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Achebe was one of the founders of a Nigerian literary movement that drew upon the traditional oral culture of its indigenous peoples. In 1959, he published his novels as a response to colonial writers, such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, who portrayed Africa as a primordial and cultureless foil for Europe. Tired of reading white men's accounts of how primitive, socially backward and language-less native Africans were, Achebe writes about Igbo life as an insider and dispassionately mirrors the strengths and weaknesses of men in the Igbo traditional society.

This paper analyses the consolidated reality of Africa's men in action, in living reaction to their fate presented in Achebe's four novels *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *The Man of the People* (1966) and *Arrow of God* (1964).

*Things Fall Apart* (1958) is set in the pre-colonial days and tells the story of Ogbuefi Okonkwo who wants to become one of the pre-eminent men in the village of Umuofia. Through reasons for which he is largely responsible himself, he fails spectacularly and finally kills himself. At the centre of both his ambition and its failure lies Okonkwo's continual attempt to prove himself a man. Okonkwo's relationship with his late father shapes much of his violent and ambitious demeanor. He wants to rise above his father's legacy of spendthrift, indolent behavior, which he views as weak and therefore effeminate. This association is inherent in the clan's language—the narrator mentions that the word for a

...is *ugwaia*, which also means "woman." But, for the most part, Okonkwo's idea of manliness is not the clan's. He associates masculinity with aggression and feels that anger is the only emotion that he should display. For this reason, he frequently beats his wives, even threatening to kill them from time to time. He does not think about things, and he acts rashly and impetuously. Yet others who are in no way effeminate do not behave in this way. Obierika, unlike Okonkwo, "was a man who thought about things." (10) Whereas Obierika refuses to accompany the men on the trip to kill Ikemefuna, Okonkwo not only volunteers to join the party that will execute his surrogate son but also violently stabs him with his machete simply because he is afraid of appearing weak.

Okonkwo's seven-year exile from his village only reinforces his notion that men are stronger than women. While in exile, he lives among the kinsmen of his motherland but resents the period in its entirety. The exile is his opportunity to get in touch with his feminine side and to acknowledge his maternal ancestors, but he keeps reminding himself that his maternal kinsmen are not as warlike and fierce as he remembers the villagers of Umuofia to be. He faults them for their preference of negotiation, compliance, and avoidance over anger and bloodshed. In Okonkwo's understanding, his uncle Uchendu exemplifies this pacifist (and therefore somewhat effeminate) mode. The story of Okonkwo's life shows that there are several types of masculinity in pre-colonial Ibo society and that Okonkwo's is not the only possible one.

In *No Longer at Ease* (1960), the third person omniscient narrator merges with the voice and opinion of the main character Obi Okonkwo, who is caught between two worlds: that of a traditional Africa and that of a changing and new world that lives amidst two cultures—the English and the African. The major conflict is that of a young man caught in between tradition and



## Personal Conflict Vs Cultural Conflict in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*

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Chinua Achebe had lifelong conviction that people must tell their own stories if they are to survive. *Arrow of God* imagines a pre-colonial Igbo land which evolves at its own pace, no Eden but a complex society with legal, religious and social structures which are recognized by the newly arrived colonial powers. The conflict theory suggested by Karl Marx, claims society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. It holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity (August 18). In this milieu the protagonist, Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu, the most powerful god of his Umuaro people, is designated a special status in the society. He is part and parcel of this society, and it is difficult to study him apart from it. There seems to be a preponderance of village life, but this is the setting in which the central figure expresses his character, it is in his role, that of interpreting to Umuaro the will of the god and the performing of two most significant rituals in the life of the people, the festivals of the Pumpkin Leaves and the New Yam is depicted. Ezeulu, the intermediary, is half black and half white, thus bridging the spirit and the human world (Njoku 151). The novel opens with Ezeulu brooding over his eyesight "and that someday he would have to rely on someone else's eyes as his grandfather had done when his sight failed" (AG 1). Such a feeling is not unnatural; many people think about future incapacitations, but this scene establishes the tone for the novel and unveils Ezeulu's internal conflict. The allusion here is that this impending blindness is a threat, for it will interfere with his ordering of religious festivals, and will even mean that his tribal influence will cease to be felt among his people if he fails to observe the progression of the moon. If his religious responsibility will be challenged, his political responsibility will be in danger. He endeavours to console himself by imagining that he is as fit "as any young man,

