

**ACHEBE'S ENDEAVOUR IN STREAMLINING THE
AFRICAN ETHOS: A STUDY OF HIS TRILOGY****Swetanjali Pradhan**

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Abstract:

Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease, and Arrow of God are the three books that make up Chinua Achebe's trilogy, which serves as a profound literary investigation of the African ethos amid the stormy time of colonialism. Achebe does an excellent job of capturing the intricate relationship that exists between traditional African culture and the growing influence of Western colonial forces. By providing a story that challenges the imperialist perspective, Achebe presents Africa not as a "dark continent" waiting for civilization but rather as a place with its own rich traditions, values, and social structures. This is accomplished through his detailed representation of Igbo society. In Things Fall Apart, Achebe introduces readers to the figure of Okonkwo, a symbol of traditional African strength and perseverance who sadly struggles with the changes imposed by colonial control. Okonkwo confronts these changes at a time when things are falling apart. The story of No Longer at Ease moves its attention to a new generation, which is embodied by Okonkwo's grandson Obi. Obi is stuck between the competing demands of his indigenous background and the expectations of a society that has become more Westernized. Arrow of God dives even farther into the spiritual and political conflicts that develop as a result of colonial authority undermining indigenous belief systems and governance structures. The purpose of this research is to investigate Achebe's efforts to simplify and give expression to the African ethos that is contained within his trilogy. This article investigates the ways in which Achebe's storytelling techniques, character development, and thematic themes lead to a more nuanced understanding of the cultural and psychological effects that colonialism had on African communities while it was in existence. Achebe's role in recovering African identity and history from the distortions of colonial narratives is going to be highlighted via the analysis of these works in this research. The goal of the study is to provide a more realistic depiction of Africa's past and its current battles for self-definition.

Keywords: Achebe's, Streamlining,, African Ethos

Introduction:

Chinua Achebe, who is sometimes referred to as the "father" of contemporary African literature, has left an everlasting effect on the world of literature via his thorough investigation of African culture, history, and identity. His body of work, in particular his well-known trilogy, which consists of Things Fall Apart (1958), No Longer at Ease (1960), and Arrow of God (1964), serves as a potent counter-narrative to the colonial discourse that has long dominated the portrayal of Africa. It is not only that Achebe's writings contradict the stereotyped images of Africa, but they also offer a profound and introspective look into the intricacies of African society, particularly in the face of colonial encroachment. The events that take place in Achebe's trilogy take place in Nigeria at a period of time when colonial powers were actively exerting their authority, which resulted in tremendous social, cultural, and political changes. Each of the three

novels, despite the fact that they have a common theme, each of them addresses a distinct facet of the African experience during this time of transformation. *Things Fall Apart* is a novel that concentrates on the pre-colonial existence and the first experience with colonialism. It provides a comprehensive depiction of Igbo culture and the principles that it upholds. This theme is continued in *No Longer at Ease*, which examines the post-colonial struggle of a young Nigerian who is stuck between the demands of a Westernized and bureaucratic environment and the expectations of traditional Nigerian culture. As traditional authority and religious rituals are increasingly weakened by colonial control, *Arrow of God* looks into the spiritual and political issues that occur as a result of this situation. In these works, Achebe's goal is not just to convey a story; rather, he is attempting to recover the African narrative from the distortions that colonial history has introduced. Achebe's goal is to restore the dignity of African culture by showing it as a multifaceted, dynamic, and capable of reflection and self-criticism. He accomplishes this by employing indigenous language, rich characterizations, and cultural references in his writing. His body of work functions as a platform for post-colonial discourse, a literary struggle against the erasure of African identities, and a way of preserving cultural traditions. The purpose of this research is to investigate how Achebe's trilogy simplifies and articulates the African ethos, therefore offering a comprehensive perspective of the cultural and psychological effects of colonialism. Through this discussion, we will investigate the ways in which Achebe's narrative techniques, thematic concerns, and character depictions lead to a more profound understanding of the African experience, both in the past and in the present. The purpose of this research is to highlight the significant influence that Achebe had in the development of African literature as well as his enduring impact in the struggle against cultural imperialism.

The African Ethos in Achebe's Trilogy:

The trilogy written by Chinua Achebe provides a comprehensive representation of the African ethos, particularly the Igbo culture, as it struggles to cope with the disturbances that were brought about by colonialism. In the course of writing these three books, Achebe illustrates the resiliency, strength, and complexity of African communities, while simultaneously drawing attention to the weaknesses that these societies exhibit when confronted with forces from the outside world. However, despite the fact that his work is profoundly anchored in the oral traditions, communal values, and spiritual beliefs that characterize the Igbo way of life, it does not shy away from confronting the internal tensions and issues that emerge within these communities.

