in Okpewho's *CMBMRN*, he battles with split identity, no thanks to his acculturation in western (English) culture by virtue of his university education in England. Consequently, he portrays a personal identity proper to a westernised African and a native African with opportunistic inclination for Christian identity. Hence, he is confused about life regarding which way to go or which identity to hold on to. Unable to effectively manage his identity crisis, he clashes with his corporate benefactor, Umuofia Progressive Union, as well as his parents. His debt to the union on his university education and his proposed marriage with Clara are the bones of contention together with his disgraceful corruption case and promiscuity. In the final analysis, he proves to be an estranged African, nay, “a been-to,” and as such an irredeemable disappointment to his parents as to the union and even to Clara who had to break up with him, eventually, seeing no light in the tunnel in connection with their proposed marriage. Joseph, his childhood friend and confidante, is equally disappointed, especially as his mother dies of heartbreak on account of the hopelessness that trails his proposed marriage. In the light of the foregoing intra-textual realities about Obi, there is no gainsaying the fact that Obi is pervasively a dramatic representation of the created man, the created man who desires God, but lacks the courage to embrace His sometimes challenging immutable precepts—the created man who is doggedly in search of happiness (fleeting pleasures) with zero idea about what happiness is.

HE is much more vicious than Mr. Nanga. Hence, his personality reflects the nature of the created man in much higher magnitude than that of Mr. Nanga. On the surface, however, he appears to be comparatively virtuous in relation to Mr. Nanga. Hence, even as a military dictator, he shared life initially with some of his former classmates: Chris, Ikem and Beatrice (BB), all of whom are members of his cabinet, directly or indirectly. At that initial time, he allowed Ikem's editorials in *The National Gazette* to influence his decision-making as the no.1 citizen of Kangan. Nevertheless, it does not take quite long for the absolute power he commands to intoxicate him, absolutely, especially with sycophants like Prof. Okon around him as his ministers and political advisers. Consequently, Ikem and Chris become his worst enemies together with every other well-meaning citizen of Kangan including BB by virtue of her stronger friendship bond with the duo, especially Chris. He deploys disguised hired assassins to kill Ikem for his now offensive editorials and declares Chris wanted for seeking to interrogate Ikem's killing and possibly bring the culprits to book and also for initially refusing to query Ikem on his orders. Chris, to save his life, goes into hiding. The socio-political upheaval that followed the killing of Ikem and Chris' threatened life soon becomes too much for HE to contain such that in the midst of it he is abducted and whisked away to an unknown place, following a military coup de tat as Chris loses his life to a trigger happy police man, almost immediately.

The foregoing compact concise story of HE shows that, while in power, he spent his time and material resources fighting to crutch oppositions rather than engaging in the business of governance. Hence, in the final analysis, there is nothing good about him as Kangan's Head of State. He is, therefore, a synthesis of everything evil just like Mr. Nanga, and so, wholly evil with zero concern for God, heaven and hell.

The protagonists in Orwell's fictions selected for this study are Mr. Jones cum Napoleon (*Animal Farm, Anifam*) and O'Brien cum Mr. Winston (*Nineteen Eighty-four, 1984*). Mr. Jones and Napoleon, respectively, of Manor

and *Animal Farm* are apt personifications of despotism, nay, totalitarianism as unravelled in *Anifam*. Both dictators par excellence personify totalitarianism in its crudest form. Consequently, the relationship between them as the political leaders of Manor and Animal farm and the citizenry, or better put, their subjects in two distinct but identical twin regimes sharply mirror any imaginable worst political oppressor-oppressed relationship, globally. Their incomparable totalitarian leadership approach explains and justifies their unanticipated spontaneous disgraceful dethronement which signals the ignominious fate of real life despots. Their totalitarian leadership is, indeed, incomparable because it dwarfs the raw despotic regime of HE in *Anthills*. It is, therefore, incontrovertible that Mr. Jones and every other despot allegorically represented by Napoleon aptly dramatise the nature of the created man—the created man as an unbeliever, particularly, and so, a complete and total enemy of God. This identity profile is emphatically applicable to Napoleon, nay, his socio-political referents in view of the institutionalised atheism characteristic of his regime and real life dictatorships which is most tactfully and agentively effected. This assertion explains the regime's zero tolerance for Moses' notion of Sugarcandy Mountain in *Anifam* to project it as a perfect hyperbolic but realistic synthesis of everything diabolical. Cf. Onyemelukwe, Ogbechie, & Ekechi (2014, p. 92)

