

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

**A Study of the Contribution of Chinua Achebe's
Writings to the Indigenization and Inculturation
of Theology in the Ibo (Nigeria) Context:
A Critical Analysis.**

**UP 33333
A DISSERTATION**

Presented to:

**The Faculty of the College of Education
De La Salle University
Manila, Philippines**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education**

In Religious and Values Education.

By:

Ayuk Ausaji Ayuk

June 1996



DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	vi
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	5
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
SCOPE AND DELIMITATION	7
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	9
ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY	9
SELECTION OF NOVELS/NOVELIST	10
CHAPTER II	12
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	12
THEOLOGY	12
AFRICAN THEOLOGY	16
LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY	19
SYNTHESIS	22
CHAPTER III	25
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	25
DEFINITION OF TERMS	29
CHAPTER IV	33
METHODOLOGY	33
SUMMARY	37
CHAPTER V	39
CHINUA ACHEBE'S LIFE AND WRITINGS	39
LIFE OF ACHEBE	39
CHAPTER VI	46
FEATURES OF IBO WORLDVIEW	46
IBO RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES	47
UNDERSTANDING THE IBO WORLDVIEW THROUGH THEIR PROVERBS	54



DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER VII.....	61
THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHINUA ACHEBE'S WRITINGS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEOLOGY IN IBO (NIGERIA) CONTEXT	61
INTRODUCTION	61
MORNING YET ON CREATION DAY.....	61
<u>CHI</u> IN IBO COSMOLOGY	62
ANALYSIS	67
"THINGS FALL APART".....	74
THE MISSIONARY ENCOUNTER.....	80
THEOLOGICAL DIMENSION	85
BIBLICAL BASIS OF THE APPROACH.....	90
SYNTHESIS.....	92
ARROW OF GOD	95
INTRODUCTION.....	95
A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL.....	96
THEOLOGICAL DIMENSION	100
ANALYSIS	104
NO LONGER AT EASE	106
INTRODUCTION.....	106
A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE BOOK.....	107
THEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS	109
ANALYSIS	116
SYNTHESIS.....	118
MORNING YET ON CREATION DAY: CHI IN THE IGBO COSMOLOGY.....	120
THINGS FALL APART.....	122
ARROW OF GOD	124
NO LONGER AT EASE	127
A THEOLOGICAL VIEW OF ACHEBE'S WRITINGS	130
ACHEBE'S STARTING POINT.....	130
RESPECT FOR CULTURE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION.....	131
THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE AND ITS CRITERIA	134
CHAPTER VIII.....	137
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	137
CONCLUSIONS.....	144
RECOMMENDATION	146
REFERENCES.....	148
APPENDIX.....	152



DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

This study examines the theological perspective of Chinua Achebe's three novels and their implications for the Christian faith.

The novels were selected based on their contribution to the development of theology in the Ibo context. Religious understanding is one of the major themes in the novels, aside from their anthropological and sociological significance.

Achebe is a well known writer in Nigeria, Africa, and the world in general. His works have achieved recognition all over the world, for their distinctive contribution to literature in English. Moreover, awards have been received by the writer for his creativity. Consulted for this study are the three main novels, Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease and the Arrow of God and essays from his book Morning Yet on Creation Day which includes works dealing with various subject matters, such as his books, his life, and the relevant essay "Chi in the Igbo Cosmology."

Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God are an evocation of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Ibo village life, how the life of the people was greatly affected by the early missionaries' activities, whereas No Longer at Ease has a modern setting mixed with a village life setting, but more of the challenges of living a contemporary Nigerian life. The societies evoked in this novels are generally unfamiliar to overseas readers.



DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

The novels unveil the values and attitudes of the Ibo people. They are meant to assist in the decolonization process of the people who have suffered the trauma of foreign conquest and the imposition of an alien culture.

Chinua had a Christian upbringing and lived within a rural or village setting, before going to college. This gave him the ample opportunity to know and understand what was going on between the early Christians and the rural or traditional folks. He was able to sense the misunderstanding that was going on between these two groups. And so he used his creative ingenuity to write novels that would bring about change in the attitude of the traditional folk and the Christians towards one another. He was able to do this by first exposing the readers to the worldview of the Ibos in order to show that they have a well developed and dignified culture that is totally based on their belief of who God is, before the coming of the early missionaries. It is not every aspect of their culture that is distinct from the Christian faith. As a matter of fact there are practices within their culture that can be utilized to make Christianity closer to them than making it foreign.

The encounter of the Ibos with Christian faith and a different system was really a trauma that needed redress and Chinua Achebe did this by writing novels that have contributed immensely to the development of theology in the Ibo context without deviating from the mainline Christian faith.