Things Fall Apart is a novel written by Chinua Achebe that introduces readers to a civilization that is rich in culture and complexity, the norms, rituals, and religious beliefs of which are unique to the society. In Igbo culture, the traditional virtues of masculinity, honor, and hard labor are highly revered. The protagonist, Okonkwo, exemplifies these characteristics and lives them. On the other hand, Achebe also reveals the shortcomings that are inherent to this society, most notably the inflexible gender roles and the brutality with which individuals like as Okonkwo cope with failure and weakness. This delicate equilibrium is thrown off by the advent of European missionaries and colonial authorities, which ultimately results in the collapse of the social fabric and the final fall of Okonkwo. Achebe's depiction of this shift not only highlights the disastrous influence that colonization had on indigenous cultures, but it also illustrates the fundamental tensions and contradictions that are present within the traditional system itself.

With the release of *No Longer at Ease*, the focus switches to a new generation of Africans who find themselves torn between the expectations of their traditional culture and the needs of a world that is fast

changing. In the story, Obi Okonkwo, the main character, is a hybrid of two different worlds: Following his education in England, he goes back to Nigeria with the intention of making a positive contribution to the growth of his nation. However, he quickly comes to the realization that his Western education and beliefs not only differentiate him from his family but also from the corrupt bureaucracy that he comes into contact with. It is via the use of Obi's tale that Achebe investigates the disillusionment and moral conundrums that post-colonial African elites are confronted with. These elites are attempting to negotiate the competing demands of tradition and modernity. The work is a reflection of the larger issues that Africans experienced in the aftermath of colonial control, including conflicts over identity, allegiance, and the maintenance of cultural traditions.

Arrow of God is a work by Achebe that digs more into the political and spiritual aspects of the African ethos. The protagonist of the book is Ezeulu, who is the main priest of Ulu, a god that is worshipped by a number of different communities. Ezeulu's position as a spiritual leader positions him at the center of the community's identity and governance; nevertheless, his authority is being progressively challenged by the administration of the British colonial government as well as the growing influence of Christianity. Achebe depicts the struggle that Ezeulu goes through in order to keep his authority and safeguard the traditions of his people in the face of these external assaults. Furthermore, the story delves into the topic of theological and cultural syncretism, as well as the internal divides that serve to undermine the community's resistance against colonial power. An illustration of the great spiritual and existential crises that colonialism brought to African communities is provided by Achebe in the catastrophic collapse of Ezeulu.

Achebe's Narrative Techniques:

Within the context of his trilogy, Achebe's storytelling style is an essential component in effectively communicating the African spirit. For the purpose of establishing his narratives as part of the oral traditions of the Igbo people, he makes use of a wide range of methods, such as the utilization of songs, folk tales, and proverbs. The significance of storytelling in African communities is brought to light by the fact that these components not only contribute to the enhancement of the story but also serve as a way of preserving cultural traditions. Achebe's use of language is particularly noteworthy because, despite the fact that he writes in English, he integrates Igbo words, phrases, and idioms. In doing so, he challenges the supremacy of the colonial language and asserts the significance of indigenous languages in literary works.

As an additional point of interest, Achebe's method of character development is extremely empathic, which enables readers to see the world through the perspectives of his African heroes. He shows his characters with all of their intricacies, strengths, and weaknesses, rather than idealizing them or their society. He does not idealize his characters or their culture. This complex picture contributes to the humanization of African communities, which is a response to the dehumanizing caricatures that have frequently been reinforced over the course of Western writing.

Within the framework of his trilogy, Achebe also makes use of a cyclical narrative structure, which is reflective of the cyclical cycle of time in African mythology. The use of this framework makes it possible to conduct a more in-depth investigation of topics like as continuity, change, and the transmission of values from one generation to the next. The concept that the challenges that Achebe's characters go through are not isolated episodes but rather are a part of a larger, continuing process of cultural negotiation and

adaptation is reinforced by the fact that some motifs and topics are repeated across all three of Achebe's novels.

The Impact of Achebe's Trilogy on Post-Colonial Literature:

The trilogy written by Chinua Achebe not only serves as a comprehensive investigation of the African ethos, but it also had a considerable impact on the development of post-colonial literature. The writings of Achebe are essential in reorienting the narrative away from a Eurocentric viewpoint and toward one that places African voices, experiences, and opinions at the center of the presentation. His trilogy has motivated a new generation of African authors and academics to critically engage with local histories, cultures, and identities, frequently opposing the prevailing narratives that were imposed by colonial forces.

The importance that Achebe's work had in the decolonization of African literature is one of the most prominent repercussions that came from his body of work. A significant portion of African literature that was published in English prior to the time of Achebe was significantly inspired by colonial themes, and it frequently portrayed Africa through the lens of Western ideology and Western stereotypes. In instance, *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe was a breakthrough work because it depicted pre-colonial African civilization as being intricate, structured, and had its own set of value systems. Achebe countered the prevalent view of Africa as a savage and uncivilized continent that is in need of redemption from the West by offering a representation of African life before to the advent of Europeans that was both realistic and dignified.

