



Chinua Achebe's Critical Wing and His Vitriolic Complexion: A Metacritical Investiture

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Chinua Achebe was not made a professor based on his creativity. It was based on his scholarship.

-Allwell Abalogu Onukaogu¹

Not that Achebe writes to please his readers; indeed, he believes that no self-respecting writer will take direction from his audience and that he must remain free to disagree with his society if it becomes necessary.

-Kolawole Ogungbesan²

Achebe's basic stance in all of ... [his] essays is that of an urbane, relaxed persuasiveness, even while dealing with the most controversial or intractable issues in contemporary African and Nigerian literature.

- Biodun Jeyifo³

So many appellations have been made to Chinua Achebe as Africa's most revered literary icon. It becomes arguable that if African and Nigerian writers – of the literary domain – are 'guilty' of hero-worshipping, Achebe's prodigiously seductive fineness and panache, he perhaps, is number one literalists to have made a hypnotic swoop and grip on Africa's hero-worshippers, being that he is always writing what simply can be called a 'curious read'. Therefore, hero-worshippers 'cannot let him die'; they cannot be weaned of his model; they cannot see or even foresee his worse side; so, they cannot but worship him, even eternally! And Achebe deserved to have seen this done to him, even in his lifetime.

Achebe's iconic canonicity inheres in a number of hagiographic references to his name. Let us cite some of the eulogies waxed on Achebe. In his reader-response analysis of Achebe's *Arrow of God*,

Uzoma Nwokochah describes the author as “one of Africa's best novelists” (126), though Oladele Taiwo would compress the canvas of his (Achebe's) literary kingdom by saying that “[Achebe is] the best known Nigerian novelist” (111). However, Charles Nnolim would rather see Achebe as the votary of African literature (Orie 108-112). By this, he made a superlative opinion of Achebe as he (Nnolim) certifies that “Achebe is definitely the father of the African novel” (I), which corroborates Tony Afejuku's rating that “Achebe is the father and the dean of [the] African novel” (21). That Achebe is. All this may inform why Emeka Nwabueze ranks him as “a canonized writer” (190).

But that is not all. Several other tributes have further been given in like manners to Achebe in praise of him as a writer. While Ernest Emenyonu may be credited as having called Achebe an 'eagle on iroko', the pair of Joseph A. Ushie and Denja Abdullahi refers to him (Achebe) as “a gargantuan iroko tree” (18)

These allegiances to Chinua Achebe – as a hero – are manifestly motivated and enthused with his creative peregrination not *apropos* to his critical *oeuvre*. However, it is the idea of the study that any recognition credited to Achebe as an artist, a recognition that is sans of his critical records, is patently impaired! Why say this? There is no gainsaying on the truism that Achebe is an exceptional raconteur; but to discountenance his critical credentials, made good in his wonderful essays, with which he had used to emphasise his creative themes, is not only a superficial rating, it is paradoxically such a basic omission. Hardly would it be apocryphal to aver that it is not only based on Achebe's creative output that Kole Omotoso reckons him among the six “greatest writers of all times” (blurb); Omotoso was here referring to world writers such as Salman Rushdie, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Derek Walcott and Wole Soyinka – who have made their individual signal achievements, having superbly written in one culture using the languages of other cultures.

From the foregoing, one may begin to agree with the first epigraph as covered in our introduction, where Allwell Abalogu Onukaogu makes an emphatic statement that 'Chinua Achebe was not made a Professor based on his creativity, and that it was based on his scholarship.' On an in-depth assessment we are likely to find something very fundamental about this revelation by Onukaogu. He has not only given us insights into the growing belief that Achebe did not make his professorship from his creativity but through his scholarly contribution. Onukaogu's epigraph here being analysed is likely to appeal to most people as a true scholar's protégé. If this statement by

Onukaogu is anything to go by, what seems best is to say that it is about time Achebe was feted as a redoubtable and inimitable social critic.

