CHAPTER - IV

FICTIONAL ART OF T.M. ALUKO

T.M. Aluko has used 'novel' to record his experiences and to relate them to the present. Every African writer aims at depicting the ongoing reality in Africa and the consequences of the exposure of traditional society to the west. Contemporary African novelist, unlike negritude writers who sentimentally idealize what is African, do not totally find fault with the new system of values and the western culture. On the other hand, they expose the weaknesses of African traditional society, improper perception of western concepts and systems. Though African novels are primarily directed to the native audience, they are also meant having been written in English, to enlighten the readership outside Africa about their rich cultural heritage and mythology. Though Tutuola's idiom of English is called 'Un-English' with grammatical expressions, his novels have presented a world of fantasy based on Yoruba myths and beliefs to attract the western eye.

T.M. Aluko, for effective communication has employed some traditional techniques of narration and has also drawn from African oral literature to give African flavour and authenticity to his novel. African fiction owes much to African oral literary tradition.

West African writers have drawn much from oral literature material like folk tales, proverbs and sayings, riddles, native myths and African cultural expressions in recording African experience in different periods of their country's history. Tutuola has drawn prouly from folk lore to create a fantasy in his novels.
Others like Achebe, Soyinka, Ekwensi, Flora Nwapa, James Ngugi too have used traditional oral literature to educate the native audience and to rediscover Africa's past and to show its relevance to the present. African novelists have used some conventional techniques of narration like story-telling, plot construction, characterization, symbolism, myths, irony and satire and have skilfully employed 'pidgin' English. But because of ethnicity and different cultural background and philosophical assumptions, and also because of the themes explored in African novels set in different periods of history, African novels appear to be different from western novels.

T.M. Aluko according to oladele Taiwo, has failed to establish himself as a reputed Nigerian novelist, as Aluko's novels have failed to evoke criticism from western and Nigerian critics. Even Palmer in his book on the 'African Novel' does not consider any of Aluko's novels worth reading and significantly African. It was only Donatus Nwoga who in a recent comment on west African Literature, found it necessary to point out that,

"With the publication of chief, the Honourable Minister, T.M. Aluko has now an impressive record of four novels, a body of work which merits greater critical attention than it has yet received."\(^1\)
Aluko is considered important because of his intimacy with his people and good knowledge of the happenings in the society which enabled him to relate native tradition to African experience in modern Nigeria, and secondly because of his idiom of expression of English popular in Nigeria. Aluko's works reveal his incisive knowledge of the Yorubas as individuals and as a group. The first four novels are based on a consistent imaginative scheme in which we find a society coherent but weakened by greed and intolerance. The protagonists of his novels are selfish and worldly and are after wealth, power and position in the new political dispensation after attaining political independence. Such a contrasting situation leads to frequent clashes on political, social and economic issues. Aluko succeeds in presenting several conflicts in one single episode as in the Igbodudu Land Dispute in One Man, One Matchet.

Plot Construction:

Almost all Aluko's early novels have incoherent with loosely connected episodes. The narrative is composed of detached incidents or episodes, having little logical connection giving the impression of some unity provided by the protagonist. The plot of One Man, One Wife is facile and unwieldy. It is a tale about polygamy and church politics in a newly christianised society. The theme of polygamy versus monogamy is given a very sketchy treatment and is not sustained throughout the novel. The theme of tradition versus modernity is particularised here. The title of the novel and the early scenes might suggest that the problem is caused by the conflict between the church's stipulation of monogamy and
traditional society's encouragement of polygamy. But even the theme of One Man, One Wife emerges a part of the novel giving rise to the major concern like the clash between the general attitudes of traditionalism and modern religion.