or better because young men were no longer what they used to be" (AG 1). This gesture is indicative of his desire to maintain a perpetual authority over his tribe; he realizes that old age begins to tell him, but this he repudiates.

According to Cook, the novel "searches into the limits of individual power in a system controlled by tradition" (18), a situation that any traditionalist would be aware of, but Ezeulu refuses, in his mind, to be a mere puppet leader, who must execute his duties according to the dictates of his position. He has a conflict which he must deal with. That is why, later in the text, he loses his equanimity: he no longer is content to see himself as "merely a watchman" (AG 3). He has of course assessed his situation in the light of influences and changes brought to bear on his society. He, no doubt, is intrigued by the power of the white man, to quell the civil war between Umuaro and Okperi. In his dilemma, Ezeulu sends his son Oduche to the white man's region on the assumption that the white man has come "with great power and conquest, it was necessary that some people should learn the ways of his own deity...[but] He also wanted to learn the white man's wisdom..." (AG 47). Ezeulu has an ulterior motive for sending his son to the mission school; it is really for personal gain, not for the good of the society of which he is a part. What motivates him is the deep-seated fear of what he lacks: power. He indirectly exercises his shrewdness in this particular instance. He is at this point not aware of or does not even foresee any repercussion in making a decision contrary to the sanction of his people. In this way, he puts one foot in the new culture.

His people vehemently opposed to this deliberate step because he operates outside the collective solidarity of people who share common customs and beliefs and world view. This act brings him into conflict with his friend and confidant, Akuebue, but Ezeulu puts self-



## The Principle of Perpetual Persuasion in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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African literature has its origin dating back thousands of years to Ancient Egypt and hieroglyphs or writing which uses pictures to represent words. Africa experienced several hardships in its long history and left an important impression on the theme of its literature. *Purple Hibiscus* is a short story based on oral literature by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She drew extensively on the Biafran war in Nigeria during the late 1960s. In the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, the Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, examines the issues of faith in the private and public domains. The plot of the story is in Enugu, a city in post-colonial Nigeria, and is narrated by the main character, Kambili Achike. Kambili lives with her older brother Jaja, a teenager who, like his sister, excels at school but is withdrawn and sullen. Kambili's father, Papa, is a strict authoritarian whose strict adherence to Catholicism overshadows his parental love. He punishes his wife, Mama and his children when they fail to live up to his impossibly high morals. The novel begins on Palm Sunday. Jaja has refused to go to church and receive communion. Because Jaja has no reasonable excuse for missing church, Papa throws his missal at his son. His wife is a reformist, but Mama offers alternatives to Catholicism by endorsing respect, tolerance, forgiveness and hybridity. She promotes a progressive view of religion, spirituality, culture and gender roles. Countering the presentation of the 'infallible' father in various guises, Adichie espouses values of feminism, and she includes a luminous epiphany of the Virgin Mary, while dark events are depicted in the novel, it holds out the prospect of redemption and hope. The individualistic nature of faith is explored in *Purple Hibiscus*. Kambili tempers her devotion with a reverence for her ancestors. Jaja and Mama end up rejecting their faith because it is inexorably linked to Papa and colonialism, respectively.

Literature is sometimes defined as anything written, this definition is both too broad and too narrow. While it is true that a housewife can ask the Department of Agriculture for "Literature" about canning artichokes, surely we can distinguish between Literatures in the sense of verbal works of art. Robert Frost says that Literature is a "performance in words". It is an element of entertaining display, and surely we expect Literature to be in some sense entertaining or to put it in slightly different terms, to afford pleasure. That Literature is an adult game, a sort of make-believe, is suggested in some of the words we apply to pieces of Literature as fiction, story, tale and play. A literary work seizes our interest and more or less at least for a moment makes the rest of the world fade or vanish.

