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Critical Stylistic Analysis of Ideological Structures in Ezenwa-Ohaeto's *Chinua Achebe: A Biography*

David Iluebe
Department of English Language and Literature,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
davidiluebespecial@gmail.com

&

Chinwe Ezeifeka
Department of English Language and Literature,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
cr.ezeifeka@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper explicates the commendable ideological actions and attitudes of Chinua Achebe as portrayed in Ezenwa-Ohaeto's biography of the world-class writer and the inspirational effects of these actions and attitudes, with a view to presenting the biographee's life as a significant source of inspiration to the readers. It is based on the descriptive and content analysis forms of qualitative research method, and Lesley Jeffries' critical stylistic theory. Using the theoretical framework, seven classes of ideological structures are unveiled. These include: naming and descriptive structures, ideological structures involving actions, events and states, equating and contrasting ideological structures, implying and assuming structures, ideological structures with positive negations, presentation of others' speech, and representing time, space and society. Crucially, the worth-adopting laudable ideologies communicated by the text producer are discovered as: commitment to true Christian practice, academic excellence, professional competence, good behaviour, honesty, humility, simplicity, hard work, reliability, selfless service to humanity,

equal treatment for all, good interpersonal relationship, commitment to a good dream, fight against injustice, and purposeful existence. The paper thus encourages its readers to imbibe these laudable ideologies if they wish to live an impactful and outstanding life like the biographee.
Keywords: Critical stylistics, biography, ideology, ideological structures, Chinua Achebe, positive impacts, inspiration.

Introduction

Biographical texts, which are often "motivated by the desire to socialize," are embodiments of ideologies (Hale, 2009:131). They accommodate all sorts of thoughts and diverse systems of opinion that stand out as ideological structures. As products of social realities, they are a veritable platform for exerting and transmitting all manner of ideological influences by both individuals and groups. In the positive sense of it for instance, biographies are mining fields of ideologies of hard work, determination, resilience, self-reliance, excellent performance, true success, resistance to oppression, integrity, socio-cultural values, respect, generosity and the like. Stanley (1990:50) thus points out that "works of biography should be seen as composed of textually located ideological practices."

This paper is therefore meant to demonstrate the positive ideological actions and attitudes of Chinua Achebe as portrayed in the biography written by Ezenwa-Ohaeto. This is with a view to inspiring its potential readers as well as making them sources of laudable ideologies. Using seven of Lesley Jeffries' textual conceptual ideological analytical tools, it identifies and describes the various ideological structures portrayed in the text regarding the biographee, how they are deployed from the angle of critical stylistics, and their impacts on the reader and humanity at large. Although ideologies, which Bloor and Bloor (2013:1) view as "how language is used to manipulate individuals and groups" are both "laudatory and abusive" (Van Dijk (2006:2), this study

specifically focuses on the laudatory ideologies of Achebe and their positive impacts. Essentially, the paper is an answer to the following research questions:

1.What are the linguistic choices made in the biography to reveal the laudatory ideologies of the biographee?

2. How are the ideological actions and attitudes portrayed from the perspective of critical stylistics? 3. What impacts do the choices particularly have on the reader and humanity at large?

Statement of the Problem

Ideological investigation, a popular sphere of research has witnessed a plethora of explorations in linguistic studies and other disciplines over the years. Studies such as those by Stockman (1983), Thompson (1984), Van Dijk (1995) Ryder (2014), Alaghbary (2014), Alazzany and Al-Nakeeb (2015), Martin (2015), Little (2018), Gyawali (2020), Al-Janebi and Al-Marsumi (2021), Cranston (online) among others readily attest to this. However, despite the abundance of research, no comprehensive analysis has been conducted on biographies, particularly regarding ideological influences. Notably, there has been a glaring absence of ideological analysis on Achebe's biography by Ezenwa-Ohaeto, thereby omitting the biographee's ideological influence from ideological literature. The omission of the ideological influence of the renowned biographee**,** who stands out as a humongous source of inspiration to his generation has no doubt created a yawning gap in the literature of ideology in particular and the biographical genre in general. It is this critical challenge that this paper seeks to address.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Stylistics

Critical Stylistics (CS) emerged as a subfield of stylistics pioneered by Lesley Jeffries in 2010 at the University of Huddersfield with the publication of her seminal work: "*Critical*

Stylistics: The Power of English." Jeffries identified a significant gap in both traditional Stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) regarding the analysis of ideology. She observed that neither traditional Stylistics nor CDA independently provided complete or precise analytical tools for scrutinizing the "linguistic choices of text producers and their possible ideological motifs and implications" (Coffey, 2013:30). She has specifically pointed out that Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse analysis lack coherent analytical tools for exposing ideological undertones of texts, hence the need for critical stylistics (Jeffries, 2010).