"The last twenty five pages of One Man, One Wife describe a small pox epidemic, a court case, a suicide, and a sudden religious conversion, all rather clumsily contrived episodes in a wildly meandering plot."²

Aluko's second novel One Man, One Matchet is considered an improvement over the first novel. But the plot construction remains loose and episodic. The story is little more than a clumsy patchwork of contiguous incidents, some interesting, some not very interesting. Though the story is about the government move to cut down the diseased cocoa trees to prevent the disease from spreading to other trees, the peoples conception is to resist the government move by any means. Slowly the novelist digresses on other situations and incidents. Most of the incidents centre on the activities of Benjamin Benjamin, an ill-educated politician cum journalist who creates trouble for a newly appointed African District Officer by encouraging the people to resist the government move to cut down diseased cocoa trees, to refuse to pay taxes, to settle Igbohudu Land dispute, to take this dispute to court of law and all this he does only for personal benefit. Other episodes are about Benja-Benja's exploitation of his people by
collecting huge sums of money for legal expenses which will benefit the district. The story of cutting of cocoa trees is not sustained throughout the novel; it is just one incident of many where Benjamin Benjamin has his greater role to play. The story ends in bloodshed and rioting before Benjamin Benjamin is killed by one of his own followers. Thus the plot is so cluttered with important incidents that it loses coherence and focus of major themes.

Kinsman and Foreman, unlike other novels of Aluko comparatively has a well developed plot with amusing incidents skilfully strung together leading to a hilarious climax.

Aluko introduces melodramatic scenes in the end. In One Man, One Wife, Royanson goes mad and recovers, Jacob has his dispute, and Toro disappears for some time, whereas in One Man, One Matchet, riots break out, Benjamin Benjamin is killed by one of his own supporters and the protagonist Udo Akpan claims success not through logical culmination of events demonstrated in the novel but through the intervention of melodrama in which calm and peace descends on the village of Ipaja and the developmental activities take a new turn. Aluko's third novel Kinsman and Foreman presents a conflict between Titus Oti and his kinsman Simeon Oke.

Characterization :-

E.M. Forster in his "Aspects of the Novel" says that the characters in a novel should be life-like. In situational novels group consciousness is important and individuals are relegated to secondary importance. In One Man, One Wife, characters are not fully
evolved. They symbolically represent sections of the society and a vision of life. Also in One Man, One Matchet, the characters are not adequately individualized by their idiosyucoracies and do not contribute much to the little action dramatized in the novel. The most interesting character in this novel is Benjamin Benjamin who has a greater role. The character has growth. He befools innocent people and exploits them to his selfish ends. He makes his speech rhetorical, also uses newspaper Jarson to impress his illiterate audience. Even Udo Akpan, who is considered the central figure in the novel fails to attract the attention of the reader as Benjamin Benjamin.

"But our sympathy should be with the common people who are at the firing line of not only the exploitative colonial policies but also in the insatiable proboscis of the emerging African bourgeoisie." 3

Aluko's third novel *Kinsman and Foreman* which has been praised as "artistically best" among the earlier novels by the critics has better characterization. The characters are quite well-defined, with each one having a special role to play in the parade of comic events. Titus Oti, Simeon Oke, Pa Joel, Rev. Micheal Morakinyo, Bimpe, MC Bain, Mother Deborah, all these characters are not static but with their definite roles to play. The so called protagonist of the novel Titus Oti though plays his part well, is considered a dummy lifeless figure in capable of decision-making and succumbing to the external pressures and thus making himself unheroic.
Irony and Satire:-

Aluko has adopted satiric mode in all his novels, sparing none of his characters and situations depicted, and not even institutions - social, political and religious. Lawyers, doctors, Engineers, bureaucrats, politicians, kings, churches, priests, Gods, teachers all have been acrimoniously satirised in his novels. He makes fun of the old order and the new, sometimes in one and the same breath.

Aluko also attacks the native social institution of marriage and the stubborn girls who violate the marriage contracts made for them by their parents:

"A daughter who refused to marry the suitor of her parent's choosing was invariably sent to the Oba's palace. There she regretted her folly at leisure ............
The new bride was one of scores in the same unenviable position of sharing in common the affections of an indolent old potentate who could never tell the exact number of his women. Indeed most of the queen's in the palace were the mistresses of the Oba's elder sons, relatives and hangers on. A queen of the palace - ah what a queen!"
Aluko sees nothing noble or dignified about traditional life. He laughs at their customs, practices, traditions, rituals etc. He laughs at the villagers who worship gods of lightning, Iron and small pox, and the priests of these gods are invariably exposed as hypocrites and charlatans who prey on the superstitious apprehensions of traditionalists. Traditional rulers like the Oba and village chiefs are portrayed as indolent, self-serving rogues more interested in preserving their powers and privileges than in governing people.

