

Telling the African side of the Story: Proverb as a Crucial Element in Uchenna Nwosu's *The Rejected Stone*

Ikechukwu Emmanuel Asika*

Abstract

*Proverb is one of the elements of folklore. Like some other elements of folklore, proverb plays several significant and important roles in the literary works of writers who chose to blend their works with the touch of African oral tradition and also to give their creative works a stamp of uniqueness, authenticity, and identity as they reflect and project their culture, tradition, outlook, views and perceptions of a community that conditioned them even though they communicate in a language alien to them. These proverbs used in literary works, from study do not occur simply by accident, rather were incorporated for the significant role which they play in literary works. This paper studies the use of proverbs in Uchenna Nwosu's *The Rejected Stone*. The aim is to highlight on the roles, importance and significance of proverbs in written literature. Also to showcase how proverb serves as important tool of story-telling in the re-creation of a genuine and believable African side of story.*

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Introduction

Proverb has come to mean a lot and occupy a worthwhile position in the matrix of people's culture as a means of interpreting and understanding several phenomenon and events around them. In this regard therefore, irrespective of the level of sophistication, modernity and technological growth witnessed all around us today, proverb has continued to play prominent roles in debates, arguments, speech, sacred and secular events of the people both the literature and non-literate alike.

Several scholars have attempted to define proverb from the dimension and view point that is more appealing and encompassing to them. That has given rise to the bulk of definitions of proverbs found in many scholarly publications. From the bulk of definitions available, one could see how easy it is to say what a proverb is not than to comfortably say what a proverb is. In the words of Donatus Nwoga, proverb 'is a terse statement which figuratively gives expression to the point of traditional wisdom relevant to a given situation.' (16) Chinua Achebe views it as "the palm oil with which words are eaten. Emmanuel Obiechina perceives of proverb as 'the kernel which contains the wisdom of traditional people. They are philosophical and moral expositions shrunk to a few words, and they form a mnemonic device in societies in which everything worth knowing and relevant to day-to-day life has to be committed to memory (156). These definitions are very vital in illuminating the nature of proverb in society. It incorporated several key words and features which at all time will continue to reflect and define proverb. These include its terseness, tacit nature, philosophical and high moral expositions and its oral nature as part of the inherited tradition of a people.

In this same regard, Rems Umeasiegbo sees proverbs as any expression recognized by a people as embodying the wisdom and philosophy of their ancestors. He admitted that the definition has its pitfall but the strength lies in the words recognized by people as embodying the wisdom and philosophy of their ancestors. This he believes is important for an outsider cannot tell the people whose lore he is studying what a proverb is (19).

Onuekwuso Jasper summed up these definitions by looking at proverb from its major and peculiar characteristics. His definition could be seen as the most encompassing of all others already given as it touches almost all facets of the nature of proverb that make it often seem to elude a concrete

definition. He believes proverbs are popular, common and numerous. They are pleasant expressions which adorn the rhetoric of a people. It constitutes a part of the oral tradition of a people, which is unconsciously acquired from generation to generation. In his words, 'a proverb is a philosophical, allusive and metaphorical citation that gives credence to traditional truth and wisdom. It is allusive and metaphorical because it refers to some truth outside itself. It is philosophical because it is a product of a long period of reasoning and observation which expresses some timeless truth (17).

This is the much of the definitions and view points on what proverb is and entails, which we shall take in this study. The purpose is to have a comparative insight on what proverb is as a crucial and better way of introducing the issues this study hopes to analyze and to provide a yardstick and common ground for a more understanding and appreciation of proverbs as well as their importance and significance in literary works, especially as it relates to the work of Uchenna Nwosu under study.

Proverbs and its Signification in Written African Literature

Proverbs have become a tool which African writers use to justify the actions of characters, criticize bad ethical and immoral behaviors. Through the use of proverbs, African writers try to express the wealth of philosophy; wisdom and perception of life as they affect and control their communities. This wisdom and rich philosophical views were handed over to them from their ancestors and the use of them is a continuation and linkage between the past which brought the present to them and will in the long run determine the future. This is what marks them out and makes them distinct and peculiar from other communities. Proverbs help writers to express the belief, an outlook to life unique to their people. They encourage the right virtues in the community while condemning all the social

VICES. This is what proverbs have helped them to realize in the most succinct and appealing way. By incorporating them, African writers succeed in giving their works a touch of African beauty and it helps them to enhance the plot of their stories, sharpen their characterization and influence their story lines to suit their purposes.

