



# RETROSPECTING POSTCOLONIALITY IN THE NOVELS OF CHINUA ACHEBE AND V. S. NAIPAUL: A CRITICAL READING OF *ARROW OF GOD* AND *THE MIMIC MEN*

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**Abstract:** The paper entitled “Retrospecting Postcoloniality in the Novels of Chinua Achebe and V. S. Naipaul: A Critical Reading of *Arrow of God* and *The Mimic Men*” tries to analyse the depiction of colonialism, its impact and the responses it generated in the novels of Chinua Achebe and V. S. Naipaul with special reference to Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*. In this study, some important postcolonial themes such as alienation, hybridity, aping the west, social and cultural ambivalence, political despondency and the socio-political changes after the arrival of colonial powers in the African and Caribbean communities are discussed in some detail while emphasizing the characters, themes and some events of these novels. The hypothetical position in this paper is that despite their differences in perspectives and predicaments, both Achebe and Naipaul condemn colonialism for leading the Third World into social, political and cultural disorientation. Important concepts and theoretical insights from post-colonial theory have been used for this study. Though colonialism is over formally, it is still disturbing the Third World through new programmes and policies. Hence, the paper purports to bring to light the techniques and methods adopted by colonial powers to demolish the eastern civilizations. Moreover, while discussing these works, one gets a helpful picture of the history of Nigerian and Trinidadian communities. It further gives information on the internal rivalries and struggles that existed in the Third World nations, at the advent of the imperial powers.

**Keywords:** Post-Colonial, Achebe, Naipaul, Hybridity, Satire.

Chinua Achebe and V. S. Naipaul are two dominant figures in the postmodern literary environment. During the eventful literary career, each has dealt with a plethora of themes and motifs

in their respective novels, short stories and essays. Each has established himself as a remarkable fictionist in the genre of postcolonial literature. Achebe received several recognitions including the Man Booker Prize of 2007. Naipaul, on the other hand, achieved a number of honours including the Nobel Prize for literature in 2001. One of the major common themes in their writings is the arrival of the colonial powers in their respective communities, namely the African and the Caribbean, and its devastating impact on the communities concerned. Obviously, there are clear differences in the way in which Achebe and Naipaul treat the question of colonialism. Despite the differences in their perspectives and treatments, both Achebe and Naipaul hold colonialism responsible for the Third World having been pushed into a state of social, political and cultural disorientation.

The attempt here is to analyse the treatment of colonialism in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* on the social, political and cultural levels. Important postcolonial themes such as alienation, hybridity, aping the west, social and cultural ambivalence, political despondency and the socio-political changes after the arrival of colonial powers in the African and Caribbean communities have been discussed in some detail while emphasizing the characters, themes and events of these novels.

Achebe's *Arrow of God* is a remarkable commentary on the encounter between the traditional Igbo society in eastern Nigeria and the newly arrived British colonial administration. Here the author incidentally deals with the internal rivalry and strife that had prevailed among the worshippers of different deities and the followers of the prominent persons in the village of Umuaro, the prominent of the locales of the novel as well. The central character of *Arrow of God* is Ezeulu, the clan's chief priest who officiates for its protecting deity, Ulu. There are frequent references to the distant past, to how the six villages of *Umuachala, Umunneora, Umuagu, Umuezeani, Umuogwugwu* and *Umuisiuzo* united as a clan in self-defence against the warriors of Abam and chose the priest of the new clan god from the weakest of the villages so as to forestall internal strife arising out of the importance of the priestly office. In this novel, there is no 'Ceremony of Innocence' as one sees in the first part of *Things Fall Apart*. Colonialism has already established its supremacy in the Igbo soil. As Professor Indrasena Reddy remarks,