African Literature generally deals with colonization, hegemony, oppression, slavery, exploitation, resistance, inequality, pride in the past indigenous culture, identity crisis etc. It includes literature of all the African nations from Northern Africa to the Cape of Good Hope people in the post war period and current century. It consists of a body of work in different languages and various genres, ranging from oral Literature to Literature written in colonial languages French, Portuguese and English.

The Oral tradition, stories passed down verbally from one generation to another, is common to all African nations. These stories include folktales and songs of praise to the nation's ancestors. In the late nineteenth century, a European scramble to conquer Africa radically changed its Literature. "Trickster" tales characterize pre-colonial African literature, while colonial Literature tends to deal with slavery and themes of Independence. Postcolonial works often deal with conflicts between the past and the future and the difficulty of maintaining an African identity in the face of globalization. Oral Literature, including stories, dramas, riddles, histories, myths, songs, proverbs



## The Dichotomy between English and African Settlers in Doris Lessing's *Martha Quest*

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Culture keeps on changing from country to country and even within country. Normally when people migrate and settle in another country, they start following the new place's culture or their own. This sudden change in the ways of life leads an individual to a state of depression and frustration. Thus, multiculturalism prevails in that country.

Culture is an integral part of a nation. Every nation has a unique culture of its own. When an independent country becomes a colony, the native culture undergoes suppression and a radical change. Ultimately, an individual tries to fit into the mould designed by the society. The individual and the society derive strength from each other. Rivkin and Ryan in *Introductory Deconstruction* says, "culture is the way people behave while eating, speaking with each other, interacting at work, engaging in ritualised social behaviour such as social gatherings, meetings constitute a culture" (124).

Sex, marriage and child bearing define a woman, yet her understandings of these experiences are culturally rooted. According to Elaine Showalter in *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness. Writing and Sexual Difference*:

A theory of culture incorporates idea about woman's body, language and psyche but interprets them in relation to the social context in which they occur. The ways in which

...functions are intricately linked to the environment. The female psyche can be studied as the product of constrictions of cultural forces. (27)

Doris Lessing is a predominant writer, who has focused on culture. The British Noble prize winner has won her Nobel prize for Literature (2007) at the age of 88 years 52 days. She was the third oldest Noble Laureate in any other category after Leonid Hurwicz and Raymond Davies Jr. She was the eleventh woman awarded with the National Prize in 106 years Swedish History. She is a vibrant and an important writer who occupies a prominent position in English Literature.

Doris is a poet, novelist, dramatist, critic and short story writer. She was born as Doris May Taylor in Persia and settled in the British Colony of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Therefore, she has enough experiences in witnessing the suffering of the black people. Her stories and novellas set in Africa published during the 50's and 60's decry the disposition of black Africans by white colonials.

The significant themes of her novels are racism, feminism, human relationship and psychological development of an individual. Most of her novels deal with the treatment of the black people by the white and exposes the culture of black people. In *Children of Violence Series*, Lessing's concept of the relationship between the individual and his society is not a simple one. She draws from a variety of cultures and ages to describe the typical ways in which groups operate. In African society, ancient tribal patterns are placed close together with social patterns of the industrialized West. This leads to the coexistence of African, English, and Dutch cultures side by side and yet they refuse to melt.

In *Martha Quest*, the first novel of *Children of Violence Series*, Lessing introduces the characters responsible for major cultural and personal influences on Martha, the female protagonist.



