The four novels of Achebe *Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease, Arrow of God, A Man of the People*, constitute his Ibo Quartet, which records the history of his family and locale. It reflects the distinct areas of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial societies. His novels expand into a fictional response in a concrete historical situation.
The impact of the colonial situation on the individual and society is vital to Achebe. Many of the third world cultures have had a shared experience. Naturally the writers of Asia, Africa and the West Indies have been preoccupied with the delineation of the human predicament and the problems of human development in the present situation.

Achebe is a matchless crusader of racial and tribal anarachy. The fictional art, According to him, like all meaningful social action, is not a product of mere agitation, but is a structured response and reaction. He shows a keen sense of awareness of the movement of social forces, memories of the colonial part and its impact on the people.

Achebe further suggests that there is a strong temptation to idealise the past to extol its good points and pretend that had never existed. The African writers may be tempted to close their eyes to the ills of the past and present it as something near perfect. Thus the novelist takes the readers to a detailed encounter with a traditional village back ground, that is richly African. He has very clearly portrayed, how the white people came with their religion and established a government, developed trade and spread education.
Achebe’s first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) takes us to African setting of Iboland, a village in Nigeria, where the things are really falling apart and the centre cannot hold them. *New Yam* festival is described at length in the context of Okonkwo’s family life, his behavior towards his three wives, children and relatives. This festival is very similar to the Baisakhi and other festivals in India.

On *Arrow of God* the author’s focus is much less upon the clash of cultures in an historical process, as upon the clash of rival personalities and policies within the full spectrum of clan’s internal politics. She succeeds in giving exposure of the thinking pattern of the colonizers in Africa.

The discussion on *No Longer at Ease* brings to the surface intermixed corruption and superstition prevalent in society of that time. The author exposes the corruption through a symbolic presentation.

*A Man of the People* deals with the analysis that things are falling apart in yet another way and the people even here seem to be no longer at ease. The politician Chief Nanga, the ‘Man of the People’ and the political anarchy continue even today.

One of the important aspects of Achebe’s fictional art is his selective use of language as a tool for mapping out a scene, a mode
of behavior, a mental crisis and the description of the people of Iboland.

In 1987 Achebe released his fifth novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, about a military coup in the fictional West African nation of Kangan. A finalist for the Man Booker Prize, the novel was hailed in the *Financial Times*: “in a powerful fusion of myth, legend and modern styles, Achebe has written a book which is wise, exciting and essential, a powerful antidote to the cynical commentators from ‘overseas’ who see nothing new out of Africa.” Certainly Achebe illuminated the path for writers around the world seeking new words and forms for new realities and societies. He has achieved ‘a new found utterance’ for the capture of life’s complexity.

Chinua Achebe presents in his novels a picture of the African society, its past and present, of the glory of a great culture as well as the anarchy that had set in, as much due to external causes as to those internal. It is this theme of culture and anarchy that forms the focus of this book, which makes a modest attempt to explicate the novels from this perspective. Thus, an effort has been made to draw attention to the centrality of ‘anarchy’ in the novels and the subtle and pervasive manner in which it envelops the characters and
situations. Here lies the merit as well as the message of Achebe’s work.

African literature forms a significant segment of twentieth-century world literature. It represents the writing of African nationals living on African soil reflecting the African native sensibility and atmosphere. The value of African literature lies in its Africanness, which is retained in spite of its cosmopolitan origin. Many of the modern novelists, poets and playwrights either enlogize their glorious past or speak of the devastation inflicted on the native societies by the colonial powers of Europe in terms of protest, conflict, anguish, anger or neurosis. They make a fruitful use of the European literary forms in order to voice their strongly felt emotional turmoil, the result of their encounter with the alien rulers. Their works of art have truly served the purpose of African aesthetics.

Chinua Achebe’s novels have pervading sense of Africanness and constitute so many chapters in the chassed history of his people. His novels have a rare phenomenon of literary excellenc, appear to contain a potent medicine which takes the reader into those occult zones of unravished beauty and the causes that spoiled it in the saga of African historical becoming.
Achebe has witnessed the three major phases that Africa passed through, i.e. its vanishing glory with the advent of western civilization, the traumatic period of colonial rule, the enthusiastic pre-independence times and the past-colonial era of disillusionment. He has rightly described himself as ‘standing at the crossroads of culture’.

Achebe sought to set right the deeply embedded misconceptions thrust on young Africans of his generation and of latter times. He tried his best to show them that Africa too had a glorious past with its own philosophy, poetry, beauty and cultural identity. As a novelist, his first duty, he firmly believed, was teaching the young Africans. He was determined to help his people in regaining pride and confidence in themselves and their culture, which they almost lost during the alien rule.

His novels trace the vicissitudes of the Ibo society, which witnessed a period of decline, as a result of forces within as well as without. In this decline there is a process, and anarchy invaded the cultural edifice of the Ibo society over a period of time. In Things Fall Apart one sees the clear signs of incipient disintegration. In Arrow of God it is the religious anarchy while No Longer At Ease represents
corrupt social ethnic, and *A Man of the People* is an epitaph on the political anarchy, which completes the process of degeneration. Thus the Yeatisian vision of things falling apart finds a convincing and comprehensive expression in his novels. Certainly, Achebe’s pre-occupation has been essentially with bringing about a cultural revolution by rediscovering the African past through the undermining of colonial stereotypes.\(^2\) His images and symbols are superb. By presenting this clash between the elements of culture and anarchy, Achebe brings to focus the larger theme of the good versus evil in his novels.
References