Achebe's writings and achievements are almost becoming hackneyed that Achebe's epic novel, *Things Fall Apart*, just like his other text, *Arrow of God*, both seemed to have evolved as a literary response or a literary protest against the Western-jaundiced representation of Africa and Africans. Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* is a case in point of a novel (not forgetting Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*) that is committed to deride and dehumanize Africa and her people. However, embittered by this foreigners' wicked mission, Chinua Achebe wrote a rejoinder which was not only published as *Things Fall Apart* but a maiden work in novel writing, which he began immediately he graduated from the university in 1953. Other things changed hands including time and delay that the said *Things Fall Apart* got published in 1958 and came as a bang to literary and non-literary scholars throughout the world. Achebe went on to bare his mind to Lewis Nkosi saying:

I know around '52, '53, I was quite certain that I was going to try my hand at writing and one of the things that set me thinking was Joyce Cary's novel, set in Nigeria, *Mister Johnson*, which was praised so much, and it was clear to me that it was a most superficial picture of – not only of the country – but even of the Nigerian character, and so I thought if this was famous, then perhaps someone ought to try and look at this from the inside (qtd. in Innes & Lindfors 4).

The above commentary by Achebe is largely in sync with his story in another forum:

At the university I read some appalling novels about Africa (including Joyce Cary's much praised *Mister Johnson*) and decided that the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well intentioned (*Hope* 25).

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So, while Achebe later wrote from the inside as an insider to the African culture particularly his Igbo culture, he, perhaps, proves that Joyce Cary is a hoaxer and that *Mister Johnson* by Joyce Cary a hoax! Achebe's own mission has been to re-educate, re-sensitize the foreigner society on the values of Africa and the African or Nigerian as well as re-assuring the African, the Nigerian, that his values and total worldview are not inferior to those of the Europeans. This context becomes instructive as Achebe seems to beat his chest:

I would be quite satisfied if my novel (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them (“The Novelist” *African* 105).

It is unfortunate that Achebe seems not to have achieved his aim in his novels. Remember that while *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are primarily meant to protest the chaotic order the colonial masters put Nigerians (Africans) into, *No Longer at Ease*, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, are primarily meant to protest against corrupt tendencies among our own people, our own elite, our own leaders. But our leaders read nothing! Those of us who read seem not to understand Achebe's parables. He is frustrated in his ideas and methods, one may suspect.

In fact, the point that Achebe did not meet up with his goal, the point of his creativity, resulted in his change of tactic or led him to invoke his critical trait. It is via this critical wing of his talent as a writer that he makes himself clear to his audience. It is interesting to note that one of the few avatars of African literature, Charles E. Nnolim who has written more than ten essays on Achebe's works - enough to confer on him the title of Achebe's critic - states that “*The Trouble with Nigeria* is Achebe's non-fictional work written out of extreme frustration. It is a sort of 'last warning' by Achebe to his audience that seems hard of hearing” (4).

That is by the way. Let us make a little drawback. Whoever knows Chinua Achebe would be incomprehensively biographical of him where the former (as writer or biographer or citation persona of

Achebe) does not recognize his (Achebe's) controversial bias. Chinua Achebe is a vitriolic critic. And his temperament, as hot as it could be thought of, is understandable. Both the colonial master's rape and/or violence on Africans and the African leaders' corrupt activities can be annoying, to a thorough-bred statesman.

Achebe's committed spirit pushes him to the iconoclastically militant mood in his literary activism to wrestle up the soul of Nigeria (Africa) and the masses of Nigeria (Africa) from the vice-grip of the wicked colonial and/or neo-colonial masters as well as the corrupt hawks called Nigerian (African) leaders. Yes, his vituperative essays are, in the main, targeted at the European and American intruders and the selfish Nigerian, nay African, leaders. We shall begin with the former lesser-monster.

Chinua Achebe, one may predict, will never have forgiven the colonial masters' past and present activities on the continent. One needs not to be deceived from knowing that the Western enslaver is still living with us. So, Achebe says in his prefatory statement in his book, *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays – 1965-87*: “I am not so naïve to think that I have slain the monster of racist habit with one stroke of the essay” (x). Nothing is more provoking to Achebe than the fact that Europeans/Americans are 'incurable racists'. In his chapter entitled “Impediments to Dialogue between North and South,” he reminds us about the unbalanced kind of partnership existing between the North (Whites) and the South (Blacks). Here, he makes mention of an unnamed “British governor of Rhodesia [who] in the 1950s defined the partnership between Blacks and Whites in South Africa, without any apparent sarcasm, as a partnership between the horse and its rider!” (*Hopes* 15). For those who may not understand this fable, Achebe lets them know that while the horse represents beast, the rider does represent human. Then, what happens between the rider and his horse? There is no dialogue between them. It is the rider that determines or decides the direction of the journey and he does not have any patience to listen to his horse. Achebe laments:

