

Thematic Study of Chinua Achebe's Novel

Dr. Uzma Javed

Associate Professor, Department Of Humanities, Ashoka Institute Of Technology And Management
Varanasi, India

Abstract:

Chinua Achebe in his writing describes the experience of Africa and Nigeria during the precolonial, colonial and post colonial and he is widely known as the representative African novelist who in his novels not only shows how the history of Nigeria in his work but also displayed various narrative techniques in order to make his work more commendable and interesting for the readers. He does not provide the emotional slavery subject, he shows the economic, culturally and emotionally changes in Africa at the front. His stories gives the insight of the traditional paradigm as well as the modern changes that occurs in the African society. He presents the African life in a very realistic and credible pictures as an insider point of view. He prides in himself as being the teacher of the Nigerian society as according to him writers plays an important role in changing the paradigm of the society.

Keywords: post-colonial literature, economic changes, historical and political fiction; corruption, colonialization, Igbo culture.

INTRODUCTION:

Achebe overall has written five novels between the period of 1958 and 1966, he published his four novels which is 'Things Fall Apart' (1958), 'No longer at ease' (1960), 'Arrow of God' (1964) and 'A man of the people' (1966) and then in (1987), he published his fifth novel 'Anthills of the savannah'. Apart from these he also wrote four anthologies of essays for children in both English and Igbo languages. Some novels are the continual of the stories in his previous novels such as 'Things fall apart' and 'No longer at ease' where we see the story of the two generations of okankuro and his Grandson obi, these novels have a historical and political fictional basis beginning with the time when britishers came into Africa till the tune when they left and what impact has done this colonialization on the minds of an African people. As Bernth Lindford points out: "Achebe novels read like chapters in a biography of his people and his nation since the coming of the white man" (Lindfords, Bernth "Chinua Achebe and the historical novel; 1980).

IMPORTANCE AND JUSTIFICATION:

He thinks it as a necessary task to rewrite the post of African life in order to restore the lost dignity of the African. Achebe shows how the African community has lost its value due to corruption and the loss of values that set in Nigeria soon after the end of first assembly in 1966. In his last novel 'The Anthills of the savannah' Achebe want his readers to emphasis on the power of traditional roots and stresses on the need to return to its roots. He wanted to change the old British concept. Achebe as insider in his first novel shows the destructive impact of Europeans coming into an Igbo culture which has been translated nearly into forty

five languages. He uses various Igbo proverbs, songs, figures of speeches in order to enrich his content and use various narrative strategies. As a good writer he does not only narrates the positive but also highlights the negative aspects of the native African culture. David Cook points out: “He prefer to reveal the darker side of both traditions as well as the better side and leaves us to draw our own conclusions” (Cook, David –“The centre holds, A critical view,1977”)

Achebe’s Novels:- Achebe second novels, “No longer at ease” is seen as a sequel to the previous novel, which shows the Nigerian society during the time of colonialism, on the verge of independence. Achebe uses a third person narrative in this novel to show the decline of morality and social values into the African and Nigerian society. Obi Okonkuro is seen as a grandson of Okonkuro who is set in both English and Igbo culture and could not been able to meet up the demands of other society. As he is an Igbo but got an education form the British university and came back to his home to be a civil servant. He wanted to prove himself as a honest and hardworking person but in turn becomes corrupted as he could not been able to meet up the demands of his family and for the repayment of his scholarship money, he took a bribe, as he could not been able to reconcile with his traditions and moreover he feel in love with an Osu, whose name is Clara, she belongs to a lower class against whom Obi parents could not been able to accepts as he succumbs to parental pressure against his marriage to Clara. Like okonkuro, obi also become a victim of the cultural conflict but he only difference is that it is much more psychological rather than physical. Obi is caught between the two major communities as he could not leave his traditional values as well as could fully assimilated with western ideals. So he got confused in his own predicament and pressure has been put on him in which he took the bribe and was sent to a jant: Achebe does not only blame the Europeans for this change in African paradigm but he thinks that parthy the people of African themselves has been responsible as they could not been able to stick to their traditional society and it is their weakness of the society: He shows that how people has lost their morality. This morality and spiritual loss has been shown by Achebe in his novel “No Longer at ease” in which the protoganise got lost in the moderns world and losses his cultural and traditional valves. He sed a flashback technique in this novel to highlight his past experiences and how he was sent to a jail and put into a trial. The novel opens in a court scene where obi has been put on a trial for his corruption offence and though him, Achebe points out the confusion and fickle mindedness which is rampant among the youth at that time which put novel also contains a number of proverbs used by many characters in the novel such as village elders the members of the Union at Lagos Obi himself.

In his third novel which is ‘Arrow of God’ Achebe goes back to his 1920’s in which the hero a chief priest of an Ibo snake cult falls as a victim to the moderns times as Ezeula come with and innovations of the outside world into his church which makes him as well as some of his followers angry. This novel is seen as one of the Achebe’s successfully novels in which he uses the characterization of the people in a very deep sense with full of ‘ambiguity’. The novelist in this novel is addressing the African as well as the European culture audience and tries to show the conflict of the culture in a powerful, realistic and convincing manner. Achebe’s narrative power in this novel is also noteworthy. The use of language and proverbs enrich the novels and various public speeches, conversations and rituals are also significant. The use of proverb gives the novel depth and unity to his narrative. Berth Lindford “In ‘Arrow of God’ was played out against the backdrop of the colonial drama in Nigeria”(Lindfords, Bernths, Chinua Achebe and the historical novel, 1986,pg.24)

In *Anthills of Savannah*, the main theme which runs in the novel is the power versus powerlessness in which we saw the political crises in Kangan and this novel is seen as a reformation of women and upgrading their supremacy and dignity from the traditional myths. He gave the women power in the novel by freeing them from the patriarchal subordination but at the same time he does not affect the Nigerian traditional values as described fictionally in chapter Eighteen of the novel. In 'Man of the people' we all see the changes in the attitudes of Africans towards African society and they feel proud to be an educated Africans, he says that we are away Cambridge, Oxford or Harvard but we alienates from them in their rich and ancient culture which makes him above his people.

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