The protagonists in Okpewho's classics include Otis (*Call Me Rightful Name, CMBMRN*), Bickerbug also known as Ebika Harrison (*Tides*), Oshevire (*The Last Duty, TLD*) and Obanua (*The Victims, Thevics*). Otis is sharply akin to Obi in *NLAE*. Hence, he is a victim of identity crisis. His crisis of identity is primarily a consequence of his dual parentage, his parents and grand-parents hailing from the United States of America (America, henceforth) and Africa (Nigeria), respectively. In other words, Otis is an American by nationality with African ancestral root, and therefore, an African-American. In plain language, he hails directly from America, but indirectly from Africa. Nevertheless, by a sudden divine prompt from the perspective of African traditional religion (Atr), he begins to progressively claim direct native African identity without brushing off his American identity. His claim is initially unconscious, but subsequently and gradually becomes conscious and glaringly resolute, anchoring on Atr's notion of reincarnation, a belief that is as controversial as it is illogical outside Atr. Consequently, at the end of his medication sojourn in Africa (Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria) for two years, he returns to America as Otis Hampton Akinbowale to resume his prosperity-tailored life as an undergraduate at Bradley University, having been immensely blessed by *ifa*, the god of wisdom worshipped by his African ancestors such as Itayemi and Akinbowale, respectively, his great grand-father and grand-father.

From the perspective of Atr, as intra-textually evident in *CMBMRN*, Otis' life demonstrates the nature of the redeemed man, very substantially but not impeccably. This religious identity applies to Otis, because apart from premarital sex and occult (secret) society membership no other mortal (grievous) sin is attributable to him. One can, however, argue that in view of his undiminished favour in the sight of *ifa*, the two sins do not count against him, especially occultism which is not a sin in Atr but in Christianity. Otis is guilty of premarital sex, having Norma as his girlfriend. His occultism, on the other hand, is tied to his membership of the "cult of strong men."

Bickerbug is a no-nonsense social crusader, nay, freedom fighter in the fictional world of *Tides*. In this capacity, he collaborates with other members of the Committee for Concerned Citizens (CCC), initially. He is, however, unable to stomach the cancerous corruption that soon besets all of them. So he quits the committee and goes solo. Consequently, he is on the neck of government with the aim of compelling government to put a stop to its offensively irresponsible oil business in Delta communities, especially Beniotu homelands. Government's oil business in the Delta is wantonly irresponsible, because it impoverishes each and every one of the oil-producing communities, ravaging their farmlands and farms, polluting their air and contaminating their waters, thus, making fishing and farming impossible for the inhabitants as well as endangering their life. This is the most unfortunate situation in the Delta, because government corruptly colludes with oil-producing companies to dodge the responsibility of cleaning up the environment polluted, very badly, by oil spillage, a consequence of oil drilling and refining of petroleum. To achieve his aim, Bickerbug goes about delivering incisive public lectures and bursting dams, refineries, oil pipes and other oil installations.

His socio-economic as well as socio-political agitation finds a very sturdy support in Tonwe and Dukumo, two ex-professional colleagues unjustly relieved of their duties as journalists, who therefore constitute another arm of freedom fight in the Nigeria of *Tides*. However, Tonwe and Dukumo adopt the peaceful approach to the social crusade which is no option to Bickerbug. As circumstantially evident in *Tides*, the trio soon come under the security grip of NSS, the nation's security agency and the government in power, being a dictatorship, instrumentalises the agency to crush their agitation by means of perpetual incarceration without trial.

Judged by his intention, Bickerbug is a saint by every religious standard, and so, reflects the nature of the redeemed man, his agitation being an emancipatory one aimed at liberating his people from both socio-economic and socio-political enslavement which threatened to annihilate them. Nevertheless, his unprecedented violent

approach to the struggle rubbishes the intention to render him a stereotypical created man. Tonwe and Dukumo, on the other hand, can always be identified as the prototypes of the redeemed man for their peaceful and uncommon sacrificial approach to the freedom fight which is godly by every standard, especially from the standpoint of Tonwe, an overt man of God as intra-textually evident in his mentorship epistles to Dukumo on matrimony.