For centuries, Europe has chosen the beastly alternative which automatically has ruled out the possibility of a dialogue. You can talk to a horse but you don't wait for a reply!... the white man has been talking and talking and never listening because he imagines he has been talking to a dumb beast. (15)

Such has been the relationship between Europe and Africa in its old and special way. One appreciates, therefore, why there is no social parity between the two races. Little wonder why Joseph Conrad's (racist) novel, *Heart of Darkness*, has disallowed people enjoying a dialogue but only to favour Europe with "the most brilliant monologue" (16).

For the European, the African is not qualified to be granted the privilege, talk more of rights or of his humanity, of being accorded the regard fit for a human being. For Albert Schweitzer's dictum during the heyday of colonialism was that: "The African is indeed my brother, but my junior brother" (*Morning* 3; *Hopes* 46). 'This is an insult!' one may overhear the echo of Achebe's roar. It might even be because of this utterance made by Albert Schweitzer that resulted in Chinua Achebe dropping his baptismal name, Albert! He takes exception to being a name-sake to the arrogant Europeans. Achebe does not see any scintilla reason why any European should claim superiority to an African.

Europe has always sought for one reason or the other to de-emphasise - in that apparent chauvinistic bent - any work done by the African. If they (Europeans) read any work by the African and where the former does not understand the cultural foregroundings into it, they would declare it as a bad book that the book does not have a 'universal' theme that inheres in a good book. This is why Achebe tells us; "I do have problems with universality" (*Morning* 3; *Hopes* 47), which Honor Tracy, Charles Larson, Philip M. Allen, Eldred Jones, *et cetera* would champion as a rule. These colonialist critics seem to be ignorant of the philosophy of individualism, as a way of life approved by an American poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a kind of culture immanent in the works by Africans. So, for those African writers - such as Ime Ikiddeh, Sunday Anozie, *et alii* - who, swayed by this universalist virus, laboured - as an apologist - to write on the so-called universal themes in order to appeal to the taste of the European audience. Achebe would advise to write on what is natural and cultural about us, Africans. He would charge the African writers not to allow colonialist criticism underrate African creative art and to see every thing good in the African brand of art, an art that weaves the earnest and the factual capital and the idiosyncratic cultural presence.

Be reminded that what Achebe tells us is that Europe does not mean well for us Africans. In his essay, "An Image of Africa," he uses Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to point out this Pole's attitude towards Africa and Africans. To show that Conrad is the epitome of the prejudiced whites, he starts by reminding us about:

The younger fellow from Yonkers, perhaps partly on account of his age but I believe also for much deeper and more serious reasons, is obviously unaware that the life of his own tribesmen in Yonkers, New York, is full of odd customs and superstitions and, like everybody else in his culture, imagines that he needs a trip to Africa to encounter those things. (*Joseph* 119)

This same Yonker, Achebe reminds us, misinformed the world to believe in him as an "erudite British historian and Regius Professor of Oxford and Huge Trevor Roper, [who would] a few years ago [would] crassly babble away, with some swagger], argue that African history did not exist" (119), in the manner Ruth Finnegan was wont to say that Africa had neither epic nor drama! They were all sojourners like Joseph Conrad who pretended not to see - as H. L. Mencken would honestly pity Conrad's "tragic vanity of the blind groping ... the profound meaninglessness of life" (qtd. in Nnolim, *Pessimism* 1) - and who refused to tell the truth. They were like Marco Polo, 'one of the greatest and most intrepid travellers of all time' who journeyed to the Far East from the Mediterranean in the 13th century and spent twenty years in the court of Kublai Khan in China only to return to Venice to write *Description of the World*, a book that contains nothing about the art of printing that was not yet known in Europe then; and in the book is found nothing in reference to the Great Wall of China, a wall that is well-nigh 4000 miles long and already more than 1000 years old at the time of his visit, a Great Wall of China as the only structure built by man which is visible from the moon (*Joseph* 127). Because of this great miss, or omission, Achebe is pleasantly surprised as he affirms thus: "Indeed, travellers can be blind" (127).