The Christmas message acquires an ironic significance:

"Christmas!
It comes but once a year. The little knot of Christians of Isolo listened devotedly to Royasin propound in the village church its story, its message and its lesson. The story of the birth of the Boy Jesus born to the Virgin Mary and how - He subsequently founded the greatest and only true religion in the world. The message of peace on earth and good will to all men in all lands and where at all hours of that sacred day various voices were being lifted up in prayer and in praise to the Boy born to the king. The lesson of humility that to serve and to save mankind the Lord Jesus had to descend to human level and assume human form, and had to be born not to the
King's queen on her throne, but to a carpenter's wife in the horse's stables.  

Christians may listen 'devoutly' but they are not concerned with Royasin's examples. The village church is hardly the right place to 'propound' any theories about Christmas. There is nothing inspiring in the way the message is presented to the audience. It ought to have occurred to the speaker that very few people in the audience are likely to be hearing of the Christmas message for the first time.

In One Man, One Wife, polygamy practised by tribes is satirized. Elder Joshua who is one of the pillars of the church, is pained to learn that to reach the highest level of perfection in Christianity, one must have only one wife. This doctrine of Christianity makes Joshua drift slowly from the new religion to his traditional religion, for he has already made up his mind to marry Toro, the daughter of Ma Sheyi, when his son Jacob refuses to marry Toro. He even pays the bridal price to marry Toro, and the ceremony is conducted by the active participation of the wife. Even wives (women) encourage men to have another wife. For the tribals of Isolo, polygamy is not considered a sin nor a social evil. It is but a part of their culture. Even adultery is not a sin.

When Toro is born to Ma Sheyi, Grand Gbemi doesn't hesitate to say "Your fiance is growing" and in the betrothal ceremony, Sister Rebecca, the wife of Elder Joshua participates actively and it is she who counts the coins to be given as bridal price. Here she (Sister Rebecca) tells, "Herself and Toro alone were going to share her husband". Even in the beginning, the letter of Jacob to his father
Elder Joshua also reveals that,

"Many youths not elder than myself are now married, whilst even some have two wives and some three wives".\(^6\)

Elopement of young girls with males of different ages is a common feature in the novels of Aluko. As polygamy is common with these tribals, elopement is considered not as a stigma to the girl nor to the family. Toro elopes with sergeant Lawal, the young Police Officer who has already two wives. By exposing the immoral life from the christian point of view, Aluko appears to have denounced it in One Man, One Wife.

In One Man, One Matchet, characters like Benjamin Benjamin indulge in deceiving gullible illiterate villagers by their long speeches in English and by their rhetoric and use of public platform and public issues for personal ends and for power, Aluko has satirized by exposing their hypocrisy. The villagers call Benjamin Benjamin out of reverence, 'Benja Benja'. But he exploits them collecting huge amount to settle their court cases. Benjamin Benjamin as a journalist abuses the Apaja's confidence in him, robs Olowokere of £ 50. This type of behaviour gives "Comrades - in - arms", an ironic significance in much the sameway as" the victory is yours", comes to acquire an ironic meaning in the context of the novel as a whole. Benjamin Benjamin uses the latter expression in the spirit of fraternal rejoicing, in a show of indentifying himself closely with his people. But, ironically the one great victory won by the Ipajas in the novel is the way they succeed in getting rid of Benjamin Benjamin where
the British system of justice has failed to punish him. Aluko is satirizing the attitude and nature of literates and journalists in whom people repose confidence but who ultimately emerge as hypocrites and social evil. That is why Benjamin Benjamin is described by the magistrate as most dangerous to the society:

"I find him to be a perfect example of the man with the proverbial half learning which is a dangerous thing. He is self-opinionated, with an extremely exaggerated idea of his own importance, and his mendacity is extraordinary. It is my considered opinion that he is a grave danger to the community in which he lives, a tragedy to the cause of education in this country, and a curse on humanity as a whole."