Oshevire is a diligent honest overt man of God in the narrative unfolded in *TLD*. Most unfortunately, however, he has an archetypal son-of-the-devil business rival in Toje, an irredeemable perpetually arrogant chief in Urukpe, the geographical setting of the novel. Toje did not only stifle his rubber plantation business, but also got him detained for a spurious charge and sexually exploited his wife, while he was in detention. Oshevire's godly image is portrayed in his exceptional heroic action of saving a thirteen-year old boy, for the sake of God, from being lynched by soldiers in the name of war. This action is the basis for Toje's false malicious allegation against him and for it he is detained for three years at Iddu, accused of enemy collaboration. His innocence is proved by his unconditional release after a meticulous trial during which he braced up and convincingly defended himself by the grace of God and to His glory.

Nevertheless, back to Urukpe, he could not just bear his wife's sexual escapades with Toje and Odibo. Herein resides his heroic flaw, namely, the failure to petition and trust God for the grace to forgive his wife. Consequently, he set his house ablaze and embarked on self-exile with his wife (Aku) and only son (Oghenevo) to an unknown destination via a thick bush in the course of which he was killed by an unknown soldier as his last duty. The nature of his reaction to his wife's unfaithfulness makes him guilty of despair, a mortal sin in Christianity. Despair refers to a complete and total loss of trust in God as an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent supernatural architect of human life and the creator of the universe. By committing this sin, Oshevire becomes a backslidden redeemed man, most unfortunately.

Obanua is a senseless polygamist. He doubles as an incurable chronic alcoholic and gambler. He is married to two wives, Nwabunor and Ogugua. His household becomes a war front, the very moment Ogugua joins it as his second wife with her two daughters. He married Ogugua as a mistaken solution to Nwabunor's procreative insufficiency. The rancour characteristic of Obanua's compound family reaches its peak as Nwabunor becomes diabolical by means of Ese Nwozomudo's mephistophelian concoction, wiping out Ogugua and her daughters together with her own only son, Ubaka. Unable to bear the unintentional killing of her son, she runs mad. Obanua sauntered home from his usual joint, visibly and hopelessly intoxicated, as the tumult following the multiple tragedies in his household rages on. Obviously, Obanua's story wholly and entirely dramatises the nature of the created man—a most hopeless created man who is, therefore, incapable of repentance and remains hell-bound, consequently.

King Odewale, the protagonist of Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are not to Blame (Tganb)* is an enigmatic character. His enigmatism stems from his predestined fate. In other words, he is a victim of predestination. Predestination is the belief held in Atr to the effect that the fate of man has already been pre-programmed, i.e., has been planned in advance, and so, fixed such that man cannot alter it. As intra-textually disclosed in *Tganb*, Odewale came into the world, predestined to kill his father and marry his mother. This evil revelation came up when his parents consulted the oracle at his birth in line with their native custom. Uncomfortable with the horrible incredible destiny, his father, the king mandated one of his court messengers to take him to a forest and slaughter him there. Incidentally, however, a humane hunter rescued him and took him home. The hunter's intention was to become his foster father, but his intention could not be realised. His intention was not realised, because Odewale's playmates rattled him by positioning him as an evil child who would kill his father and marry his mother. Consequently, believing the hunter to be his father and the hunter's wife to be his mother, he fled the hunter's home against the hunter's wish, strictly to avoid the evil destiny. Nevertheless he met, fought and killed his oppressor king-father on the way right in his territory without knowing it. By killing his father, he automatically became his successor in accordance with the popular wish of the people who unanimously and joyously enthroned him in appreciation to him for liberating them from an invasion by a neighbouring community. Having ascended the throne, he became custom-bound to inherit the wife of his predecessor, his biological mother. His unavoidable marriage with his mother provoked the gods to inflict his kingdom with an epidemic which led to unimaginable massive death in the land.

To resolve the mystery deaths, he mobilised his chiefs, urging them to leave no stone unturned in search of he, she or they who had provoked the wrath of the gods. Highly passionate about the most unfortunate situation, he decreed that whoever was found to be the cause of the massive death would have his two eyes plucked out and be banished from the kingdom. He issued this most awful decree without suspecting in the least that he was the obnoxious culprit the entire kingdom was desperately searching for. The search came to a peak with the

consultation of a great seer who identified him, most unexpectedly, to be the most wanted offender. Consequently, in an uncommon demonstration of exemplary courageous sincere leadership, however, to the greatest consternation of his subjects and the audience, he executed his decree on himself and household. Hence, the drama ends with the scene in which he is seen filing out of the kingdom with members of his household after his two eyes had been plucked out.