A justification of this view could be clearly seen in Bernth Lindfors' assertion on Achebe and his use of proverbs in his famous essay. He believes that Achebe uses proverbs to reinforce the image of Okonkwo as a man who struggles with his chi (79). He went ahead to illustrate with copious examples from his novels *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, *No Longer at Ease* and *A Man of the People*. In the end he concludes

In a *Man of the People*, as in Achebe's other novels; proverbs are used to sound and reiterate major themes, to sharpen characterization, to clarify conflict and to focus on the values of the society Achebe is portraying. By studying the proverbs in a novel, we gain insight into the moral issues with which the actions of characters can be measured and evaluated. Proverbs help us to understand and interpret Achebe's novels. It is this last talent that enables him to convince his readers "that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value, and beauty, that they had poetry, and above all, they had dignity (92).

In his study, he was able to demonstrate how the proverbs used by Achebe tell us much about the values of Igbo society. It was on this same value that Okonkwo lived and

died. He clearly demonstrates how such proverbs serve as thematic statements reminding us of major motifs in the novels and how they serve as keys to a deeper understanding of his works. Linfors also studied the proverbs used in the drama of Wole Soyinka. He critically examined one after the other in line with the personality of the character who made use of it. On Wole Soyinka's use of proverbs, he concludes

Soyinka's proverbs are capable of carrying us to the heart of his drama. By studying how they function and what they mean in a play, we can gain not only a better understanding of his intentions but also a deeper appreciation of his art and craft as a playwright. Soyinka's plays reward this kind of study, for if proverbs are truly "horses of speech", Soyinka is undoubtedly one of Africa's greatest verbal equestrians (115).

Ngozi Ohakanma in her study of the significance of oral tradition in the works of Achebe observes that through proverbs Achebe depicts the communal nature of the Igbo traditional society ... This accounts for why we have this proverb in AOG: "When a man sees a snake all by himself, he may wonder whether it is an ordinary snake or the untouchable python ... (253)." These and many more proverbs abound in *Arrow of God*

African writers have been able to use proverbs in telling the African side of the story and several Igbo writers, like Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, John Munonye, Onuoha Nzekwu, Obi Egbuna, Flora Nwapa, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, J.O.J Nwachukwu-Agbada, Rems Umuasiegbu among others incorporated Igbo proverbs in their works to reflect their "Igboness" and to showcase the unique culture

values, traditions and norms of the people they write about. These proverbs from study did not appear only to reflect the 'Igboness' of the Igbo society but to fulfill other fictions, roles, and significance which proverbs perform in literary works. This is what we study in the selected work.

Proverbs in Uchenna Nwosu's *The Rejected Stone*

Like earlier stated, the works of Chinua Achebe are always treasured because of their exploration and exposition of the rich African culture, and oral tradition which folklore ranks among them. Other writers followed suit and adorned their works with the rich African oral tradition familiar to the writer within his a given geographical location and setting. This is part of what makes African literature great and has distinguished it from the bulk of other literature written in the English language. In the recent time, some African writers have continued to lace their works with the beauty of the African oral tradition. It is in this regard that this essay studies the use of proverbs in the novel of Uchenna Nwosu entitled *The Rejected Stone*. Uchenna Nwosu in his recent published full length novel, *The Rejected Stone* sets out to tell a story of a young girl Esther who became a victim of rape at a very tender age. The rape resulted to a pregnancy and all her attempts to abort the baby were unsuccessful. Each attempt rather threatens to claim her life. She later gave birth to the child, a son, Onochie whose coming changed the plot and direction of the story. Despite scorn, mockery and criticisms, Esther accepted the burden of the rape and the consequent pregnancy refusing to divulge the source of her pregnancy except to her most trusted companion, Ifyy. Esther became the proverbial rejected stone that later became the builder's choice. She never allowed the psychological trauma of the rape to depress her but rather after her delivery, she plunged into life and academics. She won a scholarship through the African – American institute to study in the University of Pennsylvania in

Philadelphia. There she could not cope with her arranged marriage with Samuel. She later met Bill and got married to him. Despite the loss of Bill in the end of the novel, Esther could be described as a virtuous and accomplished woman; a fastidious and enviable character; a unique and refined lady who knows what she wanted from life and went all out amidst mad struggle, failures and pursuit to achieve it.