The ten exploration tools devised by Lesley Jeffries within Critical Stylistics, termed "textual-conceptual functions," are as follows: Naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, equating and contrasting, exemplifying and enumerating, prioritizing, implying and assuming, negating, hypothesizing, presenting others' speech and thoughts, and representing time, space and society (Jeffries, 2014: 413-417). More explanation on critical stylistic is provided in the theoretical framework of this paper.

Ideology

The concept of ideology, although elusive and multifaceted, traces its origins back to the 18th century when French writer A.L.C Destutt de Tracy coined it as the "science of ideas," focusing on how individuals think, speak and argue (Van Dijk, 2006:6). Subsequently, ideology has been described as a a specific set of ideas and beliefs upon which a political system, party or organization is founded. It has also been viewed as a characteristic manner of thinking peculiar to individuals, groups or cultures (dictionary.cambridge.org.ideology). These definitions illustrate that ideology permeates every communicative act, suggesting that even seemingly mundane exchanges such as the phatic communion of "good morning" carry underlying ideological implications. For instance, when a student greets his or teacher

"good morning sir," it communicates an ideology of respect (Ezeifeka (online: 22). Moreover, as Ezeifeka asserts, even the choice of one lexical item over another can signify ideological implications, encompassing ideology of style, choice, free will, and more.

Going further, Van Dijk (1998:7) states that ideology represents those fundamental beliefs that are generally shared in discourse involving the question of who we are, what we believe and why, what our goals and values are. For Cole and White (2022:7) "Ideology is a system of beliefs and values that not only seek to describe the world but also to transform it." In biographical discourse being our concern, such information could be a question of who the biographee is, his qualities, goals, aspirations and societal values or what the biographer believes that is worth sharing with his/her readers for positive transformation. Van Dijk thus strongly believes that ideologies positively serve to empower dominated groups, to create solidarity, to organize struggle and to sustain opposition. They serve to protect interests and resources, whether they are just or unjust privileges or minimal conditions of existence.

According to Hall (1996:26), ideology encompasses mental frameworks comprising languages, concepts, categories, and imagery of thought that different classes, and social groups employ to comprehend and interpret societal functioning. This definition underscores how ideology contributes to regulating and stabilizing social practices, power dynamics, and forms of dominance. It also highlights how individuals' perceptions are influenced and manipulated by the ideas of others, prompting them to take a stance on various issues. From this perspective, Downs (1957:96) argues that ideology plays a generative role by felicitating individuals' formation of opinions on specific issues. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that transformative ideas and perceptions can be imparted to individuals' minds through biographical texts.

Supporting the notion, Cranston (2003, online) views ideology as the "science of ideas with a mission," positing its purpose is to enhance human life on Earth. It is widely acknowledged that ideology operates with a mission-oriented approach, primarily aiming to persuade and enlist loyal adherents with the intention of positively transforming their lives (Van Vijk, 2006). In the context of discourse of power, Schaeger (1995:182) sees biography as "a vehicle for influencing its readers' minds" consciously and unconsciously. McVeigh (2003:21) corroborates this with the assertion that "those with the power of the pen tend to influence the minds of their readers." It is strongly believed that such influence can be greatly exerted on minds through ideological narratives like biographies. Illustratively, ideologies of hard work, self-reliance, excellent performance, integrity, respect and generosity when projected into biographical narratives can help better the lives of their readers when imbibed (Tanner, 2016).

We can therefore conclusively infer from the various definitions examined that ideology in the positive sense of it refers to patterns of thoughts, ideas, principles, behaviorism, doctrines, tenets, philosophy, conviction, persuasion, opinion, position, stance, drive or word view targeted at influencing others for a better society. To recap, ideologies are acquired, expressed and reproduced in society in different forms of discourse, of which biographical discourse is not an exception (Van Dijk, 1995). Besides, the fact that ideology has something to do with power, dominance and influence has implicated biographies as objects of critical discourse analysis, (CDA), and critical stylistics which of course is a fall out of CDA. But this paper specifically employs critical stylistics platform due to its precise and comprehensive ways of explicating ideologies in texts.

Biography

The concept of biography is considered as "the true story of a notable person's life written by someone else" (Hale, 2009:48).

The significance of this definition lies in: (a) Its description of biography as a "true story", which clearly distinguishes it from fictionalized stories portrayed in creative literature, but pictures it as a component of social realities. (b) Its depiction of biographical subjects as "notable" individuals, which reveals that biographies are ideally written about the greats – male or female, and (c) Its description of biographical content as being documented by "someone else" which clearly distinguishes its authorship from autobiography that is self-authored. Warner (2022, online) further defines biography as "a detailed description or account of someone's life and times, which is told by a different author." This implies that the content of biography is beyond a shallow compilation of information about someone's life comprising date and place of birth, family background, education and work experience. Otherwise, it will amount to a mere profile. It has to be a detailed description involving both the personal life of the individual and the historical facts about his existence in order to give the biographical discourse a context to lean on. It is thus understandable that biography is a platform for expressing societal realities through true life stories.