Udo Akpan, the District Officer is also unsparingly satirized by the novelist. He (Akpan) talks of tackling problems in an essentially African way but behaves like an expatriate District Officer, a situation which earns him the appellation of "Black-white Man".

Udo Akpan representing Colonial Administration is satirized by Aluko when he (Akpan) blames the confused situation which follows the murder of Benjamin Benjamin on pax Britannica:
"Before you come to this country with pax Britannica, a citizen of proved anti-community activities like Benjamin Benjamin was easily disposed of. He just vanished.................... After we in the Administration had failed to rid ourselves of the curse that was Benjamin Benjamin, an Ipaja man who had not heard of British sense of fair play and justice and in any case had no use for it got rid of the common enemy. He did it in a moment. We had failed to do it in two years."  

Here Akpan is over-reacting the situation created by Benjamin Benjamin's death. We are presented with ironical situation in which a "modern" Administrative Officer advocates the revival of the old method of punishing the criminals. Yet if the African idea of summary justice were to be applied to all cases, it would affect not only Akpan's enemy, Benjamin Benjamin, but also his friend, Rev. Olaiya, who constantly violates customary laws.

In Kinsman and Foreman, Aluko slashes with vigour on state, family, individual, bureaucracy and on church, he is satirizing. He has even satirized the follies of British justice and American philanthropy, and the newly appointed District Engineer Titus Oti.

Titus Oti who is considered an important son of the soil and a tower of strength to the "All Souls Church", when fails to contribute generously to the church building fund, ironically faces severe criticism from the church and his people. Whereas Simeon Oke
who is corrupt to the core and who amasses wealth by unfair means and exploiting his position but who generously gives contributions to the church and helps people in need, is loved, revered by the church and the people. Simeon is regarded as the strong pillar of the church. Titus Oti wonders at the interference of the church when Simeon receives order of transfer. He says:

"It was bad enough people saying it as individuals. But why should the church as a body complicate this already complicated and sorbid affair? Speaking frankly, I am disappointed Sir. I am disappointed."\(^9\)

Aluko seems to be very much annoyed at the state of affairs of administration and involvement of church and the people in trying to retain Simeon in the same region and in perpetuating corruption in bureaucracy. The administration also fails in punishing such culprits and social evils.

Chief, the Honourable Minister also reflects irony and satire. The Prime Minister's eulogising of Moses at a public meeting as Asiwaju of New Town is important and ironical in the novel.

"We are all here today not just because he belongs to our great party but because he is a great man with whom we are proud to associate......... Above all we are glad that you have by conferring this chieftaincy on your greatest son helped him, you have helped us, you have helped this nation, to rediscover this great man,
this prophet that has been going in and coming out among you in this progressive town without your recognizing his worth, his noble ancestry..........."  

Such high praise might just conceivably have been appropriate for Moses at the beginning of his political career. Infact he fails to live up to his lofty ideals and is no longer regarded as, "a great man with whom we are proud to associate". The repeated emphasis on the word 'great' reveals Aluko's satiric intent. The people of New Town are said to have "helped" Moses, their town and country by "recognizing" 'Moses' worth. But ironically, it is this "recognition" that has "helped" to expose 'Moses' personal weaknesses. "Moses is a 'prophet' only in so far as he has, like other local "prophets" successfully developed the capacity to deceive his people."  

