African literature in English and other European languages with its 'new' themes, myths and techniques of narration has added a new dimension and given a new perspective to commonwealth literature. Africa is no longer a dark continent full of wild life and a fantasy world. It has its rich culture, mythology and traditions and customs though some appear to be primitive and social imperfections. Contemporary African writing, the new voice of world literature tries to emancipate Africa from its literary stereotype and thus highlighting the 'unique' potentialities of African and African experience due to cultural encounter with the west. Modern African novels present a new kind of fictional reality which makes the reader examine afresh both his own reality and his assumption about the modern novel. Chinua Achebe's novels are refreshing, didactic and informative. Exploring the human condition, the novels attempt a spiritual search for roots and a rediscovery of Africa's past. Famous African novelists like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Cyprian Ekwensi, James Ngugi, T.M. Aluko, Elechi Amadi and others are greatly concerned with the realities of man - his cultural identity, individuality, legacy of colonialism, confusion of values and the role of the writer and intellectual in bettering the society.

When west African literature was dominated by the fantastic folklore romances of Amos Tutuola and the stories of city life of Ekwensi, Achebe was the first to introduce psychological crisis into Nigerian literature with the publication of his first novel Things Fall Apart (1958) which has become a classic in modern African writing in English. Chinua Achebe and other African novelists are deeply
concerned with and about the society in transition; its political scenario and corrupt politicians. Novelists like Wole Soyinko are concerned with the human predicament resulting from cultural conflict, exploitation and political injustice. T.M. Aluko of older generation of Nigerian writers, too studies the problems of colonial education through the personality of colonial elite. Aluko is basically concerned with the life of communities that crumbles under the pressure and pulls of colonialism and all that goes with it; an alien religion, western education, 'black white man', social structure based on individualistic values, a system of government and economic order. Aluko and other African writers portray either a traditional society (One Man, One Wife, Things Fall Apart, The River Between etc.) or a 'transitional society' (Arrow of God, A Man of the People, Weep not child, A Grain of Wheat and novels of T.M. Aluko) in fictional terms. Even the traditional society could not preserve its value system and culture unaffected by the west in the colonial situation. It is already crumbling and 'things' have irreparably fallen apart in its cultural encounter with the external forces. Many black African writers are deeply concerned with restoring cultural identity to African society and try the bestow human dignity on African who is looked down upon because of his 'colour' and primitive traditions and customs, not only by the whiteman but also by the 'outsider' within the society.

Aluko's first novel One Man, One Wife dealing with cultural conflict and impact of the west on the native society, is a brilliant satire on the so called westernized Africans. While christianity has preached monogamy, the traditional society encourages polygamy. The converts reject the christian concept of 'One man one wife' imposed
on them by the Christian missionary. The villagers are disillusioned by the new faith, and take to worshipping their native gods. The theme of modernity versus tradition dominates Aluko's fictional world. The conflict between Christianity that preaches monogamy and the native religion that practices polygamy is another major theme of Aluko. Elder Joshua, a recent convert to Christianity is pained when he learns that the new religion does not allow him to have a second wife, for he has already paid the bride price to marry a teenaged girl. Teacher Royasin, the village catechist is also driven out of Isolo for his suspected illicit affair with the wife of a villager. Several others that change faith also lead a polygamous life. They are reluctant to deviate from their age old customs and practices. Even the church finds it very difficult to make them follow the principles of Christianity.

T.M. Aluko has dealt with the theme of conflict of religions i.e. Christianity versus native religion to be precise, monotheism Vs polytheism in terms of worship of gods in some of his novels. The new faith insists on absolute faith in one God, whereas the traditionalists recognize and worship several deities. The deities of the land promise material reward to their devotees whereas the Christians are rewarded in heaven. Even the so called respected church pillars like Elder Joshua, Bible Jeremiah and Teacher Royasin have their own reservations about the tenets of the new faith. In the end the people are disillusioned, not only about the foreign values but also about their own beliefs when 'Shonponna' the god of small pox, strikes the villagers and finally abandoned his own chief priest.
Aluko's second novel *One Man, One Matchet* studies the problems faced by an elite who learns 'new' education during the colonial period. The setting in the novel is Yorubaland where Udo Akpan, a black Nigerian is appointed as District Officer, a post held hitherto by the Europeans. He is the first African in administration, who tries to solve the problems of Ipaja village "in an essentially African Way". When he tries to implement the government's decision to cut down the diseased trees to save the rest of the cocoa crops, Benjamin Benjamin instigates the villagers to oppose the government's move collectively through 'one man, one vote' policy. Even the modern scientific idea of curbing the disease by cutting down the diseased trees is vehemently opposed by the traditionalists who contend that such a decision would affect the country's economy and the individual income. The novel also focuses the activities of the rabble-rousing, ill-educated politician and journalist who creates trouble for Udo Akpan. Also the journalist exploits the gullible illiterate masses and collects huge sums towards legal expenses for cases pending in the court of law and for the benefit of the district. Aluko has exposed the hypocrisy of people like the journalist whose rhetorical speeches from public platform instigate people and who use public issues for their personal gains. Though Benjamin succeeds in the beginning, he faces a crisis and himself gets killed by one of his own followers. Thus he plunges the whole village to bloodshed, rioting, violence and death before peace, law and order is restored by the administration.