Odwale's very strong determination to avert his evil mission identifies him, clearly, as a typical image of the redeemed man. Moreover, his most passionate resolve to heal his kingdom of the decimating epidemic reinforces his redeemed man image. The foregoing assertions are indisputable, because the identity impressions they impinge on Odwale reflect the peak of Divine love, namely, fear of shedding human blood and healing to restore life. In other words, consciously or unconsciously, Odwale feared God, considering also his role as an emancipator before and after his enthronement for which he risked his life. Nevertheless, his role as an executor and victim of his most awful punitive decree raises more questions than answers: a. In view of his predestined fate, should the gods inflict epidemic and massive death on his kingdom? b. Should he submit himself to the horror punishment in view of this same predestined fate? c. Was it not better for him to kill himself than to have his two eyes plucked out? d. Does it make sense to consult a soothsayer to foretell the future of a baby or anybody for that matter? e. In view of his horror destiny, is there likely to be a successor to the vacant throne?

O'Brien, as the co-protagonist of *1984*, is an unsurpassable despotism-incarnate. In other words, he is an unimaginable and indescribable embodiment of everything totalitarian. Being the visible image of Big Brother, the invisible and invincible head of the government of Oceania, he is the real socio-political leader of the country as well as the party leader. As such, he is in absolute control of government and governance in Oceania. Consequently, he emasculates individualism and rules out opposition. Moreover, he makes Big Brother regime a perpetual one by contriving a spurious never-ending war in shifting coalitions and alignments with either or both of Oceania's neighbouring countries: Eastasia and Eurasia. In the light of the foregoing elucidation, no union, association or any other kind of group bond, talk less of individual opinions and/or interrogations, is acceptable except within the absolute authoritarian tenets of the party.

For avoidance of doubt, O'Brien's totalitarian government of Oceania is of so much magnitude that even family and love life in the country is strictly regulated and teleguided, thus, making Manor and Animal farm dictatorships miniature ones. For instance, a couple must obtain marriage license before proceeding to tie the nuptial cord and it takes nothing less than two years to secure such a license. Again, no married couple is entitled to more than two children just as none can have sex except for the purpose of procreation. The foregoing clarifications explain the tactfully but gradually stifled rebellious posture of Winston in the polity. Winston's rebellion was crushed after being teleguided for seven years by means of telescreens and thought police much like the countless others prior to it. Thus, his unauthorised potential marital love affair with Julia, his accomplice, was eternally brought to an end. Better imagined than described is the torture the duo was subjected to before being separated for life with Winston "rehabilitated" and reintegrated into Oceanian body polity.

The narrative unfolded in *1984* which is summarised above show clearly that O'Brien's life, together with that of Winston and Julia, sharply epitomise the nature of the created man, portrayed precisely as being the devil-incarnate with no iota of goodness or godliness.

Dedan Kimathi is the arrow head in the famous Mau Mau uprising in colonial Kenya aimed at upturning the imperialistic government of the country. Consequently, he attracted the wrath of the colonial overlords who therefore arrested, detained, prosecuted, "convicted" and executed him. His conviction is an unfortunate reality that expresses the decimating suppression suffered by freedom fighters across the globe in the hands of oppressive superior powers. In the farcical trial of Dedan Kimathi presented in the socio-political drama, the judge represents the inhuman face of the colonial overlords in Kenya as Dedan Kimathi's antagonist. The Boy's legendary godly impression of Dedan Kimathi positions the latter as a credible selfless leader of Mau Mau Movement whose goal in the anti-colonial struggle is nothing but complete and total unequivocal liberation for Kenyans. In the light of this perspective, Dedan Kimathi's life can rightly be seen to be demonstrative of the nature of the redeemed man. This deduction is valid in view of his altruistic personality which radiates Divine love. The judge, on the other hand, is a direct opposite of his identity impression, and so, epitomises the nature of the created man who as such dramatises satan's dogged determination to rubbish godly efforts if and when the ungodly is in control as evident in colonial Kenya.