This sort of realism primarily focuses on the lives of eminent personalities. It leverages on the lives of the great within a recognizable set of standards (Stanley, 1992:142). Notably, it's not about people that are great in misdeeds, but in societal impacts. Chanyang (2018, online) corroborates this assertion with the view that biographies are basically written about people with "great contributions to the world" or personalities who lead"an extraordinary life." To this end, biographers tend to choose biographical subjects that are iconic or people of renown whose lives provide them an opportunity to explore (McVeigh, 2013: 25). This could be about someone that is still alive, a male or female but with ideal qualities. That is, an individual whose character is worthy of emulation.

Biography as a true story of a notable personality is not just a narrative rendered in a third person pronoun and past tense, but it also characteristically captures the following specifics: geological account/family background of the subject, his/her place and date of birth, formative years, educational and occupational background, positive impacts on humanity, achievements and legacies, instances that manifest their ideal character, innate qualities, attitudes and world views, details that illustrate the person's individuality as well as the biographer's feelings and evaluative judgment about the biographee which of course makes the genre of biography evaluative in nature. It is these features that particularly make biography a mining field of ideologies.

Review of Related studies

This paper acknowledges previous research activities conducted on the subject of biography and ideology, highlighting significant contributions for scholars in both fields. In the realm of biography research, Kenney (1981) examined the three biographies of Christopher Colombus who courageously discovered America. Marcus (1985) and O'Brien (1993) on their own have provided valuable insights into feminist biography as a shaped narrative. While Thompson and Holland (2005) introduced the innovative method of "memory book" in biographical research, Hoyland (2007) scrutinized the diverse approaches used in documenting the biography of Prophet Mohammed. And McVeigh (2013) delved into "literary biography and its critic" in her PhD thesis.

On the subject of ideology, Stockman (1983) offered an overview of the concept of ideology in critical theory, distancing himself from Marx's theoretical view of its "falseness." Thompson (1984) juxtaposed theories and methods for analyzing ideology in Discourse Analysis, while Van Dijk (1995) explored the expression of ideologies in various texts and conversations, using a multidisciplinary approach. Ryder (2014) examined Athuser's theory of ideology and its application in textual analysis, whereas

Alaghbary (2014) investigated "ideological embedding in US presidential rhetoric on aggression on conflict," focusing on Obama's speech on Arab Spring Uprising (p.151). Others include: Alazzany and Al-Nakeeb (2015) who critically surveyed a 30-year (1971-2001) development and application of linguistic theories to the analysis of textual ideologies, Martin (2015) who investigated various ways of conceptualizing political ideologies in texts, and Little (2018) who scrutinized the Marxist false consciousness view of ideology. We also have Gyawali (2020) who investigated the development of ideological interactional theory in Critical Discourse Analysis which is based on socio-cultural perspectives of discourse, Al-Janebi and Al-Marsumi (2021) who explored ideological positioning in Rudyard Kipling's poem *If*, using critical stylistic theoretical framework, and Cranston (online) that described "the nature, history and significance of ideologies in philosophical, political, and international contexts." But the observation that no ideological work has been done on Ezenwa-Ohaeto's biography on Achebe necessitates the current study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this paper centers on Lesley Jeffries' critical stylistics theory, which integrate insights from various disciplines such as stylistics, Critical Linguistics (CL), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). First introduced in 2010, this theory aims to elucidate the precise mechanisms through which texts "transmit, reinforce or instill ideologies in their readers" (Jeffries, 2010:6). Jeffries developed this theory in response to perceived shortcomings in existing frameworks for analyzing textual ideologies, which she deemed imprecise, incomplete or insufficiently comprehensive. In addressing these limitations, Jeffries has provided stylisticians with a clear set of analytical tools to conduct critical analysis of texts, enabling them to uncover and discern the underlying ideologies (Jeffries, 2010:6).