"Like *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God* is also concerned with the socio-cultural milieu of the people prior to British occupation. The novel seeks to explicate in much greater depth the myths, traditions of Umuaro (the fictional locale of the novel) and the problem of culture-conflict than *Things Fall Apart* does. While *Things Fall Apart* mirrors the Igbo society of the last quarter of the 19th century, *Arrow of God* deals with the colonial situation of the same community in the first quarter of the present century." (Reddy, 49 - 50)

As the novel opens, Ezeulu is unhappy with the escalation of a minor conflict with the nearby Okperi tribe whom he sees as entitled to a disputed piece of land. His arguments for not going to war are well considered and reveal his knowledge of history. But a powerful speaker and a very wealthy leader, Nwaka prevails. Unfortunately, the delegate sent to the Okperi gives into his anger after being goaded about his virility and breaks the ikenga or ancestral image of the Okperi spokesman, who then kills him. The resulting war is crushed by the British District Officer, Winterbottom, who rules in favour of Okperi. After the war, he breaks all the guns in Umuaro and becomes known by the epithet "Otiji-Egbe" that evokes this act. Winterbottom is also an idealist. However, he strongly believes in the mission of British colonialism. He is one of five male British officials in the area, the others being Tony Clarke, Roberts, Wade, and Wright. There are also the dedicated and severe missionary Dr Mary Savage, whom Winterbottom secretly courts and later marries, and the Nigerian Anglican preacher John Goodcountry, who takes advantage of Umuaro's yam crisis to gain converts. As Ezeulu supports Okperi in the struggle, Captain Winterbottom misunderstands that Ezeulu is willing to cooperate with the colonial administration. His clumsy attempt to appoint Ezeulu as a Warrant Chief of Umuaro is destroyed by the strong tribal feeling and individuality of the latter. It in turn leads to the captivity of Ezeulu.

Meanwhile, the traditional ceremony of announcing the new moon in Umuaro is deprived on account of the captivity of Ezeulu, the chief priest. After his return, Ezeulu refuses to eat the

remaining yams and announces the New Yam Festival and thus prevents the reaping of the yams in time. It is exploited by Mr. Goodcountry to propagate Christianity in the land. This unexpected struggle coupled with the death of Obika, his dearest son drives Ezeulu into insanity. The novel is concluded with the ironic remark that "Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son." (Achebe 235 - 236)

V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* denotes a critical juncture in the history of Trinidadian politics. Naipaul's own comment on the novel is that,

"This new fiction was about colonial shame and fantasy, a book, in fact, about how the powerless lie about themselves, since it is their only resource. The book was called *The Mimic Men*. And it was not about Mimics. It was about colonial men mimicking the conditions of manhood, men who had grown to distrust everything about themselves." (Naipaul, "Two Worlds", *The Nobel Lecture*, 7 December, 2001)

A good number of the critics view that Naipaul in this novel is describing what is usually called a postcolonial trauma, the inactivity, confusion, dependency, cultural conflict and the natural euphoria provoked by the colonial rule and its sudden withdrawal.

The novel has a three-part structure. The first part comprises of Ralph's student life in London, his various sensual and material adventures, his meeting with an English girl called Sandra and subsequent marriage, their returning to Isabella which is symbolic of Trinidad, Ralph's detachment with his mother, his broken career in the real estate business, his growing disparity with Sandra, the dramatic destruction of their Roman housewarming, their spiritual and sexual promiscuity and their final separation.

In the second part, Ralph makes a retrospection of his early childhood and his early school life. It includes the childhood of Ralph; his relationship with his father and his maternal family including his uncle Cecil and his cousin Sali; his attachment and conflicts with his friends such as Brown, Eden and Deschampsneufs; his father's conversion as a Hindu saint; and finally, his migration to London for education. In this part, the social and political problems of Trinidad are highlighted, including the racial feelings and segregations. Ralph's maternal family owns the patent of Bella Bella Bottling and Coca-Cola. Another remarkable event of this part is Ralph's act of changing his name from Ranjit Kripal Singh to Ralph Singh or R. R. K. Singh.