Humour :-  

Aluko's, western Nigeria is beset with fear and insecurity. The people live in a situation clouded with mistrust and superstition. And sometimes they take to ridiculous actions to safeguard their positions. Aluko's intention is clearly satirical. In One Man, One Wife, the whole atmosphere is dominated by the fear of Shonponna, the God of small pox. They have fear for Shango, the God of lightning and thunder. The reason why Christian missionaries make little progress in Isolo is the fear of dreadful consequences of abandoning their ancestral God, Shonponna. To the people of Isolo or Ipaja, a dead man is not gone for ever but has gone to heaven as a further extension of the extended family on earth and is capable of influencing his
surviving relations for good or for bad. In One Man, One Matchet, the cocoa tree cutting squad of the Ministry of Agriculture avoids late chief Ajayi's cocoa farm because of his assumed spiritual presence on the farm. In Chief, the Honourable Minister, the oath swearing ritual in the bedroom of the Prime Minister to settle a dispute between two ministers of State Alade Moses and Franco John. By this Aluko appears to have ridiculed his superstitious beliefs of traditionalists. Some of the episodes in his novels depict the psychology of the people apprehensive of their beliefs. Under the influence of the west, some of the superstitions are questioned, debated and ridiculed at. Aluko appears to have satirized the Yorubas who have blindly followed traditional customs out of fear.

In One Man, One Wife Jacob's disappearance for few days after his court case with Toro, is narrated to be mysterious.

"Many varied were the accounts of that journey. Some said he had simply vanished into the clouds at Idasa and dropped out of the clouds again at Isolo - just like that! Some said he had flown on the wings of the Archangel Gabriel. Others said he had just slept at Idasa and simply woken up again at the village square at Isolo."

In One Man, One Matchet, Aluko humorously presents the cutting-out-squad deliberately avoiding chief Ajayi's cocoa farm because they believe in the existence of spirits on the farm.

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"The gang of tree-cutters cautiously avoided chief Ajayi's farm. For Ajayi's ghost was known to haunt his house and his farm, and would continue to hover around his possessions here on earth, from which he was so violently separated, for a number of moons before finally betaking himself to distant country where he was not known and where he would start another span of human existence under an entirely different name." 13

In *Kinsman and Foreman* where Titus Oti is taken to hospital at Ibadan, after his nights stay in the rest house, rumours splash that Titus has become mad.

"The story had reached Ibala early in the morning that the District Engineer had a strange encounter at Igbetti and that he had gone quite mad. Another version of the story said that it was true that he had gone mad and was already in chains at the lunatic asylum in Ibadan. He had not died, all versions of the story agreed on that." 14

At one point Benjamin Benjamin delivers a funeral oration in the style of Gettysburg address, urging his fellow mourners to
resolve that,

"this honoured dead shall not have died in vain, that this ancient city of Ipaja under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people of Ipaja, by the people of Ipaja, and for the people of Ipaja shall not perish from the earth."\(^{15}\)

According to Bernth Lindfors,

"The only redeeming feature of the novel are Aluko's occasional flashes of wit and satire. He pokes fun at the old order as well as the new, sometimes ridiculing them both in the same breath."\(^{16}\)

At a meeting of tribal elders the conflict between tradition and modernity represented by two sets of people is portrayed humorously.

"Bada then pointed out another menace of christianity in the village. The christians, led by the pastor from Idasa and Bible Jeremiah, had been trying to dissuade the villagers from worshipping the mighty Shonponna.............. That was a flagrant affront to the might and majesty of the god of small pox........ Shonponna, the god of small pox, was known to be a very jealous god. The villagers therefore could
not be too careful about him .................
In that case the villagers could not drive away the village christians without exposing themselves to the anger of the white Man.

These are serious words. Elders of Isolo ......................, what shall we do ?" 17

In Chief, the Honourable Minister, Aluko calls the lecherous
Minister of Education a 'Minister of Ladies' to show how much time
is wasted at cabinet meetings on trivial and vulgar affairs and where
important deliberations are constantly interrupted by foolish telephone
calls, and high state officials are found sleeping while on the job
and even at public ceremonies. Such passages are enlivened by
Aluko's spirited sense of humour and sarcasm.

African Idiom :-

"Simplicity' has been a quality that is commonly attributed
by western critics to African fiction. Critics like waterhouse
have said that the novels of Aluko 'are still an excellent example
of simplicity. He has further commented that' simplicity is all
we ask for in the African Novel." The language in the novels of
Aluko is very simple to enable a lay reader understand the intricacies
of the situation or plot.

Aluko has employed various forms of English, sometimes
grammatically incorrect to suit his characters. Sometimes he has
used the language of literates, the language of journalists, the
language of civil servants and sometimes 'pidgin' English also to
satirize them.