The constant emphasis that Achebe placed on the significance of language in post-colonial writing was another factor that left an indelible mark. He made the renowned argument that African writers should use English as a medium to portray African experiences, but they should do it in a way that reflects the rhythms, idioms, and cultural subtleties of African languages. He was a proponent of this idea. Not only did this technique add African linguistic aspects to the English language, but it also demonstrated the validity and vitality of African cultures within the context of the global community. In the same way that other post-colonial writers attempted to imbue their work with the linguistic and cultural richness of their own nations, Achebe's use of language became a model for others to follow.

The issues of identity, cultural strife, and the effect of colonialism that are handled in Achebe's trilogy have also found widespread resonance in post-colonial writing. His depiction of individuals who battle with the contradictions between tradition and modernity, community and individuality, and the local and the global has offered a framework for comprehending the intricacies of post-colonial identity. His representation of these characters has been important in bringing about this understanding. Achebe's nuanced study of these topics has impacted authors not just in Africa but also in other parts of the world that have suffered colonialism, such as the Caribbean, South Asia, and Latin America. This is because all of these regions have been affected by colonialism.

In addition, the work of Achebe was instrumental in the formation of a critical discourse concerning post-colonialism around the world. In addition to his novels, he has written articles and conducted interviews, all of which have contributed to the formation of conversations concerning the function of literature in the process of decolonization, the obligations of the post-colonial writer, and the politics of representation. An example of this would be Achebe's criticism of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which spurred significant discussions about racism and the portrayal of Africa in Western literature. These arguments encouraged a more critical and self-reflective approach to the study of literature and culture.

Contemporary Relevance of Achebe's Trilogy:

The trilogy written by Achebe continues to be extremely pertinent in modern conversations on identity, globalization, and the preservation of cultural traditions. In a world that is becoming more linked, where the forces of globalization continue to undermine local cultures and identities, Achebe's investigation of the conflicts that exist between the global and the local provides vital insights. The work that he has done serves to bring to our attention the significance of cultural continuity and the necessity of preserving a conversation between modernity and tradition, rather than permitting one to obliterate the other.

In addition, Achebe's depiction of the psychological and societal effects of colonialism continues to reverberate in post-colonial cultures that are still struggling with the remnants of colonial authority. The concerns of cultural displacement, identity crisis, and corruption that Achebe explores in his books are still relevant in many areas of the world today. Achebe's writings are a great source of inspiration. The reader is prompted to contemplate the enduring repercussions of colonialism as well as the continuing fights for cultural and political sovereignty by his body of work.

In addition, the present significance of Achebe's focus on the significance of storytelling as a method of conserving and conveying culture must be taken into consideration. In an era in which there is a rising worry about cultural homogeneity, the work of Achebe serves as a reminder of the potential of literature to maintain cultural variety and to develop a deeper awareness of diverse ways of living. The readers of his books are encouraged to take the time to listen to the narratives of other people, to acknowledge the significance of many cultural viewpoints, and to understand the depth of the cultural legacy that exists all around the world.

Achebe's Legacy and Influence:

This trilogy by Chinua Achebe not only had an impact on the development of African literature, but it also had an impact on how people throughout the world saw African history and identity. His writings have served as a source of motivation for a new generation of African authors, who are continuing to investigate topics such as cultural authenticity, colonialism, and modernism. It is essential for African voices to be heard in global discourse, as Achebe's emphasis on the significance of storytelling in the process of constructing history demonstrates. Achebe has ensured that the complexity of African communities be acknowledged and valued by rescuing African stories from the distortion that was caused by colonial powers. His trilogy continues to be an important part of the study of post-colonial literature because it provides insights on the enduring challenges and resiliency of African cultures in the face of great change. In a nutshell, the work of Achebe is more than just a literary triumph; it is a deep cultural intervention that continues to reverberate in the continuous search for African self-definition and dignity.

The misrepresentation of the O/other in Arrow of God (1964)

The bond that exists between a father and his son, in addition to the ramifications that are associated with the process of othering, serves as the foundation of Achebe's novel *Arrow of God*. Ezeulu, the Chief Priest of Umuaro, is ready to comprehend the Other, in contrast to his people. It is for this reason that he sent his son Oduche to study about the new religion and the habits of the white man. Over time, his apprehension of integration causes him to question the decision he had previously made: "But now Ezeulu was becoming afraid that the new religion was like a leper." Permit him to shake your hand, and he will want to embrace