In the third part, the narrator Ralph starts from where he had stopped in the first part. In the final face of his career, Ralph Singh starts a socialist oriented political movement with his journalist friend and school comrade Mr Brown. The spiritual ideas of his father who had become a Hindu saint by then and the ashvamedha he conducted are their chief tools to inspire the crowd. They are likewise the ideational sources of their pamphlets too. Even though they are able to crash the existing machinery, neither Brown, the chief, nor his companions have any plan regarding the rule after forming the government. They have to face some important issues such as the nationalization of the sugar industry, the re-signing of the bauxite contract, the dismissal of the old civil servants and the issues regarding the trade union. They had no option other than submitting themselves before the British politicians who failed to help them.

After the failure of a negotiation with a British politician on the matter of bauxite contract, the political future of Ralph Singh is concluded. As N. Ramadevi remarks in her study,

"Ralph Singh, the protagonist-narrator of the novel, is the representative of a generation which gains power at independence and can only mimic the authenticity of selfhood. His various failures at the level of personal life are indicative of a larger, national failure." (Ramadevi, 69 -70)

One of the fundamental questions discussed in the postcolonial writings is the problem of roots and identities. This issue gains prominence on account of the social and cultural disparities between the imperial and Third World nations. Both Achebe and Naipaul discuss this question in the concerned novels, though with a little bit of difference. The clash between the civilizations of the Igbo and the British bringing colonialism and their Christian religion to West Africa is re-enacted in Achebe's novel through the perspective of Ezeulu, the chief priest of the deity Ulu in Umuaro, a god figure emanated from the need to fight the slave traders of neighbouring Abame. A land dispute



between the Okperi people and Umuaro that results in a brief war is forcibly stopped by the British District Commissioner, Captain Winterbottom who further sets the stage for the ensued British intrusion into Umuaro. A fight between Ulu and Idemili gives a chance for the new religion of Christianity to make an entry into the African soil. The conversion of the Igbos from their traditional religious order to Christianity is symbolic of the smashing of their ancient roots and tuning into the Christianized atmosphere as a circumstantial necessity. Ezeulu's madness can be attributed to his strong awareness of such a negation and its larger socio-cultural impact. In the words of Prof. S. A. Khayyoom,

"In the novels of Achebe there is a shift from the communal life to the individual consciousness and back to the ethnic group. The individual is vulnerable in isolation and introspection but is reabsorbed into the mainstream of the community. Achebe tries to describe the symbolic order of African society from a culturalist point of view and as a detached observer he attempts to highlight the setbacks of traditional culture responsible for the social and political maladies of the modern Nigerian society with a sense of irony and satire." (Khayyoom, 32 -33)

In the case of Ralph Singh, the protagonist of *The Mimic Men*, this problem is much more conspicuous on account of the multi-national feelings in his personality. Most of the characters including his wife Sandra face the same trouble. Ralph always bothers about his incapacity to capture the Indian consciousness and the heritage of the heroic Rajputs. He regards himself as a lost Rajput. He even reads Tod's difficult volumes.

"I was a Singh. And I would dream that all over the Central Asian plains the horsemen looked for their leader. Then a wise man came to them and said, `You are looking in the wrong place. The true leader of you lies far away, shipwrecked on an island the like of which you cannot visualize.'" (Naipaul, 104 - 105)

Thus, in both the novels this negation of the tradition and the futile attempt to assimilate with the present have traumatic effects.

Colonialism has resulted in colossal social and cultural changes in the Caribbean and African communities. When Achebe describes the immediate effect of colonial invasion in Nigeria, Naipaul contemplates on the larger consequences of the colonial encounter in Isabella, which is symbolic of Trinidad.

Colonial contact had multiple impacts among the Igbos. It quickened the despotic tendencies and corruption which had already been prevalent among the powerful persons among them. An obvious example is shown when Achebe describes the case of James Ikedi. The British headquarters in Nigeria exert much pressure on Mr Winterbottom to appoint a warrant chief from among the natives. Finally, he chooses James Ikedi, an intelligent man with Western education, for the post.