In One Man, One Wife, a great deal centres on Royasin's
dishonest use of language. In his opposition to the church in his new capacity as "public Letter-writer and Notary, Friend of the Illiterate, Advocate of the oppressed", Royasin wins the confidence of the people to embarrass the christians.

"Then all the inhabitants of this ancient village - men, women, boys, girls and children - they all opened wide their mouths in wonder and astonishment and curiosity when they discovered and disclosed the identity of the manager of the thieves and robbers; for he was one important and importable member of the church at Isolo. The law of libel and slander and scandal forbids and forbades a newspaper correspondent from correspondingly disclosing the name of this leader of the culprits."

Aluko's use of newspaper articles in his novels is satirical. Royasin's use of "The Nigerian Reader", is a good example of how a mass communication medium can be thoroughly abused. When he is dismissed from his post, he vehemently targets the church and uses the newspaper as the platform to attack the church and to brand its leaders as rogues and vagabonds. Here Aluko uses the language of a semiliterate, using words like 'wonder' and 'astonishment', 'discovered' and 'disclosed', 'thieves' and 'robbers', 'importable' and 'important' and 'forbodes' and 'forbids'.

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Aluko also uses bombastic language which surfaced in the letter addressed to the District Officer, Idasa by Royanson on behalf of the Longe who has been deprived of the land.

"I beg your Honour most respectfully and respectfully to carefully and patiently peruse these few lines of a tale of woe and persecution and prosecution perpetrated and perpetuated on your Honour's most unworthy servant, to wit my humbly self, Longe of Idoka village......................

The land that is the subject of ............ very generously and royally given by his highness Oba Atakumasa, to his humble subject and loyal general for valiantly and courageously driving out the soldiers of the king of Ibadan away from Adasa Territory."

This letter is highly rhetorical and full of high sounding words like - "respectfully" and "respectively", "carefully" and "patiently", "persecution" and "prosecution", "perpetrated and perpetuated", "unwritten and verbal", "valiantly and courageously" and stereotyped expressions like "your Honour's most unworthy servant", "this abominable act of man's inhumanity to Man", "his humble subject and loyal general", "to wit any humble self, Longe" - which reveal that it lacks originality.

Jacob's letter to his father, Joshua reads:
"With much gladness of heart and love I write to you this letter. I hope that it will get to you in peace and in good health as I am here. I am very well, and there is nothing to complain about. For this and other blessings Jehovah's name be praised.

I received the letter which you wrote to me. My dear father, my joy was exceedingly great when I saw the letter. I opened the envelope and I read the letter. All the matters that you wrote about I understood. I thank you greatly for this, Father, You are a good father to me."²⁰

reveals that Jacob is a semi-literate, written with utmost devotion and warmth of feeling.

Benjamin a semi-literate in One Man, One Matchet, tries to deceive his innocent illiterate villagers by posing to be a man of great learning and talking irrelevantly.

"The White Man has a proverb. A beautiful proverb. You know what it is? No, they did not. They wanted the great Benjamin to tell them. Yes, I will tell you the proverb." No one puts his hand on the plough and looks back". Again there is another proverb. "We have
There is no going back."

Aluko also uses refined official language of the civil service in One Man, One Matchet, in the report of the Commission of Inquiry constituted by the government to go into the fund raising activities of Benjamin Benjamin.

"Mr. Benjamin Benjamin, the Secretary-General of the Ipaja Descendants Union, also failed to come to give evidence at the Inquiry. 

Needless to say how disappointing and sad it is that the person who should have been key witness in the Inquiry has absented himself from the Inquiry and at the time of writing we do not see our way clear towards taking any active measure against him. I refrain from saying anything further at this stage about Benjamin Benjamin, realizing as I that a man must be presumed innocent until proved guilty."  