Through the ordeals of Esther, Uchenna Nwosu was able to sound out one of his thematic messages in his work, which points at the fact that rape does not in any way mark the end of a devoted and planned life. Again is the idea of inter-cultural marriage which the author tried to encourage for it was Esther's marriage to Bill Whipple, a white man that bought her the peace that had eluded her all her life. Uchenna Nwosu was able to portray the multi-faceted parts of marriage peculiar to the African people which comfort, kinship, material wealth and family lineage are the most important factors and not love, respect and compatibility as practiced by the Western world. From arranged marriage, child-marriage to a whole lot of others. The author showcases the Africa side of life in contrast to the Western world. In all these, it is his abundant use of proverbs that triggered this study and forms the crux of our discussion.

The author made abundant use of proverbs in the novel. In all the actions that took place in Izada Una, a fictitious town in the Igbo community, proverbs replete the speech of characters, but not a single proverb was cited in all Esther's ordeal and escapades abroad. Part of the reason perhaps been in the fact that proverbs give a particular society identity and cultural uniqueness and in discussing the western world these proverbs become alien and were not used because a different culture and worldview has taken over. The moment Esther came back to finalize her marriage with Bill in the traditional way, the proverbs came flowing again marking a coming home to a culture, a people and a world well known and appreciated

by the author. This argument is only a part, a little insight on the author's use of proverbs. An important issue worthy of note is the fact that Uchenna Nwosu incorporated proverbs for several reasons and in a subtle way, blending the oral tradition with the written tradition just like Achebe, Nzekwe, Nwapa and few others have done in the past. Uchenna Nwosu's novel could serve as a typical example of how best the oral tradition could be recreated in the written form and in a foreign language too. He qualifies in Bernth Lindfors appreciation of African writers and their use of folklore material in their works: Bernth Lindfors expresses,

... Not every African writer yielded so completely to foreign or indigenous literary influence. Some tried to combine the two traditions artistically, welding European form to African matter so skillfully that no one could tell without careful inspection precisely how or where they had been joined. These were writers who began to contribute something new to world literature, for they were forgoing genuine links between the two disparate cultures Africans had inherited, one by birth, the other by education (27).

It is on this significant accomplishment of some Africa writers that we shall study Uchenna Nwosu and his use of proverbs in order to showcase and highlight the important and significant roles of the proverbs and how they function and serve as a key to understanding and interpreting several hidden meanings and thematic issues in the novel, *The Rejected Stone*.

Proverb as Plot Generator

From study, Uchenna Nwosu did not use proverbs, for the sake of using them and neither can one argue that these proverbs

were accidental in the context they appear. The argument here is that some of the proverbs the author used in the novel were used to generate and strengthen the plot of the story. Plot is the skeletal framework of a story, the backbone of any given creative work of art. It is the arrangement of actions and events, in a logical manner, each event gives rise to another, all of them leading to an inevitable end. In the novel, *The Rejected Stone*, it is apparently glaring that some proverbs were used by the author to develop, generate, build and strengthen the plot of his story. Others were used to anticipate the plot and future events, all leading to the inevitable but desired end of the story. We shall consider these proverbs as used in the novel in order to support the argument that some of the proverbs function significantly for the purpose of shaping the events and directing the plot and flow of the story:

The responsibility for lineage-preservation of Obi Amaefuna was thrust on her and she believed in the Igbo saying 'onye kwe, chi ya ekwe' (chi bends to the will of the determined) and she was determined to 'bend' her chi to secure the hub hearth of the extended Amaefuna family (58).

Context: The above proverb was cited by the author in the course of unfolding the inner thoughts of Nwudu. Following Esther's delivery of a bouncing baby boy, Nwudu who obviously was in dire need of a son for her only son, Samuel following Ekemulu's inability to produce a male child for his son abroad, saw Esther as an already made good to purchase, since she has no one claiming responsibility of her pregnancy. The author had cited this proverb to show Nwudu's line of thought, her determination to go against her chi to secure a male child which she did. The action led to Esther's being betrothed to Samuel abroad. Samuel was later to reject Esther when they met years later in Philadelphia because there was no love between them outside childhood fantasies. Also the

actions of Ekemulu to subdue Esther because of her male child; the disappearance of Onochie and lots of other events that took place in the novel were made possible by the use of this proverb that pointed at the cause of Nwudu's action and decision which in no small way affected the plot of the story and enhanced it.