"Within three months of this man receiving his warrant, Captain Winterbottom began to hear rumours of his high-handedness. He had set up an illegal court and a private prison. He took any woman who caught his fancy without paying the customary bride-price. Captain Winterbottom went into the whole business thoroughly and uncovered many more serious scandals. He decided to suspend the fellow for six months, and accordingly withdrew his warrant." (Achebe, 55 - 56)

When a foolish officer replaces the position of Ikedi without much awareness, he not only joins with an overseer for corruption and other malicious practices, but also even creates his own titles, as Mr Winterbottom has been spoken of in the Gun incident. Here, the native tries to violate and discard his own customs and practices in the shadow of colonialism.

The abomination of the sacred python by Oduche, the son of Ezeulu also indicates the same confusion. Christianity has also created the hybridized individuals like Moses Unachukwu. Homi K. Bhabha, in his analysis of the postcolonial literature views 'hybridity' as a social condition in which the elements of both the colonial and the native Third World cultures are fused in an individual that it produces something ambivalent and artificial. This hybrid condition always creates a sort of pessimism and a sense of nostalgia and loss in the native. Unachukwu is an interpreter between the Christians and the people of Umuaro. In spite of his conversion to Christianity, he is not able to

disgrace the Igbo cult. He looks upon the white men and their powerful god with fear, awe and wonder. But there is another minor group of characters who recognizes the danger of colonialism, but tries to benefit practically from it. The best example for it is John Nwodika, the servant of Mr Winterbottom. In spite of his colonial contacts, he respects his native tradition and the honourable personalities in it. The respect and dignity with which he treats Ezeulu in the latter's captivity is really remarkable and admirable. It seems that despite his relationship with the colonial officials, he realizes the dignity and respectability of the native tradition and the eminent, wise visionaries among them like Ezeulu. Since Nwodika knows about the inevitability of social change after the arrival of colonialism, he tries to exploit the situation practically by trying to enrich himself financially. John knows the fact that, his village has no much complicity in the daily transactions of the market. At the same time, he feels a peculiar pride and respect about his own civilization, when he is asked of Ezeulu by Mr Winterbottom. he does not disgrace his tradition, but tries to tune himself to the practical demands of the situation. Achebe seems to favour this approach of John. It must be admitted that John does not mock and disgrace his tradition for attaining heights as people like James Ikedi were used to doing.

In the case of the Trinidadians, the sense of abomination, violation, hybridity and alienation are more severe on account of the multi-racial and cultural existence of the community. The novel *The Mimic Men* occurs during the middle of the twentieth century. Naturally, all these problems evolve into a kind of cultural and political crisis in the Caribbean islands. Ralph and his companions start a government, not out of any political goals, but merely to enjoy the thrill of it and to experience the opium of power.

"The situation was squalid. But we were among men to whom, in trips abroad at the invitation of foreign governments, in conferences in London, in the chauffeured Humbers and in the first-class hotels of half a dozen cities, the richness of the world was suddenly revealed. We were among men who felt more cheated, more bitter in their power than they had ever done before, men who feared that the rich world so wonderfully open to them might at any moment be withdrawn. Each man therefore sought to turn that airy power, which his anxiety rightly painted to him as insecure, into a reality." (Naipaul, 221 - 222)

Political power embodies the colonizer's dream of power, possession and self-realization.

Through Ralph's sensuous adventures in London and his marriage to Sandra, Naipaul satirizes the Caribbean's passion for fashionable British women and its disastrous effects. It is evident when Ralph justifies his passion for Sandra.