Udo Akpan, the African District Officer and protagonist of the novel, checks the activities and the damage caused by the evil designs of the politician. But the villagers distrust this young
man with 'new' ideas and brand him as 'black white man' always supporting the colonial administration and not his own people. He suffers and fails for want of support and sympathy from his own traditional society. Though Aluko in this novel appears to have supported popular tradition - he has absolutely endorsed modernism a scientific advancement. He finds fault with the traditionalists for their lack of scientific temper and their opposition to change.

Aluko's other concerns in the novel are poverty, exploitation, ignorance, corruption, dishonesty, misappropriation of public funds and violence.

In *Kinsman and Foreman* also, Aluko has presented the theme of conflict between tradition and modernity in a more realistic manner than in his earlier two novels. In this novel the conflict with traditional society narrows down to a confrontation between the 'been-to' and the ill-educated self-mademan who represents rampant corruption in the society. Titus Oti who represents modernism is conflicting with Simeon Oke symbolising tradition in almost all the situations. Titus Oti is faced with two major problems in his society. He has to adjust himself to the traditional ways of his people and also has to check corruption in the society which is deep-rooted. In the beginning the traditional society tries to influence Oti and take him into its fold but Titus successfully resists. Titus Oti's relatives in Ibala take undue advantage of his position and also the local church expects generous financial contribution from him towards church building fund, Harvest and Bazaar festival fund etc. But Titus Oti, in spite of his position finds himself in a fix unable to check the dishonesty of his own kinsman Simeon Oke. Confused and unassertive, with his
divided self Oti proves himself unheroic allowing Simeon Oke to go scot-free, unpunished though Simeon is transferred to another region.

To some extent, Titus can be said to be successful as he intends and tries to cleanse the society of social evils. He appears to be partial in granting certain concessions to the traditional society in the interest of the family unity, exhibiting traditionalism showing utmost concern for his family and communal well-being. Aluko’s other concerns in this novel are - Home coming, national identity, rampant corruption, exploitation, religion ignorance and dishonesty at every level in society.

Oladele Taiwo observes that Aluko has failed to establish himself as a reputed Nigerian novelist as his novels have failed to evoke criticism from western and African critics. But Aluko is considered an important writer because of his intimacy with his people and good knowledge about the on-going reality in the society which enabled him to relate native tradition to African experience in modern Nigeria and secondly because of his use of idiom of expression of English popular in Nigeria. Aluko’s protagonists are selfish and worldly and are after wealth, crazy for power and position. Aluko’s early novels are but episodic and do not have a unified plot. Detached incidents or episodes are loosely connected. The plot of One Man, One Wife is facile and unwidely. The theme of polygamy versus monogamy is given only a sketchy treatment and is not sustained throughout the novel. Whereas, Aluko’s second novel One Man, One Matchet is considered slightly as an improvement over the first novel. Here also the plot remains loose and episodic. The narrative is little more than a clumpy and some not so interesting. Though the story is about the government’s move to cut down the diseased cocoa
trees to prevent the disease from spreading. In most of the episodes, the activities of Benjamin Benjamin.

But Kinsman and Foreman has comparatively a well-developed plot with amusing incidents skilfully strung together leading to a hilarious climax. This novel has been praised as the 'artistically best' among the earlier novels by the critics. The characters are well-defined, with each one having a special role to play in the parade of comic events.