Another example is:

Ogam, it is said that an animal that has an itch on its back runs its back on a tree, whereas a human with similar itch goes to another human to scratch it for him...

"Well, you know the winged termite is a delicious treat for a toad; she continued ...

"But the toad cannot fly to catch it ... Instead, the toad waits patiently for the termite to shed its wings and fall to the ground... "Well, the winged-termite has shed its wings", Nwudu added, rubbing her hands together in ecstasy (72).

Context: The above proverbs were cited by Nwudu as she tries to explain to Nwankwo the need to take action and marry Esther. This led to lots of bizarre and sequence of events in the novel, for Ekemulu who was earlier married to Samuel, in a child-marriage had failed to produce a male child, and the threat of Esther occupying all befitting positions in the family sets the peaceful home in disorder and disunity. Esther was later married to Samuel. This leads to lots of suspense that was finally quelled the moment Samuel rejected Esther and Nwudu disappeared with Onochie in her bid to preserve a son for his son following Samuel's death in a ghastly motor accident while returning to Nigeria. These were actions made possible with the use of these proverbs.

The last example we shall consider is:

It is better to look for a black sheep during the daytime, before it blends into the night (95).

Context: Following the proposed marriage and Esther, Ekemulu had gone to the elders of Obi Amaefuna, the agnate to demand for her entitlements even though she has no male child. This action and others were part of her effort to search for the black sheep during the daytime. This proverb also tries to justify the actions of Nwudu and some other characters in the novel, a situation that helps the action of the story to blend in the desired format and logical order which the author desired. Through these proverbs, the author was able to come to his desired end, however tragic and sorrowful the story may have ended on Esther's part. Thus, Uchenna Nwosu used proverbs to generate and strengthen the plot of his story.

The Use of Proverbs to Create and Resolve Conflict in *The Rejected Stone*

Proverbs were used in the novel to create some major conflicts which created suspense; heightened the plot; increased the reader's interest and stimulation, and led to the emotional purgation in the end. Proverbs were used in the novel to create and resolve conflicts generated by the actions and activities of some characters in the novel. The proverb about the termite that has shed its wings and is now a meal for the toad, earlier cited, portrayed part of Nwudu's plan not in the real sense of it to help Esther, but to exploit her son for the preservation of Afamenuna's lineage. This situation generated lots of tension between Ekemulu and her fears for Esther's domination. Esther on her part was afraid of her future in the hands of arranged marriage, and her rejection by Samuel confirmed her fears. This proverb and the consequent actions brought about several conflicts of interest in the novel.

Another proverb reads

“As the saying goes”, whenever a palaver poses, a response will be found”, Nwudu replied cryptically (73).

Context: Nwudu had cited this proverb when Okonkwo tried to caution her about her actions for Esther’s child belongs to her father since no one paid her bride price before her delivery. Nwudu aware of the conflict that the problem will generate in the near future gives this proverb to show her readiness to do anything.

Another proverb that followed up this is:

“Every town cooks with its special brand of firewood”. She replied (79).

Nwudu had cited this proverb again when the man he hired to write a letter to Samuel that Esther and her child now belong to him tried to find out whether Samuel consented to this strange marriage. She had given the proverb to show her determination to pursue her cause against all odds, irrespective of the dangers inherent in them. Following the death of Samuel, Nwudu ran away with Onochie, Esther’s son for fear that Esther’s family might claim him and he was never seen till the end of the story.

Here is another proverb:

“I guess the time has come to find out which is the male tortoise”, he mused.

Context: Okolo, a palm wine tapper had visited Ekemulu, newly married to a young boy she was over six times his age. Okolo knows that Ekemulu needs a man to father her children. That was when he cited this proverb. It is not a conflict

initially, for Ekemulu wanted him but it was later to become one when Nwudu discovered that Okolo has already impregnated Ekemulu. This is expressed in the following conversation:

If a snake doesn't bite as snakes do it runs the risk of being collected with bare hands... (91).

"Nne Dim, I was already keeping warm by the fire in anticipation of the cold hamarttan wind". (92).