"Sandra, I can see, will not be everyone's idea of a beauty; few women are. But she overwhelmed me then; and she would overwhelm me now, I know: her looks were of the sort that improves with the strength and definition of maturity. She was tall; her bony face was longish and I liked the suggestion of thrust in her chin and lower lip. I liked her narrow forehead and her slightly ill-humored eyes perhaps she needed glasses. And there was a coarseness about her skin which enchanted me." (Naipaul, 44 - 45)

The same hybridity is visible, when Ralph celebrates his Roman housewarming. The people of Trinidad try to create the atmosphere of British seaports and swimming pools with their artificial resources and enjoy themselves. Throughout the novel, Naipaul bitterly satirizes the Trinidadians who run frequently after the pleasures of life in Britain including polished restaurants, luxurious fancy items, imperial garments and food without any internal benefits but merely the enjoyment in being in that status and the thrill imparted. Racialism is another severe result of colonization. It is more evident, when Hawk, a half African, refuses to shake hands with his mother in the presence of his friends, because she is a black. Ralph's mental agony, when he visits Brown's home is another example. One of the key issues in the novel, Ralph's act of changing his name from Ranjith Kripal Singh to Ralph Singh or R. R. K. Singh, also results from a similar kind of inferiority complex. According to R. S. Pathak,

"*The Mimic Men* have an attitude which is in conformity with that of the empire

builders. They look down upon common people and try to keep themselves aloof from their company. Their elitist mode renders them alienated from their society. Naipaul's novel, however, seems to suggest that they are what they are because of extenuating circumstances of chance and environment." (Dhawan, West Indian, 161 - 162)

In both *Umuro* and *Isabella*, the financially superior persons enjoy a higher social status and they look on others with a superior social gesture. In all the meetings of Igbos, Nwaka, the wealthy man has a very persuasive opinion which people treat with respect and obligation. He tries to exhibit his high financial status before others with his five wives decorated in enormous jewellery. It is he who creates the conflicts among the people on petty issues. When the yam crisis occurs, he even provokes the people to discard the deity of Ulu in favour of a new one. He also joins with Ezedimili to plot against Ezeulu and to destroy his priesthood. Ironically most of their rebukes and convictions are justified by the public due to the force of circumstances and the incapacity of Ezeulu to recognize the danger inflicted on himself and his clan. Ralph's uncle shares a similar attitude, when he goes with Ralph through the slums.

"I imagine I had expected more passion and more pain. But I kept my thoughts to myself and merely said, 'Why can't they give them leggings?' 'They' were the Stockwell estates, whose overseers' houses, tall concrete pillars, cream concrete walls, red corrugated-iron roofs, presently appeared, rather close together, with no gardens to speak of and as bare of trees as the sugar-cane fields in which they were set. Miserable crop! But the pain I felt was my own. Cecil's father said, 'Leggings cost money.'" (Naipaul, 104 - 105)

Ralph's uncle, a member of the upper-class, treats the workers not even slightly better than he treats his machines and animals. Another group contains the aristocratic pretenders like the Deschampsneufs. Deschampsneufs were the French emigrants in *Isabella*. They entertain James Anthony Froude, the imperialist pamphleteer to achieve their lost social superiority after they were disgraced due to the presence of one of their family members in the anti-governmental rebellion in 1877. They further try to evoke a French affiliation and cultural superiority which they actually do not deserve. It is obvious when Ralph visits their home before he leaves for London. Thus, both Achebe and Naipaul mock the aristocratic pretenders in their respective communities.

While dealing with colonialism, both Achebe and Naipaul employ irony and satire as two chief weapons to fight against its encroachment into their respective native civilizations. However, their satire is not just restricted to colonialism. They recognize evil as an innate trait of human nature. Hence, they do not hesitate to debunk, ridicule and criticize the wrong practices in politics in their respective native lands. Satire is also directed at those individuals who sacrifice their inner virtues to gain undue favours from colonial officials.