The theoretical framework serves as the foundation for the current study, offering a systematic approach to exploring the ideological dimensions of biographical texts. By leveraging on Jeffries' critical stylistic theory, the paper aims to unveil the ideological influences embedded within the biographical narrative of Ezenwa-Ohaeto's biography on Achebe, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the ideological forces at play in biographical discourse. Jeffries critical stylistic theory draws its raw materials extensively though not exclusively from Critical Linguistics (CL), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Alazzany and Al-Nakeeb, 2015:1). Named critical stylistics owing to its fusion of text analysis from stylistics with the ideological awareness of CDA, the theory aims to demonstrate how ideologies are communicated, reproduced, constructed, and negotiated, using language (Jeffries and Mclntyre, 2010:194). While CDA primarily considers external circumstances surrounding a text, critical stylistics focuses solely on the text itself, relying on the textual meaning encoded by stylistic choices to interrogate ideological aspects (Jeffries, 2014:408).

Jeffries' theory is rooted in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly in its ideational metafunction, which concerns actions, events, and states represented in language. SFL views language as a network of systems and linguistic options enabling communication of various meanings, with three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:29-30).

Critical stylistics theory predominantly operates within the ideational arm of SFL emphasizing actions, events and states that are going on in language including who is doing what to who and where and how it is done as conveyed through transitivity in lexicogrammar. Lexicogrammar captures the interdependence of lexical and grammatical features for meaning production, asserting

that lexical items function in sets to create meaning in texts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004:143).

The theory identifies linguistic pairings and collocational ties as part of the ideational function of language, revealing associative meanings and facilitating ideological analysis. These "textual-conceptual functions" constitute the tools for ideological analysis in critical stylistics, shaping a particular view of the world and representing reality with ideological consequences (Jeffries, 2014: 412). To this end, the ten set of analytical tools or "textual-conceptual functions" specifically spelt out by Jeffries for ideological analysis are as follows:

Naming and Describing: This textual-conceptual function involves the choice of nouns and noun phrases. It probes the way noun phrases are structured and the elements they are composed of. That is, "the way noun phrases are put together and what is included within them" (Jeffries, 2014: 413). Such elements may be evaluative adjectives placed within a noun phrase to serve as premodifiers to the noun head or postmodifiers to another noun or nominalized adjectival and verbal elements to invent ideologies in a text. Precisely, this function has to do with "the use of nouns, noun phrases or nomalization to transmit ideology" (Al-Janebi and Al-Marsumi, 2021:8).

Representing Actions/Events/States: This tool has to do with how an ideology is being transmitted through "what is being done (actions), what is happening (events), or what simply is (states)" (Jeffries, 2010:38). The textual function is premised on Halliday's transitivity pattern as determined by the verbal element of the structure. It tends to connect events, actions, and states in the clause to particular participants and circumstances. But since transitivity analysis can be "overwhelming" due to the presence of its pattern in "almost every clause" in a text, Jeffries has advised that other conventional stylistic means of identifying "foregrounded" features in texts could be alternatively deployed at the analysist's discretion (Jeffries, 2014: 418). As such, due to the

limited space in this paper, we may not offer a full-blown transitivity analysis in the representation of actions, events and states, but by a conventional means of describing how lexical and syntactic interrelatedness produces textual ideologies.

Equating and Contrasting: It involves the use of synonymous and antonymous structures or similar and opposite structures or parallel structures to convey ideologies. It arises from the "possibility for words to be semantically similar and semantically opposed" (Jeffries, 2010:52). According to Jeffries, this analytical tool is used to explore the range of textual triggers which can cause equality, inequality or opposition to be created contextually, especially in terms of racist ideology or ideology of hate. Comparative devices and derogatory terms are sometimes used to create such ideologies.

Exemplifying and Enumerating: What this textual-conceptual function is used to explore is a situation where a particular world view is presented by exemplification and enumeration, using textual markers like "for example," "for instance," "illustratively," and listing categories like "one, two, three…" or "firstly, secondly, thirdly", etcetera.

Prioritizing: This tool is used to investigate the syntactic technique of placing the clausal element carrying essential information at the beginning of a sentence or placing the most critical information at the end to "make it less susceptible to debate" (Al-Janabi & Al-Marsumi, 2021:243). Arshagian, (online:20) on her own explains it as being used to investigate the information that is foregrounded by the syntactic technique of placing ideological information by fronting, subordination or its transformation from active to passive voice and vice versa.

Implying and Assuming: These two terms are variously linked to implicature in pragmatics and presupposition in semantics, constituting text-conceptual function for deducing implicit ideologies from texts. The main triggers of this tool are the definite article, demonstratives, factive verbs, cleft constructions, and

comparative constructions embedded in relative clauses as well as assumptions and implications (Jeffries, 2010).

Negating: This tool is used to scrutinize laudable ideologies that are inherent in structures that are constructed negatively -in an attempt to influence the reader. Syntactically, the use of negative particles with verbs such as "did not" or "didn't" or simply adverbs like "never" or negative verbs like "refuse," "reject", "decline," "turn down" can trigger negation analysis in texts, e.g. Achebe is never short of wisdom; He refused to accept a bribe.