The message Ekemulu was passing across was that she had already taken in. When Nwudu learnt of this, she had barred Okolo from entering her compound and doing any chores for her. The underlying reason which Ekemulu never found out was that Okolo was Nwudu's secret lover, and because she cannot bear the sight of sharing her secret lover with her that she banned Okoro from entering the compound ever again. This conflict and the consequent actions were made possible by Okolo's musing with his proverb. These rank among the proverbs with which Uchenna Nwosu used to heighten, create and achieve conflict and suspense in the novel, as one conflict triggers another, which inevitably leads to the other, in a logical manner, maintaining a high degree of suspense and interest till the novel came to the author's desired end.

Proverb as Tool of Criticism

In this section, we argue that Uchenna Nwosu used proverbs in his novel to criticize, condemn her characters when they deserve condemnation. This argument stems from the fact that proverbs more than spoken words carry more weight and potency than ordinary speech. An idea expressed naturally could be more impacting and appreciated when it is concise and expressed with a proverb. The reason is because proverb is highly respected and valued among the Igbo people as not

reflecting the immediate time but reflecting the wisdom and world view of our forefathers and ancestors in the time past. This is why proverb is more valued than ordinary speech and it's easily appreciated and hearkened to because it does not express our wisdom but that of our forefathers. Proverbs do not belong to us; it belongs to our forefathers, our ancestors in the time past. It is in this regard that Ojo Arewa and Alan Dundes speak of proverb thus:

Like other forms of folklore, proverbs may serve as impersonal vehicle for personal communication. A parent may well use a proverb to direct a child's action or thought, but by using a proverb, the parental imperative is externalized and removed somewhat from the individual parent. The guide or responsibility for directing the child is projected on to the anonymous past, the anonymous folk. A child knows that proverb used by the scolding parent was not made up by the parent. It is a proverb from the cultural past whose voice speaks truth in traditional terms. It is the "one", the "elders" or the "they" in "they say", who direct ... (70).

Thus, proverbs express the wisdom and thoughts of our forefathers and when applied for criticism, it serves a vital purpose of striking the culprit at the heart and will propel him for a change of action and attitude. Uchenna Nwosu used several proverbs to criticize, condemn and satirize the action of some characters in the hopes of instilling a change of attitude and mindset in them. In the novel, Ekemulu's father used lots of proverbs to criticize her over-stay in his house and to engineer her to marry a little boy, Samuel, a child-marriage plotted by Nwudu to ensure a continuity of her family lineage:

“Ekemulu, no child remains a child forever ...” He began... “She who cannot find what she wants should make do with what finds her”, he continued ... (86)

Context: Ekemulu’s father had cited these proverbs to criticize her continual over-stay in his house and to encourage her to marry a three-year old boy. Another example is seen in the elders admonishing of Nwudu:

“Elders do not upstage a child hunter in dividing out the game he has slain.” “At the same time, one mouth does not feast while another mouth is starving” (96).

The above proverbs were used to reprimand Nwudu and to compel her to favour Ekemulu with her own portion of her husband’s property irrespective of her inability to produce a male child which was the obvious reason she was married to Samuel. Here is another proverb:

“Both the kite and the eagle have a right of perch on the Iroko tree; may the one that wards off the other lose its wings (94).

This proverb was used in criticizing the actions of greedy and selfish men while projecting the need for communal life, love, oneness and togetherness in human existence and their relationship with one another.

He who is pursuing a snake is on a hunt; if he kills the snake he will eat pepper soup, if the snake bites him, he will go for treatment” (236).

Context: Esther had brought home Bill, a white man for traditional marriage protocols. The proverb had been used to admonish Moses, Esther’s father on the prospects and dangers of being an in-law to a white man.

This and few other proverbs were used by the author to criticize, mock and reprimand his character. By so doing his proverbs fulfilled part of the unique functions of proverb in the Igbo community in his literary work.

Proverb for Cultural Awareness/Preservation

The argument here is that proverbs in the novel of Uchenna Nwosu were used to give a stamp of identity, cultural superiority and uniqueness in his work. Literary artists write to reflect the realities of their time, environment, tradition, norms and beliefs that identity them and mark them out from other individuals and communities. Folklore projects the people's way of life, culture, attitudes, perceptions and values of life. Proverb is one of the ways which African writers showcase their rich African cultural heritage and uniqueness and superiority over all other communities. Chinua Achebe for one is reputed to have taken it upon himself to write *Things Fall Apart* in order to prove that we did not hear of culture for the first time from the Europeans. His use of proverbs from the Igbo lore was manifestations of this fact. Uchenna Nwosu in *The Rejected Stone* obviously used these proverbs for this obvious reason. By allowing his characters to use them, he seeks to revitalize and project the importance of his culture and tradition over all others as part of preserving the unique lore of his people. In this regard also, he uses proverb to achieve an oratory disposition and prove that his characters are unique and distinguished. It could be argued that the author made his characters use proverbs for the purpose of giving importance, aura, flavour, significance and authenticity to their speeches and by so doing, he gives them unique identity and personality as characters from the cultural location and background which he reflects and writes about, his Igbo community. This is in line with what Onwudiwe George said on the use of proverbs. He expresses that:

