CHAPTER - V
CONCLUSION

Creative writing in West Africa is a post-war phenomenon. Contemporary African writing traces the history of the country and records the traumatic experiences during and after the imperial rule, the cultural cringe and economic bondage and with the struggle for political freedom. Much of African literature of colonial rule and pre-independence is dominated by the themes of protest and cultural conflict. Negritude movement of this century endeavours to restore to African society its pristine glory and for psychological emancipation of Africans. The development of transterritorial cultures during and after the colonial period formed the basis for modern African literature. Achebe, the doyen of modern African writing in English, has created in his own novels a new kind of fictional reality which makes the reader examine afresh both his reality and his assumptions about the modern novel. African novel exploring the human condition tries to expose transitional mores and social evils because of the exposure of the native society to the Western culture. Achebe’s novels depict pre-colonial (*Tings Fall Apart*), colonial (*Arrow of God*), pre-independence (*No Longer at Ease*) and post-colonial (*A Man of the People*) and contemporary
situation in Anthills of the Savannah, full of corruption and deterioration in the moral standard of living.

The first four Igbo quartet novels of Achebe depict the Negerian situation in different eras - pre-colonial (Things Fall Apart), colonial (Arrow of God), Pre-independence (No Longer at Ease) and Post-independence (A Man of the People). Chinua Achebe’s fifth novel Anthills of the Savannah published in 1988 reflects the life in Kangan, an imaginary African State in the Nineteen eightees and attempts to redefine the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. The predominant theme of the novels is the indelible impact of the west on the native society. Achebe’s Things Fall Apart is about Okonkwo, a typical architypal African symbolizing tradition and traumatic experiences of Umuofian society during pre-colonial period. Okonkwo symbolizes group consciousness and agony of the entire Igbo traditional society. Okonkwo as a matchless wrestler, ‘a roaring flame’ and a flaming fire’ and a proud and imperious emissary of war’ embodies the traditional values of Igbo society.

In No Longer at Ease Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist is the man of two worlds, a product of hybrid culture, form between the two systems of values, unable to live up to the
expectations of his family as Umuofian society; falls a victim to the happenings of the alien culture, partly because of Western education and his Christian upbringing. As a consequence of colonialism the sufferer in the end, loses Clara, his love and is caught red-handed taking bribe from his people for doing favour, convicted and sentenced to prison. Obi Okonkwo symbolically represents a vision of life and a section of Nigerian elite that is at the cross-road confused, unable to decide, but all to a prey to the circumstances. The setting in the novel is modern Nigeria, a pre-independence situation showing how things have fallen apart in a new society. The protagonist Obi Okonkwo is the grand son of Okonkwo, of Things Fall Apart, a young graduate from England, full of idealism and appointed as Scholarship Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education. In the beginning he resists all temptations but subsequently gives himself to the external trappings of European culture and living and thus faces his sticky end. The novel deals with Obi's, professional, social and moral decline Obi observes that "in Nigeria the government was 'they' and also finds that "ours in ours and nine is mine" in his society. He is forced to resort to this kind of dualism which was such a pervasive feature of Igbo life.
Arrow of God (1964) has a richer evocation of the Igbo society under the colonial administration. The chief character is Ezeulu, the chief priest of Umuaro. He is unlike okonkwo of the first novel in temperment, behaviour and attitude towards the colonists and their administration. The tension in the novel springs from Ezeulu's defence of his deity Ulu and himself against European culture and religion. Ezeulu who considers himself as an arrow in the bow of god, falls a vicction to the wrath of his own deity. When he falls he also brings did grace on his people and chief deity.

Achebe's fourth novel A Man of the People (1966) clearly presents the situation and life in post-independent Nigera. In the novel Achebe, by exposing the modern Nigeria society, appears to have attacked the crippling and corrupting powers of privilage, position and money. The man of the people is chief Nanga and the hero is odili, the narrator. The novel is about the legacy of the whiteman, and documents the acquisitweness and avarice of the people and the rampant corruption in Nigeria, the serious consequences of colonialism. Nanga is a fraud not only in political and commercial terms but also culturally. Odili himself no model of conduct, is at pains to clarify that the
people had nothing to do with the coup which swept away the Government.

**Anthills of the Savannah**'s political theme is rooted in post colonial compulsions. Addressing itself to socially relevant problems in Nigeria, the novel appears to aim at the social change instituted within the Nigerian "Core-reality". An old man from Abazon, who is the story teller, at one level takes the reader into the contemporary world of African power politics. Ikem Osodi too like the old man is arrested and is killed in a fake encounter, by the security men. The novel tells, using traditional oratory skills, the story of Nigeria, its tyrannical political history, and of its women in need of freedom and dignity. In *Anthills of the Savannah* the controlling motive is struggle against authoritarian regimes while the selfishness of the educated elite and his compliance with those in power becomes the ancillary theme. Achebe, in the essay *Where Angels Fear to Tread* Compiled in *Morning Yet on creation Day*, suggests that the western critic of African literature must be purged of superiority and prejudice and cultivate humility to apprehend the African sensibility in the right, perspective. His essay *Hopes and Impediments* reiterates his stand on social function of a writer. His other essays
'The Novelist as a Teacher,' 'The writer and his community', 'What has literature got to do with it', proclaim the writer's functions of providing guidance and his becoming a responsible leader in his society.

Achebe as an insider and critic of his society participates in its future renovation via the past. Exposure to the west with its consequences being the dominant theme in African fiction, the novels of Achebe too, as 'situational' novels deal with cultural conflict in different eras. Achebe is highly emotional about this colonial confrontation and about the African writers awareness of it. Achebe has infused confidence in Africans and African writers to feel proud of their colour and rich cultural heritage as to counter complexes of years of debasement. He inspired the writers to become conscious of their responsible and constructive role in re-educating and re-generating the society, as to put the African into the main stream of life.