Hypothesizing: This has to do with the use of modality to convey a text producer's viewpoint. The various ways modality is used to achieve this in stylistics especially in critical stylistics are through the use of modal auxiliary verbs, adverbs/sentence adverbs, evaluative adjectives, generic structures and predictions (Neary,2014:181). Notably, Halliday (1994) places the use of modality in language's interpersonal metafunction, but Jeffries (2010) attributes it to ideational metafunction because of its conceptual meaning and different ways of influencing addressees.

Presenting Others' Speech and Thought: As the name implies, it is used to communicate textual ideologies by quoting other people's speech and thoughts, using means like free indirect speech, direct speech, reported speech/thought, e.g. She was sure that he wouldn't disappoint her (free indirect speech): She said "I am sure he won't disappoint me" (direct speech); She said she was sure that he wouldn't disappoint her (reported speech); He thought for a while (a report about a thought action); They discussed elaborately (indicating that the speaker is directly aware of the discussion). According to Jeffries (2014), this tool indicates that thoughts and speeches can be attributed to people without the risk of being sued for libel.

Representing Time, Space and Society: This text-conceptual function explores the ideological potential of the use of deictic elements or "deictic words and phrases to point to things in the real world through references to time (then, now), space (here, there), or social structures (Sir)" (Jeffries, 2014:417). Deictic

elements in this regard, are elements of meaning from the context or situation of use attributable to the speaker, the addressee, time and space. These tools shall be accordingly deployed to identify and describe the type of ideologies in our chosen text, how they are deployed and their impacts on the readers. On the whole, critical stylistic framework is chosen for this analysis on the grounds of its precise ways of unveiling ideologies in texts explicitly and implicitly.

Methodology

The paper applied descriptive, and content analysis forms of qualitative research method for the scrutiny of Achebe's biography by Ezenwa-Ohaeto as sampled purposively. While the descriptive approach (which tends to portray "accurately the characteristics of a particular individual, situation or group", Agbonifoh and Yomere (1999:128) was used to describe the ideological actions and attitudes of the biographee, the content analysis template was used to identify and extract the linguistic patterns portraying the ideological structures for analysis.

The linguistic units that the researcher needed to analyze were selectively extracted from the primary text by purposive sampling on the basis of their communicative value and significance. The instrument used for the research was the researcher himself who carefully read through the 326-page primary text to extract the required data. This is in consonance with Okolo's assertion that a researcher can serve as an instrument for collecting "data from documents" through reading (Okolo, 2009:123). The researcher also consulted some secondary sources /extalinguistic materials relating to the person of Achebe for necessary insights on him. Our searchlight was specifically beamed on positive ideological structures in the text, using Jeffries' critical stylistic analytical template and tools on the basis of quote-and-explain approach.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The linguistic features in focus are underlined in the various coded excerpts, while the ellipses within the texts are the researcher's -for summary purposes.

Excerpt 1: Naming and Descriptive Ideological Structures

Achebe was a thorough little Christian**.** The child exhibited signs of intelligence… He possessed the best hand writing in the class… He was so intelligent that he was nicknamed Dictionary and regarded as students' second teacher… Chinua scored the highest marks…He was the best English reader, He passed 2 entrance exams at once which made him a celebrity in Ogidi… He was made a college Prefect… (pp. 7-22) … Mr Achebe's style is a model for aspirants… Achebe has a profound gift of observation and tells his story with an adept touch. He is the best African novelist of today. Achebe is a necessary angel who has restored for us something that slavery took from us… Achebe had cleared a frontier by his examples as a writer and his keen perception as a critic for the emergence of Nguigi Wa Thiogo whose distinguished career would parallel his own … Achebe was unassuming and humble as the controller… Chris Okoli had noted…simplicity in spite of Achebe's rise in his carrier at the NBC; it was one reason why she had decided to marry him… [H]e clearly performed his duties with great honesty and in the best interest of Nigeria (pp. 84-284).

The focus here is on the textual ideologies that are portrayed by Ezenwa-Ohaeto about Achebe and how they are communicated, using nouns/noun phrases with or without embedded evaluative adjectives. The first in this order is ideology of religious commitment. This is evident in the noun Phrase "a thorough little Christian" where the attributive adjectives "thorough" and "little" are evaluatively used to premodify the noun head "Christian" in the manner of naming and describing Achebe as a meticulous practitioner of Christianity in his formative years. This