... to use proverbs is to economize words and yet make a pungent point. The Igbo people hold anyone that uses proverbs and uses them correctly in oral speech as orator. He is also seen as 'true son' of Igbo land as well as a scholar. Correct and frequent use of proverbs serve as a security device hence proverbs are veritable ingredients in communication, especially in Igbo (159).

Thus, Uche Nwosu used proverbs to attain the height of a good orator for himself and that of some of his characters. Examples of this abound in the novel. Let's consider this example, cited when Ekemulu brought her case to the agnates of Afamefuna family:

It is said that when an animal itches on its back, it rubs the back on a tree; when a person has a similar itch, he seeks out a fellow human to scratch the back", she continued. "When a female goat is brought to a billy goat for insemination, one must protect the female goat from being gored", she continued ... "It is better to look for a black sheep during the day time, before it blends into the night ..." she continued to make her case ... "Indeed, it is said that "ours is ours, but mine is mine (95).

In many speeches of Nwudu, Okonkwo, Ekemulu and few others, proverbs replete their statement, distinguishing them and marking them out as unique personalities who have not lost touch with their culture at the same time the author preserves this tradition and heritage for the outside world and the future generation.

Proverbs for Moral and Thematic Purpose

Every work of literature has a message, an idea which the writer hopes to pass across to the readers which in the end becomes the thematic and moralistic message of the work. Early literary work is an embodiment of hidden meanings which the reader ought to search and search; looking beyond the seen to the unseen; paying attention to every detail no matter how insignificant which will unfold several hidden meanings and aid a deeper understanding of the messages and moral lessons the author hopes to convey.

Uche Nwosu incorporated many proverbs to enforce the themes of his work and project the morals which ought to guide people and society for a more harmonious, codified and idyllic society. Such proverbs reflect the values of Igbo society; the values which the people live and die for. They serve as thematic statements and remind the reader of some of the major motifs in the novel. These moral views include the need for equity, fairness, justice and love in society. Also is the importance of hard work, patience, diligence, humility and doggedness as lasting virtues in life. Examples in the novel include:

As our elders say, the treetop belongs to both the eagle and the kite. May the one that denies the other a perch lose its wings (84).

“It is said that an ember placed in a child’s palm by an adult does not burn the child ...” (87).

“Elders do not upstage a child-hunter in divvying out the game he has slain ...” “At the same time, one mouth does not feast while another is starving (96)

“Whoever comes to us as a stranger must leave us as a friend” (241)

“As both sides of the buttocks bump on each other, my neither side knock out the other ... (96)

These and many other proverbs point on the themes and moral lesson of the novel: the need for love, togetherness, justice, hard work, optimism, doggedness, determination and sincerity of purpose as well as acceptance of fate. All these are parts of the message which the author hopes to convey and make more potent with the use of proverbs.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we have seen how proverbs have come to be a crucial element of storytelling. Proverbs used in creative works of African writers do not occur by accident rather were being used for specific roles, and significances which they perform in the African culture. Critics have argued and brought out the obvious reasons Achebe and some other writers made use of proverbs in their works. This study has demonstrated how proverb is one of the effective tools and ingredients that make the work of Uchenna Nwosu pleasing and of great interest to the readers. He used proverb to build and strengthen his plot; to create conflict which enhanced his suspense and degree of responsiveness from actions of his characters. Also he incorporated proverbs to preserve the culture and tradition of his people and project their individual uniqueness above others, and to distinguish his characters. Finally with proverbs, Uche Nwosu reinforces his thematic and moral issues, thus placing proverbs at the very centre of Africa creative writing in the bid of writers to recreate a true African picture and tell a genuine African side of the story in the whole framework of life and human existence.

***Ikechukwu Emmanuel Asika** lectures in the Department of English Language and Literature, Anambra State University, IgbariamCampus.

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