Since these travellers are always at their pretentious best, Conrad's blindness at the heart of Africa, blindness at the goodness of the people of Africa, is understandable. It is racism that blinded him. So, Achebe concludes that "Conrad was a bloody racist" (*Joseph* 124). This has been a popular description. The European is brashly proud and arrogant. Acknowledging the arrogant flaw of the European, Achebe has had this to say vis-à-vis the conspicuous deprivations which Conrad brings to bear in his much hyped about *Heart of Darkness* against Africans:

Of course, there is a preposterous and perverse kind of arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the breakup of one petty European mind. But that is not even the point. The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot.

Achebe refuses to stop there. He continues:

I would not call the man an artist, for example, who composes an eloquent instigation to one people to fall upon another and destroy them. No matter how striking his imagery or how beautiful his cadences fall, such a man is no more a great artist than another may be called a priest who reads the mass backwards or a physician who poisons his patients. (124)

Chinua Achebe is a literary warrior. He is a hero at that. He has exhibited unequalled commitment to liberating Africa. He has fought the whites, militantly. Achebe is a one-man squad! He would parable-like march in front of the battle rhetorically questioning with the aura of a committed spirit: "what does Africa mean to the world? When you see an African what does it mean to be a white man?" (Omotoso cites Echeruo xi). He finds nothing as a big deal being a white man which he, perhaps, would shout 'God forbid!' to...

It is now time we looked at Achebe's outrage at African (Nigerian) bad leaders. It is the disillusionment, disappointment, and nigh pessimism of the Nigerian masses, because of the betrayal and high handedness of their leaders after the hankered-for independence, that gave impetus to the writing of the mini book, *The Trouble with Nigeria*. The title of this book is eloquently instructive. Its chapter starts vehemently by blaming Nigerian leadership:

The trouble with Nigeria is simple and squarely a failure of leadership...The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples which are the hallmarks of true leadership. (1)

Because he does not find anything wrong with Nigerian character, land or climate or water or air or any thing else, he believes that she can change. So, he assures:

What I am saying is that Nigeria is not beyond change. I am saying that Nigeria can change today if she discovers leaders who have the will, the ability and the vision. Such people are rare in any time or place. But it is the duty of enlightened citizens to lead the way in their discovery and to create an atmosphere conducive to their emergence. If this conscious effort is not made, good leaders, like good money, will be driven out by bad. (1-2)

He believes we can have good leaders and competent leadership. He gives options: "if we cannot compel greatness in our leaders. We can at least demand basic competence. We can insist on good, educated leaders while we pray for great ones" (*The University* 19).

Our scholar, however, fingers tribalism as one of the banes of Nigeria's progress. He picks Chief Obafemi Awolowo as one of the tribalist leaders who stole away the Western House of Assembly in 1951 from Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. The consequences of that 'robbery' are better observed in his own words.

Someday when we shall have outgrown tribal politics, or when our children shall have done so, sober historians of the Nigerian nation will see that event as the abortion of a pan-Nigerian vision which, however ineptly, the NCNC tried to have and to hold. No matter how anyone

attempts to explain away that event in retrospect it was the death of a dream-Nigeria in which a citizen could live and work in a place of his choice anywhere, and pursue any legitimate goal open to his fellow; a Nigeria in which an Easterner might aspire to be premier in the West and a Northerner become Mayor in Enugu. (5)

Above is a lamentation about a local prejudice, a prejudice against a fellow Nigerian decorated as an 'outsider' or a 'stranger' in his own country? Out of fury of such mischievous culture as practised in Nigeria, Achebe is forthright in saying, as if cursing her:

Nigeria is *not* a great country. It is one of the most disorderly nations in the world. It is one of the most corrupt, insensitive, ineffective places under the sun. It is one of the most expensive countries and one of those that give least value for money. It is dirty, callous, noisy, ostentatious, dishonest and vulgar. In short, it is among the most unpleasant places on earth! (9-10) (emphasis is original)

What is more to be said? Nothing, we think, can be added.