ideologically recommends to the reader the need to be a dedicated Christian, having chosen to be part of that religion. In plain terms, it amplifies the common saying that whatever that is worth doing at all is worth doing well. It is followed by ideology of academic excellence which is demonstrated with nominal structures like "signs of intelligence," "the best handwriting in the class," "nicknamed Dictionary," "students' second teacher," "the highest marks," "2 entrance exams at once," "a college perfect." Through the use of nominalized abstract noun "intelligence," attributive superlatives like "best (in handwriting)," "best (in reading)," "highest (in scores)," Achebe is evaluated as an excellent performer in class work in his formative years. Being described by his peers as a walking "Dictionary," is a metaphor for super intelligence and paragon of knowledge. Descriptions such as being "a second teacher," made "a college prefect," and passing "2 entrance exams at once," thereby making him "a celebrity in Ogidi" further speak volumes of this super intelligence or uncommon academic excellence, which the text producer intends to recommend to his readers ideologically. In other words, he is advocating the need to strive to stand out academically.

The paper also examines linguistic choices used to portray the biographee's ideology of literary competence and uniqueness. These include the descriptions of Achebe as possessing "a profound gift of observation," having storytelling ability with "an adept touch," and being "the best African novelist of today." In these instances, attributive adjectives like "profound," "adept, and "best" are superlatively used to modify the noun heads, emphasing Achebe's exceptional level of literary creativity. This linguistic construction projects the ideology of a unique touch of literary excellence and encourages readers to strive for excellence in their respective fields of endeavour. Structures depicting Achebian literary style as "a model for aspirants," his clearing "a frontier by examples" as a writer and paving a literary way for "the emergence of Nguigo Wa Thiogo" of Kenya, "a necessary angel" …which is a

metaphor for a massager or an enabler are further used to describe Achebe as a literary pathfinder, mentor, innovator, and a facilitator. These nominal choices in a nutshell are used by Ezenwa-Ohaeto to inspire his readers to strive not to live for themselves alone but to serve as positive way makers to others. Besides, ideologies of simplicity, humility and honesty are communicated in the text. These evidently reflect in the structures describing Achebe as being "unassuming and humble" and known for "simplicity" despite his "rise" in the broadcasting industry and writing career. This virtue is of course said to have attracted his wife to him, thereby ideologically sermonizing that humility and simplicity are rewarding to those who practise them.

The need to be honest in all that we do is also communicated nominally by depicting Achebe as discharging his broadcasting duties "with great honesty and the best interests of Nigeria." On the whole, with the use of evaluative attributive adjectives within noun phrases, premodifiers to the noun heads, normalization, ideologies of commitment to Christian practice, academic excellence, career competence and uniqueness, innovation, simplicity and honesty are variously transmitted by the text producer with a view to inculcating same into the consciousness of the readers.

Excerpt 2: **Ideological Structures of Actions, Events and State of Being**

Achebe was usually quiet and attentive…In all the subjects that S.N. Okonkwo taught, Chinua scored the highest marks… He passed 2 entrance exams at once… The telling is polished; images effortlessly light up the pages. Through his writings, he has enriched all humanity…Achebe is a necessary angel who has restored for us something that slavery took from us… The honours and appointments which continued to flow his way were often offered in recognition of his role as a fighter for African literature and its economy. Chinua Achebe reshaped the literary map of

Africa. I used to feel elated when he acknowledged my greeting, remembered my name and asked how I was going on…His manner of approach in handling matters affecting his subordinates helped in tremendous way to make the administration easy… "Chinua is one of the most reliable people I know. You can rely on his political integrity as much as his emotions and his personal loyalty" **(**pp. xi, 11, 85, 156.268, 281).

Here, we concentrate on how textual ideologies are transmitted through what is being done, what is happening or has happened and what the biographee simply is, by the use of verbs/verbal elements. Diverse ideologies are thus transmitted through the above text in terms of Achebe's positive impacts, attitudes, actions, reactions to happenings around him and the state of his personality. For instance, the *be* verb "was" in the first sentence is used to capture Achebe's state of usual quietness and attentiveness in his formative years in the classroom, which of course exudes an ideology of good behaviour worth imbibing. Another *be* verb "is" is metaphorically used to ascribe to him the role of an angelic being, a God-send. The tense is deliberately rendered in present tense to picture Achebe as Africans' timeless literary deliverer. The relational *be* verb "is" is equally used alongside a phrasal verbal element like "can rely on" to ideologically project Achebe's attitude of reliability. The persona uses them to assure that the biographee is reliable on the grounds of his tested forthrightness. His actions which translate into laudable performance are on their own conveyed with dynamic verbs/other verbal elements. These include "scored," (in terms of being the highest scorer of marks in his class), "passed" in terms of passing two exams as double achievement, "polished" in terms of providing a refining literary style that "light up" or illuminates the mind of the reader, "enriched" as in enhancing humanity with his literary prowess, "restored" in terms of being a restorer of hope to Africans, his people with the power of pen, and "reshaped" which bothers on his effort of reconstructing African literary landscape. We also

