

Principles of Literary Study  
[pls21.blogs.rutgers.edu](https://pls21.blogs.rutgers.edu)

Prof. Andrew Goldstone

([andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu](mailto:andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu))

Office hours: Mondays 2:00–3:00 or by appointment

April 19, 2021. Achebe (2).

next

- ▶ Achebe exercise due (choose a passage in pts. 2–3)
- ▶ try to finish the novel
- ▶ Gikandi chapter: will discuss on Monday with Quayson

## point of (re)view

- ▶ external narrator, external focalizer: the eyes of Umuofia
- ▶ “the nine villages *and even beyond*”: the eye on the eyes of Umuofia
  - ▶ “The world is large,” said Okonkwo. (74)
- ▶ Ikemefuna’s death
  1. CF (Okonkwo): Ezeudu’s warning (57)
  2. CF (Nwoye), CF (Ikemefuna): the elders come (57)
  3. CF (Nwoye): Ikemefuna taken away (58)
  4. CF (Ikemefuna): Ike’s increasing inwardness (59)
  5. “As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away.” (61)

## reported discourse

direct reporting verb + verbatim speech

“How much longer do you think you will live?” she asked. (75)

indirect reporting verb + complement clause (tense/person match matrix clause)

He told Ear that he was still alive. (75)

Only then did she realize, with a start, that Chielo had stoped her chanting. (103)

free indirect no reporting verb, tense/person match discourse matrix

But Chielo's voice was still a long way away. Had she been running too? (103)

His hands trembled vaguely on the black pot he carried. Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear? Ikemefuna felt his legs melting under him. And he was afraid to look back. (60–61)

- ▶ Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear?

His hands trembled vaguely on the black pot he carried. Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear? Ikemefuna felt his legs melting under him. And he was afraid to look back. (60–61)

- ▶ Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear?
- ▶ Ikemefuna wondered why Okonkwo had withdrawn to the rear.

His hands trembled vaguely on the black pot he carried. Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear? Ikemefuna felt his legs melting under him. And he was afraid to look back. (60–61)

- ▶ Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear?
- ▶ Ikemefuna wondered why Okonkwo had withdrawn to the rear.
- ▶ Ikemefuna wondered, “Why has Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear?”

reported discourse, irony

Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell. (53)

## reported discourse, irony

Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell. (53)

- ▶ [The narrator tacitly denies that it is certain that it is right to be masculine and violent.]

## reported discourse, irony

Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell. (53)

- ▶ [The narrator tacitly denies that it is certain that it is right to be masculine and violent.]

Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak. (61)

## reported discourse, irony

Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell. (53)

- ▶ [The narrator tacitly denies that it is certain that it is right to be masculine and violent.]

Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak. (61)

- ▶ [The narrator tacitly casts doubt on Okonkwo's belief that his action will prevent him being thought weak.]

## rhetorical irony: definition

Verbal irony consists in echoing a tacitly attributed thought or utterance with a tacitly dissociative attitude. (272)

Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, “[Relevance Theory](#),” in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence Horn and Gregory Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 272.

When he was a child his mother had told him a story about it. But it was as silly as all women’s stories. Mosquito, she had said, had asked Ear to marry him... (75)

## rhetorical irony: definition

Verbal irony consists in echoing a tacitly attributed thought or utterance with a tacitly dissociative attitude. (272)

Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, “[Relevance Theory](#),” in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence Horn and Gregory Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 272.

When he was a child his mother had told him a story about it. But it was as silly as all women’s stories. Mosquito, she had said, had asked Ear to marry him... (75)

**proposition** All women’s stories are silly.

**embedding 1** Okonkwo believes that all women’s stories are silly.

**embedding 2** The narrator tacitly rejects Okonkwo’s belief that all women’s stories are silly.

## women's stories: breakout groups

Consider the story of Tortoise and the feast in the sky (chap. 11, pp. 96–99). What is this doing here? The handout gives you some ways to approach it.

- ▶ Discuss in small groups for about 15 minutes. Choose specific sentences you'd like everyone to focus attention on.

## whole-class discussion

- ▶ Each group note-taker should present for their group.
- ▶ Then you may all feast, or at least head off to your next activity.