you. According to Achebe (2010): 330, "Ezeulu had already spoken strongly to his son, who was becoming steadily more peculiar with each passing day." When the high priest's other son Nwafo explains to Ezeulu that the bell is the one that invites people to abandon their yam and coco-yam in order to attend to church, the high priest connects the bell with "the song of extermination". Captain T. K. Winter bottom, for his part, is irate because of the order he is given to ensure that native control is maintained in Africa. He believes that the people in command at the center are completely oblivious to the reality that is occurring on the field, and he says, "Words, words, words." Civilization, African intellect, African atmosphere. Was there ever a time when His Honor rescued a guy who was buried alive up to his neck and had a piece of roasted yam placed on his head in order to attract vultures? It is. When Winter bottom recalls how the attempts to establish native control led to bribery and an exploitative system, he appears to conveniently forget that the indigenous had done nothing but emulate the rule of white men. This is something that Winter bottom seems to overlook. Along the same lines, it is clear that Mr. Wright has a sense of his own superiority and a deep-seated hatred for the indigenous. He says, "Many of them were, of course, bone lazy and could only respond to severe handling." On the other hand, if you came to terms with them, they might be rather entertaining" (363). Obika and his companion Ofoedu arrive late to work on the new road, and Mr. Wright does not hesitate to whip Obika or to name them all "black monkeys" (Achebe 2010: 369). This occurs when Mr. Wright is dealing with the situation. A visitor at this year's festival would leave believing that Umuaro had never been more unified in all of its history, as the narrator of Arrow of God observes: "A stranger to this year's festival might go away thinking that Umuaro had never been more united in all of its history" When Moses Unachukwo informs his people that there is nothing they can do to escape the influence of white men, he says, "[...] I knew there was no escape." In the same manner that sunshine drives out darkness, the white man will ultimately drive away all of our traditions. The numbers.

At the meeting of the age group that Obika and Ofoedu belong to, Nweke Ukpaka makes an effort to make its members comprehend that the dread of the unknown causes individuals to behave in a particular manner. He says, "What a man does not know is greater than he." Those of us who want Unachukwo to go forget that none of us are able to really say "come" in the language that is spoken by white people. We ought to take his counsel into consideration". The entire misunderstanding that led to Ezeulu's collapse is based on a lack of communication and on the misrepresentation of the other: Captain Winter bottom wishes to make Ezeulu chief over the entire village, but the content of his message is completely misunderstood on the road to accomplishing this goal. As a result of Winter bottom's interpretation that Ezeulu's unwillingness to arrive is a gesture of defiance and disdain, he writes an arrest warrant for him and then becomes unwell. His dissatisfaction with his own people is mirrored in his attitude toward them: "As long as he was in exile, it was easy for Ezeulu to think of Umuaro as one hostile entity" This is because Ezeulu's refusal to be the chief of the white man causes his esteem and reputation among his own people to reach a level that has never been seen before. Upon his return, he comes to the realization that "all of these people who had left what they were doing or where they were going to say welcome to him could not be called enemies" Ezeulu refuses to set the date for the New Yam Feast in order to force his people to acknowledge that they made a mistake by abandoning him in the hands of the white man. As a result of this refusal, he becomes the Other in their eyes: "Almost overnight, Ezeulu had become something of a public enemy in the eyes of all, and, as was to be expected, his entire family shared his guilt." As a result of the death of Obika, Ezeulu is driven to insanity, and Umuaro is converted to Christianity. This is because, in order to harvest the yams more quickly, they present them to the God of the new religion. As a result, they are compelled by circumstances to accept another faith.

Conclusion:

The trilogy written by Chinua Achebe is widely regarded as a significant accomplishment in the field of African literature. It provides a comprehensive and nuanced depiction of the African way of life during a time of significant transformation. As a result of his investigation into the social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of Igbo culture, Achebe offers an alternative narrative to the colonial discourse that has for a long time been the dominant one in depictions of Africa. His body of work not only helps to restore the dignity of African traditions, but it also acts as a striking critique of the colonial project and the enduring influence it has had on African institutions and communities. Achebe's trilogy is a monument to the resiliency and richness of African identities, especially in the face of pressures from the outside world and disputes within the African community. The book encourages readers to reevaluate their preconceived notions about Africa and its inhabitants, providing a viewpoint that is more genuine and well-rounded on the history and contemporary existence of the African continent. Through his ability to articulate the African ethos with such clarity and depth, Achebe has made a contribution to world literature that will last for generations to come. He has ensured that the voices of African people are heard and appreciated on the level of the global arena. The purpose of this research was to shed light on the role that Achebe played in conserving and simplifying the African ethos through the completion of his trilogy. Through the examination of his narrative strategies, thematic concerns, and character depictions, we are able to get a more profound comprehension of the cultural and psychological effects that colonialism had on African societies, as well as the continuous fight for self-definition that occurs in the post-colonial age. To this day, the works of Achebe continue to be an indispensable resource for anybody who is interested in comprehending the complexity of African identity and the lingering legacy of colonialism.

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