have "handling," "helped" and "make" as used to depict his laudable selfless administrative service and skills which became a big blessing to his "subordinates" at the NBC and a big boost to the entire establishment. All these constitute an ideological clarion call to the readers to make impacts on their own generation if they must be celebrated like Achebe. The pool of his recognition and awards which are said to have "continued to flow", "were often offered" not for nothing but as a reward for Achebe's handwork and tremendous impacts on humanity also project ideology of handwork and purposeful existence. The biographer further draws his readers' attention to Achebe's ideological attitude of not relegating anyone, with verbs like "acknowledged," "remembered," "asked" and "going on" as used by him to portray Achebe's good interpersonal relationship with him which brought about asking how he was fairing as a student at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, thereby tasking us to regard everyone in society no matter how highly placed we are. Ultimately, this textual tool has given us ideologies of good behaviour, impactful and purposeful existence, handwork, equal treatment for all, reliability and selfless service to humanity.

Excerpt 3: Equating and Contrasting Ideological Features

He is the best African novelist of today… The author possessed literary gifts of high order, writing a clear and neaty style free of the dandyism often affected by Negro authors (p.66). Chinua achebe more than anyone else reshaped the literary map of Africa (p.280).

The comparison and contrast present in these statements are implicit, as Achebe is not directly compared or contrasted with anyone else. Describing him as "the best African novelist" implies his superiority compared to other African novelists of his generation. This suggests that in the opinion of the persona, Achebe stands out as the most superior and favourable among African novelists.

Similarly, when it is stated that Achebe has "reshaped" or impacted the African literary terrain "more than anyone else." It positions him as the foremost African writer, the master of his craft, and the dominant figure in African literature. This implies that Achebe's influence surpasses that of any other individual in the African literary sphere. Moreover, the second sentence highlights the exceptional nature of Achebe's style, emphasizing that it is distinct from the perceived low-quality writing associated with other black writers. This sets him apart as the best among his peers, indicating that while other black writers may struggle with their expression, Achebe's works stand out as master pieces. Overall, these statements convey the ideology of striving for excellence and mastery in one's endeavours. They advocate for individuals to aim to be the best and to excel in their respective fields, reflecting the importance of dedication and skill in achieving success.

Excerpt 4: Implying and Assuming Structures

Focusing on noun phrases with definite articles, demonstratives, possessives, existential presumptions and comparative constructions. "This is the best novel I have read since the war" … The publisher did not touch a word in it in order to correct it… Achebe's style is a model for aspirants… The literary method of the author is apparently simple… The style is faultless… He is the best African novelist of today (pp. 65-66).

The ideological implication of the above linguistic choices is our major concern. The first sentence is quoted from Donald MacRae, the editorial adviser to Achebe's publisher in 1958. His use of the demonstrative pronoun "this" and the definite superlative element "the best" ideologically implies that the Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (TFA) referred to is a master piece of all ages. "The publisher" (made definite) whose decision it was to either accept or reject the manuscript is said to have corrected nothing in it, which further endorses the author's acclaimed distinguished

literary dexterity. In sentence three, s-genitive or possessive is used in the Phrase "Achebe's style" to attribute to the author a distinctive prosaic pattern worthy of emulation by other African writers. TFA being a prototype to this order, "the style" employed therein is further assumed flawless. In this case, TFA is not only assumed to be "the best" in the excerpt, but its author is also said to be "the best African novelist…" The simplicity of "the literary method" of "the author" which has drawn to him so much readership is also emphasized twice with the definite article "the" to sufficiently demonstrate Achebe's exceptional literary competence. Ideologically, Ezenwa-Ohaeto thus implicitly tasks his readers to imbibe the same competence in all their endeavours and never to be a party to mediocrity.

Excerpt 5: Ideological Structures with Positive Negations

/Each time he scored 8/10, he would cry throughout… He never featured in the list of offenders and law breakers… (p.14). The publisher did not touch a word of it in order to to correct it and it achieved instant acclaim in the British press (p.65). "He thinks a lot. He doesn't talk much" (wife) (p.86)./

The negative linguistic elements used to transmit ideologies in the above excerpt are "cry", "never", "did not", and "doesn't." The action of "cry" is ordinarily negative, but Achebe is said to feel bad each time he scored even as much as "8/10" in his class work. This portrays him as a man who aimed at nothing but the best in life. It depicts him as someone imbued with the mindset of excellence. The adverb "never" is equally used in positive terms to portray Achebe as a law abiding fellow as he is said to at no time break any law in his school days, thereby ideologically beckoning on the reader to be law-abiding in society like the biographee. The negative particle "did not" is further used to establish that TFA's manuscript was not in any way subjected to editing obviously because it was error-free. And the ideology of literary competence is reechoed with the depiction. Achebe's

psychological system, which is not given to loquaciousness according to his wife, is conveyed with the negative contraction "doesn't" to ideologically project the need to be calm and calculated in order to be deeply philosophical like the great writer.