Though Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God are highly anthropological dealing with traditional change in Igbo society, Achebe has subordinated the anthropological details to the human condition. For his primary concerns are loss of cultural identify of African and his group
identity. No Longer at Ease records the professional, social moral decline of Obi in Lagos, a city of heady atmosphere, high life, aspirations and corruption. Obi becomes a parable of modern Nigeria, a commentary on apparently universal corruption and on the colonial judgement of the new African generation. Achebe's prime interest in rendering the story of Obi is more a tortured psychology of alienation.

Achebe's A Man of the People is more a political novel depicting post-independence situation in modern Nigeria with new power structure of administration with a democratically elected government. It is a political satire where corrupt politicians corrupt their electorate to remain in power. Neo-colonialism is reflected in the continued economic exploitation of Africa and Africa's by Africans themselves even after independence under the influence of the West, in a changed system of administration and economic structure. It is a novel of corrupt politics bordering on the abuse of power, privilege, position and money. Nanga is a man who could remain in power unafraid of his people, but afraid only of corruption his tool, that turned against himself and ruined him ultimately. Achebe's chief concern in the novel A Man of the People is the infectious nature of corruption in Nigeria - in politics, in the army, in
civilian life, in rural as well as urban environments. Achebe who is cynical about his new Nigerian society, does not seem to favour any of the characters he has portrayed in the novel, not even the narrator Odili Samalu, the elite full of vigour and emotion and idealism, 'whose hypocrisy is also exposed to the disliking of the readers and African masses. Achebe's novel *Anthills of the Savannah* published in 1987 The like most post-colonial novels, aims at social change instituted within the Nigerian "Core of reality".

In *Anthills* Chris, as the product of neo-colonialism in modern Nigerian Society, calls Sam, Ikem and himself 'the three green bottles that hang precariously than the wall looking down purposefully upon the world unaware of that they can fall down any time. Achebe who believes in "Society being an extension of the individual", blames the individual for creating a new social and political order disrupting harmony peace happiness because of inept and failure of leadership. *Anthills of the Savannah* is a novel about power versus powerlessness and about mutation from corrupt, inefficient neo-colonial multi-party system to a rigid, authoritarian military state, since the country's achieving independence in 1960. It is a fictional version of Achebe's concerns in *Trouble with Nigeria*.
leaders have placed their own interest before those of the nation. Achebe’s commitment to the powerless groups reveals his dissatisfaction with the ineffective Nigerian middle class and his opposition to the military leadership. Achebe calls for continuous struggle against new forms of oppression and regimes.

Achebe’s vision of mutation in African character is more philosophical than historical, as in his three novels—*No Longer at Ease, A Man of the People*, and *Anthills of the Savannah* which explored the effects of colonialism resulting in neo-colonialism in independent Nigeria, and leading to the new awakening of African. Though the form ‘novel’ is Western, Achebe has put ‘things’ African to present the human predicament and cultural conflict and the following cultural cringe in the Nigerian society, and used some indigenous techniques of narration to make his novels ‘African’. Achebe’s novels are a study of the legacy of colonial rule where the protagonists are conceived in tragic terms as involved in an uncertain world of violence and violation. As a true moralist, Achebe judges his individuals on the basis of their moral responses to the milieu and his works collectively constitute a vision of life and society.
Art for Achebe, is but a dialectic transformation of experience, a new way of looking at tradition to create a different order of reality through imagination. Today Achebe's art speaks not only to and for Africa but also to and for the rest of the 'third world', not least through its successful challenge of "first world" centricity. His stories present a conflict such as one between tradition and modernity, between the social and the occult or within the clan, between the community and the individual.

The structure of the novel invites the reader to analyse motives and examines every event responsible for Obi's fall in *No Longer at Ease*. The moral decline of Obi under the influence of the west is rather sudden. The novel speaks of Obi's confusion of values, of confusion not only between 'good' tradition and blind, and superstitious tradition, but also between new 'advance' and new corruptions continued in modern Nigeria as neo-colonialism. The novel *A Man of the People* is narrated from the fastidious point of view of Odili Smalu, a school teacher who intends to justify his own actions and values as he maligns the motives of Nanga. In this novel Achebe portrays on a grand scale the infectious nature of corruption in Nigeria. There is a general breakdown of morality, and prevalence of delusion, superficiality, and an over
indulgence in greed. Achebe employed the technique of flash back, a cinematic device to place events and actions in significant order in his novels. No Longer at Ease prophetically draws a dismal picture of the neo-colonial situation which would prevail in the country after its formal independence. And Obi representing the educated class of modern Nigeria, symbolises the eroded morality that has brought the nation to crisis in the 1960s.

His latest novel, Anthills of the Savannah (1987), is his most explicit comment on the place and function of literature in the modern Nigerian context. Achebe narrates the situations of high tragic potential characterised by emotional intensity and historical authenticity during the crucial phase of transition through the character of Ezeulu in Arrow of God.

Achebe’s narrative art, committed as it is to the socio-cultural reality of the Igbo world, contributes to the ‘rehabilitation of the novel as a borrowed art form in Africa’. As a writer, Achebe participated in the political transformation by intervening in and contesting the hegemonic misrepresentations of Africa in colonial/imperial discourses, and by setting up alternative images of Africa. Achebe is an imitator and agent of social transformation.
He is both some one especially gifted—a leader and a teacher of the people—and empowered to show his people the way to a better, more promising future. Achebe as an innovator of modern African fiction to redeem African novel from its anthropological cliches, as a pioneer of modern African writing in English with universally acclaimed literary merits in him, is a writer to be reckoned with.