In Marie Corelli's *The Sorrows of Satan* which is a tragic comedy, Geoffery Tempest is the "tragi-comic" protagonist. His initial life dramatises the most unfortunate and lamentable fate of anybody who wrongly believes that he can fight the battle of life alone with zero space for God. Consequently, he succumbs to Lucio

Rimanez's bait which hooks him to the deadly grip of materialism. He succumbs to Rimanez, being unwise enough to connect God in his search for relief from frustration as a budding author. Hence, despite countless premonitions that come his way he becomes and remains spiritually blinded. His spiritual blindness soon hoodwinks him, luring him into marriage with a lustful woman, Sibyl, whom he divorces almost as soon as the marriage is contracted. His divorce of Sibyl pushes her into suicide which provokes Rimanez, his devilish benefactor, to deal with him. Hence, he becomes poverty-stricken, very soon after, with a near-overwhelming impulse to commit suicide. Nevertheless, he survives Rimanez's luciferian shock, but not without connecting God. Hence, he is not counted among the victims of suicide. He rather emerges from his post-traumatic stress disorder to be a redeemed soul to patiently pursue his writing career with integrity. In view of the foregoing intra-textual disclosures on Geoffery, his life embeds and dramatises the nature of the created man as well as that of the redeemed man, echoing the reality of satan on earth to solemnly caution mankind against his disastrous intrigues. Specifically, Geoffery's life cautions humanity against the dangers of falling for affluence and ungodly beautiful women.

Samba Diallo is the tragic hero of Hamidou Kane's *The Ambiguous Adventure*. Visibly, he is an unequivocal embodiment of identity crisis characteristic of formally educated Africans as noted by Onyemelukwe (2016) with focus on Otis, the protagonist of Okpewho's CMBMRN. His identity crisis stemmed from his formal education in Paris which rattled and collapsed the Islamic values he cultivated as a student of Thierno, a Koranic School teacher and the spiritual head of Diallobe tribe. In other words, he dumped his Islamic orientation in preference for western libertine ideologies. Consequently, when he was recalled from Paris before the completion of his formal education to succeed the spiritual head, he found himself unqualified to occupy the supposedly exalted position and declined. Disappointed in him, The Fool stabbed him, obviously to kill him. Very clearly, Samba Diallo and The Fool are unmistakable epitomes of the created man, having demonstrated zero faithfulness to and knowledge of God, respectively. It must here be clarified that nothing in the life of Samba Diallo rubbishes formal education, because nothing about formal education inhibits knowing God and being faithful to him.

4. Conclusion

The analysis done as part of this study confirms the hypothesis of the study, namely, that literature is a mirror of life which is largely a reflection of the natures of the created man rather than those of the redeemed man. The confirmation of this hypothesis proves that humanity is farther away from God than she is close to Him. In other words, the final destiny of mankind, hereafter, is largely threatened. The pragmatics of this worrisome conclusion is that the near-countable redeemed people of God in this generation, especially the clergy, should and must commit themselves to intensified effective creative evangelisation to forestall evil in the world. Positive response to this clarion call by the redeemed people of God found in all religious sects is imperative, else, evil will eventually overtake the world and provoke God's devastating wrath on humanity. A pointer to this possibility is reflected in the fictional but realistic world of Hamidou Kane's *The Ambiguous Adventure* as aptly captured by Samba Diallo's father's solemn warning in connection with ungodly western libertine ideologies which has no place for God:

The West are in the process of overturning these simple ideas of which we are part and parcel. They began timidly by relegating God to a place "between inverted commas." Then two centuries later, having acquired more assurance, they decreed that *God is dead...* After "*the death of God*," what they are now announcing is *the death of man* (pp. 100-102).

"*The death of God*" in the context of the foregoing quotation translates to irredeemable loss of the sense of sin occasioned by faithlessness, nay, secular humanism. This zero faith in God in the western world noted in the quotation has since diffused across the globe, gripping a great majority of people. Consequently, evil is actually overtaking the world, hence, the clarion call in this section for sustained intensified evangelisation. That evil is actually overtaking the world is indisputable in view of current global experiences replete with abominable heinous crimes and other vices such as senseless terrorism, ritual and political killings, celebrated fornication and adultery, mindless abortions, gay marriage, mind-boggling embezzlements and grafts, oil bunkering and other forms of economic sabotage, witchcrafts and other forms of abominable diabolism. For avoidance of doubt, intensified effective creative evangelisation, beyond its appealing or persuasive way of preaching for the purpose of sustained conversion of souls, emphasises mutual friendly relations or peaceful co-existence rather than orchestrating the need for forgiveness in a manner that appears to license offenders.

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