In Chief, the Honourable Minister also Aluko dramatizes a situation in which language is used imperfectly both by the government and opposition politicians. "The misleading of ordinary people" is practised on a wide scale, and the Prime Minister himself sets a bad example in a passage full of far-fetched comparisons and allusions:
"A great English scholar once observed that when we see genius come out of what looks like the gutter we should know that it did not begin there. If we take the trouble to dig beneath the surface we will discover that like Shakespeare the son of a wood-peddler, Napoleon the son of a farmer, and Luther the son of a peasant, the genius from the gutter most probably descended from a line of kings and prophets. That observation was made about one of the greatest figures of history, Abraham Lincoln. It may well be applied here and now to your own son Alade Moses, who we join you to honour today."

The aim of the Prime Minister is to improve the image of Alade Moses by comparing him with some great names in history, which could not be understood by the illiterate and semi-literate audience.

Dauda, leader of the opposition, when the High Court declares Moses' election to parliament as null and void, he takes advantage of the occasion to come down heavily on the government and to create tension in the society saying:

"We of this paper have been justified in our unshaken belief in the unlimited capacity of our judiciary to absorb the stresses and strains to which this unholy gang of rascals who have now forced themselves..."
upon the nation have subjected the judges and the magistrates
we are proud to record here to the eternal glory of the judiciary of this land that
inspite of threats and intimidation, most times subtle and concealed but sometimes open, they have carried out their sacred duty of administering justice, just justice, in the highest tradition of their sacred calling."  

Members of the cabinet are called "this unholy gang of rascals", "rogues and dictators", all in an attempt to bring the government into disrepute. The impression given about Dauda is that of a man anxious to achieve his goal by any means, fair or foul. Other hackneyed expressions like "to the eternal glory of the Judiciary", "their sacred duty", "just justice", "in the highest tradition of their most sacred calling, "similarly point to Dauda's hollowness.

Aluko's greatness lies in the variety of English he has used in the dramatization of his characters, and sometimes deliberately using chiches and hackneyed expressions.

Aluko in his novels makes a conscious attempt to modify the English language in order to reflect the rhythms and speech patterns of Yoruba. In One Man, One Matchet, the Oba of Ipaja says:

"Elders of Ipaja, I bid you welcome, and I bid you a pleasant evening, the old chief said waving the horsetail. 'It was I who
sent for you. I sent for you all to come to my compound. There is cause for my asking you to meet here, in my compound.....

Many moons ago, we used to hold our meetings here in my compound ............... 'Now they all sleep there'. He indicated the further most end of the compound where his predecessors on the stool of Ipaja were buried. "They all sleep there. But they hear everything we say. And they breathe peace." 25

They are idiomatic English such as, "many moons ago," "there is a cause for my asking you," "they all sleep there" and "they breathe peace." It is unremitting Anglophonic in rhythm and imagery in Moses' addresses to his people at political rally:

"If our critics thought that our government - this government of our people by our people was going to build the super structure of our great educational edifice on the shaky foundation left by our colonial masters, then let them think again. We tell them that we know better than to put new wine in old bottles. We will have nothing to do with any foundation that bears any element whatsoever of our un-edifying - past - a past that we must forget in double quick time." 26
This amusing parody of stale political rhetoric may actually be a fairly accurate transcription of a certain brand of Nigerian soapbox oratory in English, but it is hardly convincing to have Moses speak in this idiom in his discussions with his mistress or with illiterate villagers who purportedly address him in their vernacular language. Aluko does individualise the speech of a few of his rustic characters but he does not work as conscientiously at Africanising his style as he did in *Kinsman and Foreman*.

Aluko is metaphorical in describing the mission of Rev. David and his assistant Teacher Royasin in *One Man, One Wife*. Their considerable modest achievement is told through the intensity of kerosene lamp at the Mission House at Isolo:

"Pastor and Teacher watched the flickering flame. It appeared to be fighting a gasping battle against unseen forces wanting to choke it out of existence. The gasps were spasmodic, the flame looked like going out after every one. Then it seemed to recover and flicker into life again for a brief period............ The flame slowly regained steadiness and confidence. Its light rose steadily in intensity........"\(^{27}\)

This metaphor gives us a clean picture of the situation. The operative word is "gasping" which successfully describes the initial Christian missionaries had in making any impression on the people of Isolo against the "unseen forces" of ignorance and superstition. At first, it looked as if the "flame" must be choked out of existence.
by the stronger forces of tradition. But because of the energetic evangelical work of Rev. David, the "flickering flame" regains "steadiness and confidence".