But Chinua Achebe has more to point out. And they are quantum sensitive factors. Imagine that, according to him, "Nigeria... is a country where it would be difficult to point to *one* important job held by the most competent person we have. I stand to be corrected! (19, emphasis is original). Of course, he knows nobody can rebut him, for it is a disturbing popular truth.

Nevertheless, Achebe, and we, should never expect our brand of leaders not to give one excuse or another, no matter how flimsy, though. Yes, by the 80s, corruption had already announced its large presence, but then President Shehu Shagari publicly told Nigerians and foreigners that though Nigeria had acknowledged the spate of corruption in itself it had now reached an alarming proportion. Against this claim, Achebe reacts radically: "my frank and honest opinion is that anybody who can

say that corruption in Nigeria has not yet become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this country" (37). Well, it is a relative matter. Who knows the stage Shagari would want it to reach for it to become a national worry?

For Shagari, there was nothing corruptible in siting "five steel mills worth N4.5 billion on completion with estimated employment capacity of 100,000 by 1990, only in the North and West of the country" (49-50). It was a project carried by November 9, 1982 *National Concord* captioned "Wonders of Katsina Steel Mill" by one Ola Amupitan. The paper reports that against the journalist's question posed to the Minister, Malam Ali Makele, on why the project left out the Eastern South of Nigeria, the answer remains: "He said there was a mill affiliated to Aladja meant to sell steel products to Bendel, Cross River, Imo and Anambra." And for the Minister, he had given a satisfactory answer to Nigerians!

Just as Achebe is at controversy with Margery Perham for not understanding the Biafran case, and siding with the Federal; and Honor Tracy, Charles Larson, Philip Allen, Eldred Jones and other European individuals, for not being humble to appreciate the values of the Africans, so also he is not happy with some individual Nigerians. In fact, he makes his case known that he has drawn the battle line between himself and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Tai Solarin, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and some others. We have already discussed his problem with Awolowo – that he was a tribalist, who, had too much interest in getting everything to his kinsmen, the Yorubas. Then, about Achebe's case with Tai Solarin, he says in his preface: "In deciding to bring back that whole episode, *I have chosen to be accused of strident anger and nastiness...*" (our emphasis, xiii). Note that the point at issue was that Solarin lashed him by saying that it is "sickening reading Achebe defending English as our *lingua franca*." He accuses Achebe for so doing and alleges that Achebe uses English in order to have wider market for his books.

While replying to Solarin's letter, he does not mind using hard diction on his addressee. He seems to make a caricature of Mr Solarin:

But may I ask you one little question? If you are truly as sickened by a defence of English as you make out, why have you gone on week after week, year after year, in season and out of it, writing and publishing your newspaper column in

the same loathsome language?... And I guess the *Daily Times* pays you for throwing up this weekly mess.... (87-8)

Part of the above excerpt is where he cajoles Solarin for being “a little short of idea” of what is reasonable for him (Solarin) to do.

More shocking is Achebe's attack at Nnamdi Azikiwe, the great Zik of Africa. Achebe does not care whose ox is gored. He takes on Azikiwe, saying that the latter is the cause of the whole political problem the Igbo have suffered. Permit my more or less lengthy intermittent quotes:

But the problem with Azikiwe's political career in Nigeria or even his relationship with the Igbo has never been how to explain away one momentary lapse in an otherwise steady record of standing fast but rather how to account for a pretty consistent history of abandonments. Here was an eloquent revolutionary who inspired a whole generation of young idealistic activists in the Zikist Movement to the high pitch of positive action against colonial rule and then, quite unaccountably, abandoned them at the prison gate.