வாழ்க்கை வாழ்வதற்கே  
எழுந்து ஒலிவீசு





# உறவிஸ் உதயம்

ஆ. மரிய சாந்தி



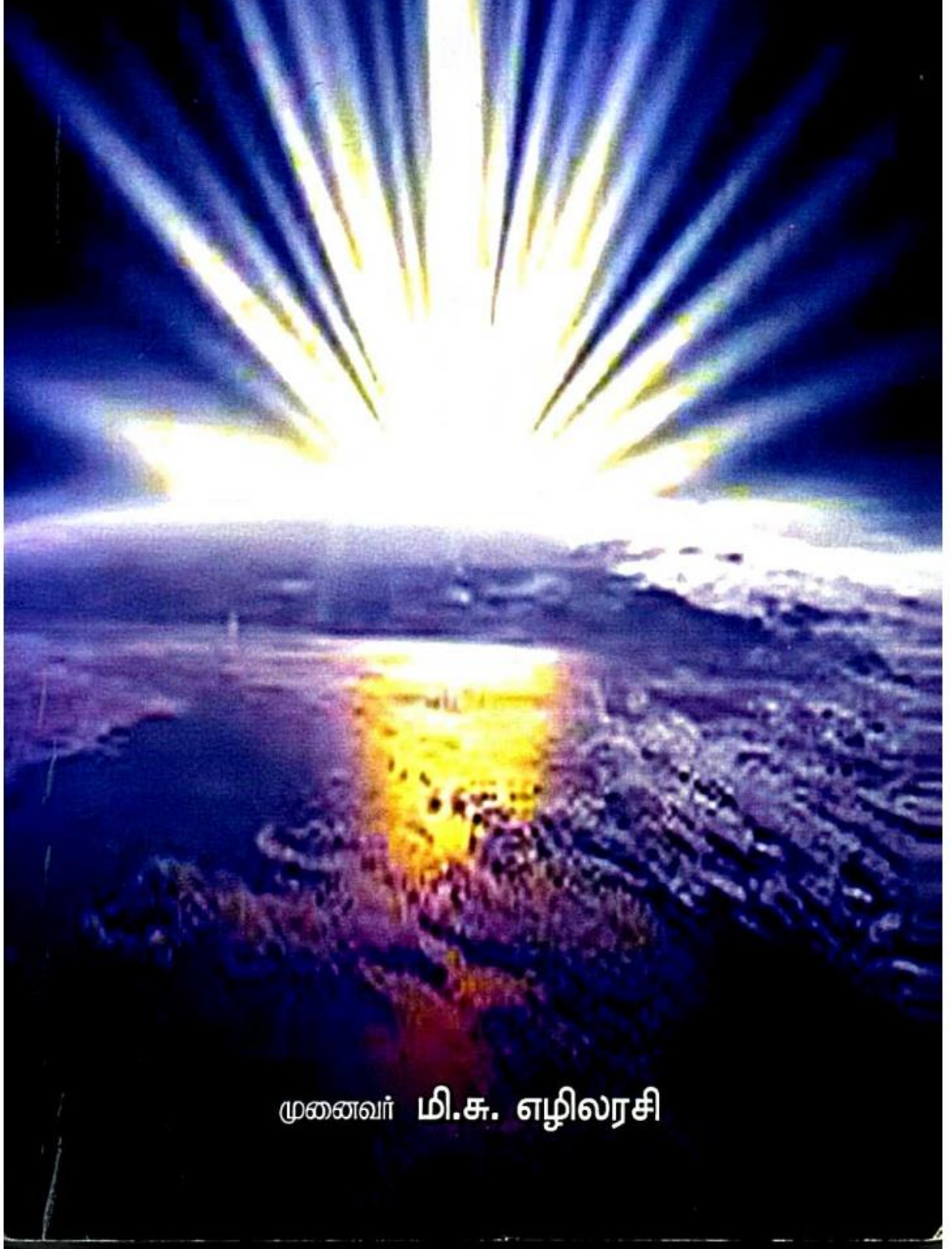
# இலக்கியத்தில் வாழ்வியல் நெறிகள்



முனைவர் இ.ம.சோனல்



# சிவஞான போத உரைகளில் வேறுபாடுகளும் காரணங்களும்



முனைவர் மி.சு. எழிலரசி