

## **THE RISE OF 'INDIVIDUALISM' Vs THE AWAKENING OF 'COMMUNAL CONSCIOUSNESS' IN AYN RAND'S AND CHINUA ACHEBE EARLY FICTION**

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### Abstract:

This research article attempts to establish fictional form itself as a literary genre which has undergone considerable changes during the last two hundred years, replacing the classical world by a subjective and individualistic one. The development of the novel is seen moving from a neutral omniscient narrative to a point of view' novel and later to the much more subjectively centered 'stream of consciousness' novel.

The rise of individualism as a global phenomenon and the awakening of communal consciousness have in the course of history fostered the kind of private egocentric life one finds in the heroes of the eighteenth century novels. Fictional narrative gradually evolved as the principal technique for capturing the intricacies of the individual consciousness. Three quests of the contemporary writer, that is, quest for survival, identity and authenticity are in line with intellectual movements in other fields of enquiry-too.

There is a need to read American and African literature, to have a feel of the American and African life and understand the workings of the American and African psyche. Ayn Rand and Chinua Achebe have struggled to present various aspects of the American and African self in the context of a historical moment. The researcher has commented critically on the works of each novelist, individually first and then compared and contrasted them against the background of each of their respective fictional works.

Key words: , man versus the state, tribal culture , communism , change and transformation, development, subjectively centered , point of view novel ,significant juxtaposition , multiplicity ,mutability, Individualism, collective consciousness, American experience , African experience , identity crisis .

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Fictional form itself as a literary genre has undergone considerable changes during the last two hundred years, replacing the classical world by a subjective and individualistic one. The rise of individualism as a global phenomenon and the awakening of communal and traditional relationships have in the course of history fostered the kind of private egocentric life one finds in the heroes of the eighteenth century novels. In Western Europe the spreading of social cohesions was undermined by the individualistic pattern of thinking and life, and new modes of personal relationships eventually developed. Fictional narrative gradually evolved as the principal technique for capturing the intricacies of the individual consciousness. Thus in 'The Rise of the Novel', Ian Watt argues, while the novel as a literary form took root, simultaneously private experience emerged as socially significant <sup>1</sup>. (Watt 1967: 53) Gradually the novel form itself reflected this development, moving from a neutral omniscient narrative to the point of view novel, and later to the much more subjectively centered "stream of consciousness novel". <sup>2</sup> (Ibidem, p.53)

Bhalla, quoting Armijo Singh in "Self-definition" as a moral concern in 'The Twentieth Century American Novel' observes that the new society in America started taking shape in the beginning of this century, through a technological revolution, the seeds of which were sown centuries ago in renaissance Europe. America as a culture has been part of the European movement and till the advent of the twentieth century; it has always been on the receiving end.<sup>3</sup> (Bhalla 1981: iv) But the centre of gravity shifted in the beginning of this century, and during and before the First World War, America became the home of new technology, and her literature burst upon the world with tremendous force and energy. The American modernist writer broke away from the restraint of his own society and started articulating his own experience in terms of his own independent individuality. Young American writers became part of an international movement and many artists went away to live in Paris to imbibe the new culture and fight American Puritanism. The new modernist writer tried to dispense with the old consciousness of absolute ideas and created new modernist works of art. This brought in its wake, (as Ramachandra Rao observes in 'The American Fictional Hero'), "an acute self consciousness and a sense of terror born of uncertainty, and indignity of modern existence."<sup>4</sup> (Rao 1979: vii) a condition created by the breakup of small village community and family. The social organization, the aloneness and the concomitant boredom are all aspects of modern life which are portrayed by a modernist writer. The basic emotion is fear and the basic urge is escape. But the struggle of the modern writer is to find a way out of this contemporary confusion, and to achieve a psychic stability by creating myths which can subsume new realities.

"The American novel was born", according to Richard Chase, Bhalla observes in The Twentieth Century American Novel "out of a culture of contradiction". Its genesis, according to him lies in "the aesthetic possibilities of radical forms of alienation, contradiction and disorder."<sup>5</sup> (Bhalla 1981: ix) D. H. Lawrence discovers contradiction in the 'duplicity' of the American literary mind because of a basic opposition between the 'puritan consciousness' and the 'native spirit of the place'. The spirit of the American continent (as Olga.W.Vickery

observes in Language as Theme and Technique in Modern American Fiction) has been reckoned with, by the American imagination as the terrifying and mysterious theme of the 'frontier' in American fiction. The guilt prone American self underwent another baptism of terror realizing its limited capacity to cope with the physical and spiritual demands of his new homeland. <sup>6</sup>(Vickery 1970: 179)

There is a sort of continuity in the tradition of the American novel though the context has changed, observes Frank Kermode in *Continuities*. The new technology, the mechanical World Wars and the fear to survival has not only accentuated the old terror and made it a perpetual nightmare, but also made it universal – a condition of existence for all men all over the globe in the twentieth century. The American novel has acquired a new immediacy and relevance not only for the American but also for all those who are interested in contemporary life and art. <sup>7</sup>(Kermode 1968: 223 -224)