Achebe severely ridicules colonialism and its officials in *Arrow of God*. This is evident from the selection of the name of the colonial chief, Mr Winterbottom, which means ashy buttocks. He further ridicules the incapability of the British officials to recognize the Nigerian people, their weather, their style of living, their arts and even their emotions. Mr Winterbottom decides to make Ezeulu the Warrant Chief in *Umuro* for the reason that the latter had stood for the truth in the conflict between *Umuro* and Okperi. Winterbottom has learnt a few Igbo words and is fond of using them frequently. While referring to the guns, he tells Tony Clark that Winterbottom is named Otijiegbe by the natives which meant "breaker of guns". In the novel, Achebe mocks the pointless prejudices of the whites about the natives. One remarkable occasion is Mr Winterbottom's chatting with Tony Clark.

"I have not found out what it was, but I think he must have had some pretty fierce taboo working on him. But he was a most impressive figure of a man. He was very light in complexion, almost red. One finds people like that now and again among the Ibos. I have a theory that the Ibos in the distant past assimilated a small non-negroid tribe of the same complexion as the Red Indians." (Achebe, 38 - 39)

The other officers are worse in their acts. Wright's sleeping with the native women and Tony Clark's ambivalence after the hospitalizing of Mr Winterbottom are all the objects of ridicule for

Achebe. He further criticizes the Britisher's brutal treatment of natives and their mode of employing the people of Umuaro without making any payment.

However, Achebe's satire is not restricted to the British alone. Achebe strongly scorns the pride and arrogance in Ezeulu, the musings of the possibility of power in Edo and the demonstration of the wealth by Nwaka. Nwaka's boastful mask in the Idemili festival is one of the many examples of satire. In comparison with the objective and moral satire of Achebe, Naipaul is a superior dealer of irony and satire. As with Salman Rushdie, most of his works and especially *The Mimic Men* are filled with satire from the beginning to the end. Regarding the satire in *The Mimic Men*, Prof. Shashi Kamra remarks:

"The narrator's irony and satire is a reflection on the unquestioning and greedy mimicking of patterns of behaviour of the colonial which the achievement of political independence and democracy implicitly rejects. This mimic behaviour is generated as much by a natural human response to the contemporary world to leap across centuries into roles esteemed by the world powers as to a lack of indigenous institutions and thought systems. The essential fact that the colonial is now incorporated into the subjective reality of the colonized has to be accepted in order to contend with the reality of the situation. The polarization of awareness along a continuum of consciousness which ranges from simplicity to sophistication (literal to literary) dramatizes the emergence and existence of the Third World protagonist." (Kamra, 49 - 50)

Naipaul's chief objects of ridicule are those natives who are educated in Britain and are trying to imitate British fashions, ways and morals. He further mocks the natives like Cecil's father who takes charge of spreading the Western practices and ways throughout the island. Another major subject of ridicule in the novel is the educated Trinidadian's passion for the polished British women and the inevitable disintegration resulting from their association. Ralph's own failed marriage with Sandra is its obvious example.

Naipaul further satirizes the Western notions of life. The name "Shylock" is itself a symbol of miserliness and rough nature of the British landed gentry. Lady Stella's passion for nursery rhymes, Sandra's play with her breasts, the behaviour of British politicians, are all subjects for Naipaul's bitter criticism.

Like Achebe, Naipaul also satirizes the degraded and meaningless practices among the people of Isabella. An obvious example is the ridicule of racism through Hok's behaviour with his mother, in the presence of others. When Ralph and his schoolmates walk through the street with their teacher, one boy reports that Hok has not talked to his mother who passed that way. Even when the teacher forces him, Hok is reluctant to greet his mother before others. The reason is that she is a Black. The students further stand in an exaggerated military posture in order to highlight the situation before the ignorant common masses. It is only when the teacher threatens that Hok meets and shakes hands with his mother.