Aluko uses hyperboles sometimes out of context as in One Man, One Wife and One Man, One Matchet where both Royanson and Benja-Benja strive after bombast through a misconception that this is the best English. But Royanson resorts to repetition of hyperboles out of context whereas Benja-Benja's language is appropriate though pretentious. For example - Royanson's article to a local paper reads thus:

"We have been sounding the warning for sometime now that the Imperialistic Dragon now driven to the corner by the St. George of Nationalism is seeking refuge in the church............... That condition is this: the host must give a guarantee on behalf of his infamous guest that the latter would not hide behind the sacredness of church in order to continue to commit his atrocities against the people of this country."

Still more effective is Aluko's rendering of Benja - Benja's often quoted imitation of Lincoln's famous Gettysburg address:

"That we here highly resolve that this honoured dead shall not have died invain, that this ancient city of Ipaja under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people of Ipaja, by the
people of Ipaja, for the people of Ipaja shall not perish from the earth". 29

Aluko for the first time in his fiction writes pithy dialogues in African vernacular style when Pa- Joel introduces Titus Oti to Simeon in the beginning:

"Simeon this is Titus the son of your Kinsman Samuel, now gone to heaven. I hand him to you this day as your own son. You are to direct his going out and his coming in the PWD. You know all the intricacies of government work ............... If a child boasts that he has as many clothes as his father, can he equally boast of having as many rags of his father?

And you, Titus, you must listen to the words of my mouth. Where Simeon tells you to go, you must go ........Does the thread not follow the path made by the needle?

It is inspite of the snake that the bush rat nurtures its young to maturity. Regardless of the activities of human snakes, you Simeon will pilot your child Titus to success in Government work". 30
Influence of Achebe on Aluko :-

The influence of Achebe on Aluko is seen in his use of different speech rhythms and the idiom of English for different characters in his novels and in the depiction of post-colonial situation. Kinsman and Foreman of Aluko echoes the theme of rampant corruption in the bureaucracy of Achebe's No Longer at Base, where Obi succumbs to the temptations of high life in Lagos to get rich quick and maintain high standard of urban living. Though Aluko, like Achebe, does not vehemently attack western aesthetics affecting native tradition, he makes his novels didactic to bring out social reform by exposing social evils. Both satirize the society and the individuals.

Aluko like Achebe takes the task immoral and power crazy politicians in his fourth novel Chief, the Honourable Minister, as in A Man of the People of Achebe. It tells the story of Alade Moses, a school principal who has been appointed Minister of Works in the corrupt government of Afromacoland. Like Nanga, Moses luxuriates in plush offices and regal living quarters and he is married to an uneducated woman whom he considers beneath his social status. So Moses takes up with a pretty young nurse who is happy to serve both as his mistress and confidant. Indeed, in some respects he appears to be more closely akin to confused idealists like Odili and Obi Okonkwo in Achebe's novels. In the end Moses is killed by the rampaging crowds. The novel ends, as A Man of the People in the overthrow of civilian government by a military regime claiming to provide order and peace though transient.
REFERENCES:


(4) Aluko T.M. One Man, One Wife, Heinemann, African Writers Series, P.82.

(5) Ibid P.50

(6) Ibid P.21

(7) Aluko T.M. One Man, One Matchet, Heinemann, African Writers Series, P.103.

(8) Ibid P.144.


(10) Aluko T.M. Chief, the Honourable Minister, Heinemann, African Writers Series, P.176.


(12) Aluko T.M., One Man, One Wife, Heinemann, African Writers Series, P.147
13. Aluko T.M., One Man, One Matchet, Heinemann, African Writers Series, P. 82
18. Ibid P. 94.
19. Ibid P. 64
22. Ibid P. 131.
23. Aluko T.M., Chief, the Honourable Minister, Heinemann, African writers series, P. 176.
24. Ibid, P. 154-155