Excerpt 6: Presenting Others' Speech and Thought

When asked what his reaction would have been if the manuscript had been stolen… he said that he would have died (p.63) … 'Chinua, I know you are a prophet. Everything in this book has happened except a military coup! Said J.P Clark. (p.109) …Asked to comment on the conduct of the presidential election, Achebe answers: 'what has happened is a wholesale disregard of the rules – the rules of election, the rules of fairness. If you don't have the attitude for fair play then you cannot have a democratic system' (p.230).

The first sentence in the excerpt is a reported speech stating Achebe's answer to the probable incident of losing his manuscript of *Things Fall Apart* in the course of mailing the only available copy to his publisher in England in 1958. The fact that he would have died if it had happened ideologically connotes that writing was as important to him as his life itself. It reveals how much he loves literary creativity above anything else in life, thereby ideologically enjoining us to pursue a good dream with all vigour. The second sentence is a direct speech from J.P Clark, Achebe's literary colleague and confidant who after reading the advance copy of the *A Man of the People* he got from the author described him as a prophet for predicting a military coup in its ending – a prediction which eventually came to pass few days later. The ideology communicated through this direct speech is that writers are prophets that keep their society in check through their works. Through the use of another direct speech, Achebe himself is seen condemning the 1983 presidential election which he claims to have been marred by lots of irregularities and non-compliance with electoral rules. Again, this ideologically tasks us not to be silent at

the face of electoral injustice or any other form of injustice at that if society must work accordingly.

Excerpt 7: Representing Time, Space and Society

In early 1968, he traveled to London and other known European cities as part of his effort to draw attention to his country's plight…Achebe and his companions made efforts on the tour to increase awareness in America of the plight and importance of Biafra before returning to the country in November 1969 (p.150) … His engagement in political activities in 1983 made Achebe more sensitive to the need to refashion the political culture in Nigeria (p.229) … Achebe…restored for us something that slavery took from us… (p.281) …In 1991, the spate of honorary doctorate degrees turned into a flood (p.282).

This except is about the use of deictic elements or structural elements referring to time of some important events, places of their occurrence, collective concerns and other social structures relating to the biographee. For instance, the first and second sentences record a significant event that took place "in early 1968" when Achebe painstakingly visited places like "London," popular "European cities," and "America" with Biafran compatriots in search of a solution to the raging civil war between the federal government of Nigeria and the seceding nation. It is also specifically stated that he returned from this important tour in "November 1969." The year 1983 is further pointed out as Achebe's year of political engagement for the service of his dear country Nigeria. This political action is said to be aimed at refashioning the Nigerian political culture, which is nothing to write home about. Still on the instrument of time, we are also told how Achebe was flooded with an array of doctorate degrees precisely "in 1991" for his laudable contributions to the literary enterprise. Through the use of the pronoun "us," the next sentence, connotes that Achebe's literary effort did not benefit him alone but the entire ("us") African society, as his literary incursion is said to

have restored the lost dignity of the entire Africa. With these various impacts on humanity by Achebe, Ezenwa-Ohato expects his readers to make worthwhile efforts to improve on humanity like his biographee.

Conclusion

The paper effectively identifies and describes the laudable ideological actions and attitudes of Chinua Achebe as portrayed in his biography by Ezenwa-Ohaeto. Through the application of Jeffries' critical stylistic textual ideological tools, seven classes of ideological structures are unveiled, encompassing naming and descriptive structures, ideological structures involving actions, events and states, equating and contrasting ideological structures, implying and assuming structures, ideological structures with positive negations, presentation others' speech, and representing time, space and society.

Crucially, the analysis reveals a spectrum of laudable ideologies communicated by the text producer ranging from commitment to true Christian practice, academic excellence, professional competence, good behaviour, honesty, simplicity, hard work, reliability, to selfless service to humanity. These ideologies, while directly associated with Achebe's impacts on humanity, are intended to inspire readers to live impactful and outstanding lives akin to the biographee.

Through the adept use of critical stylistic devices and linguistic choices, the biographer, effectively communicates the ideologies embedded in the biographical text. The deployment of critical stylistic tools enables the researcher to reveal the biographer's intended goal of foregrounding Achebe's ideological actions and attitudes to inspire the audience positively. Consequently, it is believed that the various ideologies communicated have been aptly utilized to influence the minds of the audience in a positive manner, fostering inspiration and encouragement.

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