Aluko has adopted satiric mode to record his experiences in his novels and has spared none of his characters, situations and institutions - social, political and religious. Lawyers, doctors, judges, engineers, contractors, priests, churches, beaurocrates, politicians, kings, gods, teachers all have been acrimoniously satirized in his novels. He also makes fun of the old and new order, systems, practices, rituals, traditions in one and the same breath.

His satiric eye does not spare the Christians either. The village elders, pastor David, Teacher Royasin, village men and women - Christian or heathen all are satirized. He attacks both the present and the past. The village community at Isolo, Idasa and Ibala, is superstitious, ignorant, illiterate and exploitative, a typical colonized society. It is exploited by the colonizer from the outside and by the religious practices and social customs from within. The internal dynamics so very vital for the growth and sustenance of a social order has yielded little positive. It could produce only cheats like Royasin, village elders like chief Lotun,
Asolo, Bada, Benjamin Benjamin, Simeon Oke, Pa Joel whose chief aim is but to exploit people for their selfish ends. The tyranny of social customs drives people away from their traditional way of life. They embrace Christianity, not out of love for the Christian ways but out of frustration with their own religion which has failed them. Aluko, however, fails to deal with his major theme fully. Unlike Achebe, he looks at the conflict only from the cultural point of view, ignoring economic, social and psychological implications.

Folktales, proverbs and folk songs contribute to the humour and satire in Aluko's novels. In One Man, One Wife it is Toro, a teenager, who tells a folk tale to the village urchins. She concludes it with the remark, "since that day every girl must marry whichever man her parents ask her to marry" and most ironically, she herself does not marry the man her parents ask her to. She thus breaks an age old well respected tradition of her people. Again, the folk tales are not told by the village elders, but by young persons like Toro. This also defeats the main purpose of these stories. Similarly the initiation ceremony of Titus Odi on his return from England in Kinsman and Foreman into the ways of his clan is devoid of seriousness.

Charles Larson in his study of the Third world novel traces its development based on cultural confrontation, which is also described as historical confrontation of the past and the present resulting in cultural cringe. and chaos and annihilation of native culture. Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God, One Man, One Wife, One Man, One Matchet, Kinsman and Foreman etc. are some of
the novels dealing with this kind of cultural confrontation in colonial situation, full of anthropological details with less focus on character.

Cultural re-organisation forms the central theme of the novels of T.M. Aluko who has accepted the colonial reality as an inescapable situation. He therefore aims at restructuring the native culture by projecting a positive picture of the synthesis of the two.

Aluko's works deserve better critical attention than they have received so far. His distinctive contribution to the Nigerian novel is the great variety of English he has employed to suit his characters and the action in the given situation. His technical sophistication in the matter of handling language is shown in his deliberate use of cliches and hackneyed expressions to dramatize his very critical attitude to Yoruba culture.

As we move from Aluko's first novel to the third, we observe a growing sophistication in Aluko's approach to his writings. In the first two novels, satire is directed in a fairly broad, though effective, way at individuals of a basically simple kind. In the third novel, though the intention remains satirical, Aluko is more concerned with the complexities of process of understanding. For example, Titus Oti in *Kinsman and Foreman*, emerges as a strong character because of his clear perception of his total environment. Aluko's works draw attention not only to the foibles and weaknesses in society but also to the attitudes which must be changed if society were to improve.
Many critics have expressed the fear that Aluko 'will ever write a masterpiece' though his twenty five year of literary career has been marked by slow and steady artistic progress. He has been identified as a second rate writer by Bernth Lindfors who observed that:

"He is facile and witty satirist but little beyond that. One searches in his novels invain for the high moral seriousness that pervades even the earliest works of committed artists such as Achebe, Soyinka and Armah. Aluko seemscontent to merely laugh at his world, and because his laughter contains no undertones of anguish or outrage, it rings hollow. He is a critic without a troubled conscience, a trickling gadfly without a sting. It is the superficiality of his social protest, not the occasional clumsiness of his craftsmanship, that identifies him as a second-rate writer. It is hard to take such a light-hearted comedian seriously."

Aluko might not yet have written his masterpiece but each successive novel has shown a clearer thinking out of his main theme and a greater awareness of linguistic problems. His educated men have become progressively more acceptable because they are more flexible and more aware of the problems of change, and his
traditional villains have become progressively less villainous and more representative of the dignity of traditional life. It seems therefore not entirely correct to talk of Aluko's insensitivity towards language or inability to develop. And he would certainly emerge as a writer of repute to be reckoned with in the years to come.