That is the first phase of abandonment. Achebe goes further to worry:

Here was a true nationalist who championed the noble cause of “one Nigeria” to the extent that he contested and won the first general election to the Western House of Assembly. But when Chief Awolowo “stole” the government from him in broad daylight, he abandoned his principle which dictated that he should stay in the Western House as Leader of the Opposition and give battle to Awolowo. Instead, he conceded victory to reactionary ethnic politics, fled to the East where he compounded his betrayal of

principle by precipitating a major crisis which was unnecessary, selfish and severely damaging in its consequences. (58)

That is the second abandonment. Yet, again, is the case of Professor Eyo Ita that Azikiwe robbed, unnecessarily:

Professor Eyo Ita, an urbane and detribalized humanist politician who had just assumed office as leader of Government Business in Enugu saw no reason to vacate his post for the fugitive from Ibadan. Neither did most of his cabinet which in sheer brilliance surpassed by far anything Enugu has seen or is likely to see again in a long time. Using his private-owned newspapers and political muscle, Azikiwe maligned and forced Eyo Ita and his team out of office and proceeded to pack his own cabinet with primary school teachers, ex-police corporals, sanitary inspectors and similar highly motivated disciples who were unlikely to dispute anything he said. So, the rule of mediocrity from which we suffer today received an early *imprimatur* in Eastern Nigeria, of all places! (58-9)

Ita's case has a more delicate angle to it. It is this issue that has brought the cold feud and lack of trust between the South and the East to this day. So, Achebe tells us – acting in the manner of those who are not afraid to die a martyr – how Azikiwe goofed:

And that was not all. Professor Eyo Ita was an Efik, and the brutally unfair treatment offered him in Enugu did not go unremarked in Calabar. It contributed in no small measure to the suspicion of the majority Igbo by their minority

neighbours in Eastern Nigeria – a suspicion which far less attractive politicians than Eyo Ita fanned to red-hot virulence, and from which the Igbo have continued to reap enmity to this day. (59)

Having proved how Azikiwe remains the very problem that has faced the Igbo community, our fearless scholar, while believing that Nigeria can still be salvaged and refocused, says that in order to eschew catastrophes of any kind, Nigerians “must take a hard and unsentimental look at the crucial question of leadership and political power” (59). He does not mince words as he declares that the politics of Azikiwe and Awolowo is defective:

There is no doubt in my mind that the continued dominance of major areas of Nigerian politics by Azikiwe and Awolowo is of negative value. Not because they are old men now, but because their political thought which is the mainspring of political action was always at the best of times defective. (59)

We hope that we have not forgotten that Achebe has said the above in the 80s. For these two political pundits are dead and buried for quite some years now. Unfortunately, things are not still right! Why? The simple answer is that the ship of Nigeria's leadership is still being ruddered by old men whose ideas are not only obsolete but to a large extent obnoxious, as they – the patriarchs – seem to drag us all back to the obsolescent dispensation marred with shibboleth policies! For as Achebe accuses Azikiwe as not good at desiring to choose and surround himself with talents (61), our present leaders do not make appointments based on expertise – a petro-chemical engineer can be appointed a Minister of Health, and we are chivvied to see nothing wrong with the mis-matching.

By now, it must have become clear that the current essay has been able to make clear not only that Chinualumogu Achebe's critical self is a more defining arm of his personality; More than this, the paper has been able to make the point on how Achebe has fought colonialism and poor leadership of Nigeria and Africa, using both his creative and critical weapons as a literary scholar. The work may be said to have pointed out

that after writing *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* to protest against colonialism and things that came with them, Achebe tends to have written such essays as; “Colonialist Criticism” and “An Image of Africa”, to bring his critical message of attacking the colonial masters and their racist bias closer to our noses; thus, after writing *No Longer at Ease*, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, all of which were written to fight tribalism, inefficiency and poor leadership, our people seemed not to get the message which further resulted in Achebe writing of controversially vitriolic essays that got published as *The Trouble with Nigeria*. All of his works seemingly adds up together to offer the germ theory for a desirable leadership which we all hanker for. In all these, Achebe's critical tool is more forceful as it is more biting and more result-oriented for change.

Chinua Achebe may be regarded as a votary of the Nigerian (African) novel, but he is electric and remarkable critic; he is a prodigious writer whose vitriolic critiques have not just brought some hard revelations on the political sphere but have also brought a turn-around in marching towards a positive, effective leadership in Nigeria and Africa. This paper, while making up the loop-hole in Achebe's literary personality by bringing up his hot latent critical complementarity, I would have been somewhat adaptative of Abiola Irele, for my title could have been thus: In praise of Chinua Achebe's Scholarship.

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