Naipaul further mocks the Trinidadian's manner of aping the British in their deeds and attitudes. The Roman house-warming of Ralph, the sea bath of Cecil's family, the aristocratic pretences of Deschampsneufs, and the political activities of Ralph and his companions are perfect examples. As R. S. Pathak states,

"Naipaul regards the novel as a form of social inquiry rather than an opportunity for autobiography and boasting." His own fiction is both the creative interpretation of past and a criticism of the contemporary life. It emerges as an authentic account of the agony and the pride, the trials and tribulations of his people." (Dhawan, West Indian, 114- 115)

Now to conclude, both Achebe and Naipaul are critics of colonialism. Achebe recognizes the fact that colonial rule has crushed the existing order in Nigeria. They not only have destroyed the traditional roots of the Igbos through the propagation of Christianity, but also pushed the people into a kind of existential disorientation. Naipaul in his *The Mimic Men* discusses the same problem with much more depth and gravity. Naipaul's commentary is more severe on account of the multi-racial



and rootless existence of the Trinidadian society.

Naipaul and Achebe view that, colonialism has created a large group of hybridized individuals. These people have their roots, neither in the traditional order, nor in the post-colonial atmosphere. In the case of Trinidad, the problem is more severe because it has become a multi-racial community of old Red Indians, imported slaves from Africa, the imported labourers from India and the remaining ex-colonial officials. So naturally their search for roots and identity is the major theme in the novels of Naipaul.

Both Achebe and Naipaul use irony and satire as two potent tools to ridicule colonial officials, their hunger for power and those natives who destroy themselves by surrendering themselves to the will of the colonial officials. However, there are remarkable differences in the tone and mode of satire in these two writers.

Achebe is an objective satirist. He has a very obvious purpose while ridiculing the colonial officials and their ways. He wants to inform both the Westerners and the Third World about the pre-colonial dignity of the African civilizations. At the same time, he does not whitewash any sins and evil practices that existed in the pre-colonial Igbo order. However, he is of the opinion that colonialism is responsible for the contemporary social and cultural crisis that the Third World nations confront at present.

In the writings of Naipaul, satire and irony are something inevitable. Most of the situations in his literary works have an undercurrent of irony and mockery. Sometimes he socializes the individual problems or he personalizes a social issue. Achebe depicts the transformation of Nigeria in a very realistic manner. He does not attach himself with any of the factions but rather passively narrates the inevitable social change. Naipaul has a very pessimistic and gloomy vision in most of his fictions.

Achebe in *Arrow of God* does not present a contemporary reality. He rather tries to fictionalize a dark reality in the days of his ancestors. Hence, he is not very aggressive or pungent in his analysis of colonialism. He further accepts the social change in Nigeria as something essential and inevitable. His objective attitude may also be the result of his Western education.

Naipaul, in most of his writings, depicts the contemporary social and political reality. The novel *The Mimic Men* is especially autobiographical, both in its subject matter and in its presentation. Naturally the contempt, disgust, dissatisfaction and humour with which he writes the novel are the unconscious reflection of his own personal failures and problems.

Both Achebe and Naipaul view that corruption and other social evils are not the by-products of colonialism. As for Achebe, he feels that the colonial rule has only quickened the pace and length of the existing corrupting tendencies in Nigeria. It is obviously due to the disintegration, cracks, internal rivalry, hunger for power, and the selfishness among the natives that colonialism could establish its rule in Nigeria very easily and immediately. Rather, the colonial officials have been exploiting some cracks and weaknesses in the existing civilization for their gains in the social, political and religious realms. In so far as Trinidad is concerned, the colonial officials' massive exercising of power has evoked a sense of weakened ambition, desperation, disillusionment and pessimism in the native crowd. This accounts for even the most potent among them trying to enact the same political drama even after the withdrawal of colonialism.

Thus, in short, in spite of all the differences in the perspectives and predicaments, both Naipaul and Achebe are vehement critics of colonisation. They reject the policies and programmes put forward by the colonial administration as strategies of ruling and uplifting the natives. They judiciously identify the dangers and destructive tendencies brought about by the colonial forces in their respective communities.

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