The need for the transmutation of the American self was first realized by Henry James. Frank. D. Mc Connell joins issues with this school of thought in his recent book, *Four Post War American Novelists: Bellow, Mailer, Barth and Pynchon* and asserts that with the advent of Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Faulkner, "the big three of the twenties" the American novel enters the modernist phase. <sup>8</sup> (Mc Connell 1977: xii –xiii) It is the war and its terror, as a reality and as a metaphor, outside and deep down in the human psyche, that provides the warp and woof to their novels. Hugh Kenner tells us in *A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers* that in the thirties, the war assumes ideological and psychological shape and the novel becomes Marxian and Naturalistic, though Malcolm Cowley thinks that the hard realistic surface of the novels of the thirties should not obscure the idealistic core. According to him, the novelist creates Biblical myths in contemporary terms to find solutions to urgent social problems. The novelist of the twenties continues writing but the social conflict assumes greater importance now and as the clouds of another war darkens the absurdity and surrealism, indicating another psychic shift. <sup>9</sup> (Kenner 1975: xii) The sense of insecurity and terror, disintegration and disillusionment now become accentuated still further, and survival assumes a more sophisticated and complex form. Man in the contemporary world is now worried about achieving some sort of psychic steadiness in order to exist in a social set up. The old organic structure, which had already been undermined by the Modernist novel, now gives way to a symbiotic, relativistic, open-ended and elastic form. Not that the symbolist or dialectic patterns are not in vogue, but now the artist chooses whatever suits his theme more freely without caring for convention.

Ihab Hassan, in his book *Contemporary American Literature* pinpoints the following as the most important features of the post-modern novel.

Survival appears indeed both the secret and paramount obsession of contemporary man. In America particularly where change changes at a dizzy rate, man rushes even faster questions do not only concern the Doomsday Bomb but memories of holocausts groom Auschwitz to Hiroshima, a succession of wars from Korea to Vietnam, the earth exploding in numbers, ravages to natural environment,

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renewed awareness of poverty in America, the discriminations of race and sex, political protests of every kind.<sup>10</sup> (Hassan 1973; 2, 3)

All these perpetuate a mood of crises that no writer can entirely ignore. Human privacy is invaded, as the media of control and of communication exchange their functions, as computers at once ease and complicate the pattern of social existence. Increasingly the public realm seems ruled by a variety of fantasies, instantaneous, comical and dreadful. For the individual, violence, nihilism offers no genuine alternatives to the surrealism of mass society and the super state. This experience shared abroad, deepens the affinities between American and European literature, between nations witnessing the strange paradox of a world extensively homogenized yet intensely fragmented.

Yet despite the culture of the post war era, curiously violent and hedonistic, angry and apathetic, the American writer makes a place for his imagination in it, which is the second pre-occupation of the artist. The greatest problem of our time has been that war psychosis has outlived the war. It has become permanent and universal. American Pre-eminence after the Second World War created cold war abroad and conformism at home. This conformism threw up a counter culture in the 1950's. Philip Roth in his article, "Writing American Fiction" says that this leads us to the third most important preoccupation of the artist, his search for the authentic voice. All artists are now suspicious of the voice of the establishment, for invariably it seems to be opposed to the stirrings of the individual soul. The quest for authenticity is ultimately linguistic, namely the search for the true word. This becomes a measure of the individual's affirmation of life in the face of a destructive and pervasive nihilism. The contemporary artist struggles to establish his own linguistic and stylistic dominion – his own artistic space.<sup>11</sup> (Roth, 1977; 35)

These three quests of the contemporary writer, that is, quest for survival, identity and authenticity are in line with intellectual movements in other fields of enquiry. The critics have interpreted the general drift of western culture in modern ways. According to Kermode, 'the early modernists like Eliot, Joyce, Yeats, Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Faulkner felt that the debacle of World War I has signaled an end of the self-assured creativity of the Western civilization.'<sup>12</sup> (Kermode 1968; 223-224) They produced different visions and versions of the 'Wasteland' and found an antidote of universal decay in visions involving a retreat of myth and "traditional" faith. But the second generation of modernists represented by writers like Jean Genet in France and William Burroughs in America represent a complete and even joyful acceptance of the fact of apocalypse. Kermode's argument is supported by other enthusiastic critics like Susan Sontag, George Steiner and Richard Poirier. Sontag calls the new approach "style of the radical will", Steiner calls it the "Pythagorean Genre" in fiction and Poirier designates it as the art of "performing self."<sup>13</sup> (Ibidem) But they more or less agree with the basic premise. They think that new fiction is moving towards a radical redefinition of human personality and human freedom. The old restrictions that society applies to blind an individual will, now vanish and man is liberated into a free, guiltless

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celebration of the life of the senses, of unselfconscious delight unencumbered by the weight of the rationalistic critical spirit.

It is difficult of place Ayn Rand into any specific school or tradition as she herself declares in her early notes, that she belongs to no tradition, but may perhaps stand at the beginning of one. Quoting Rand, Barbara Branden says in *The Passion of Ayn Rand*: "I know I am challenging the culture and tradition of two and a half thousand years." <sup>14</sup>(Branden 1986:56) Rand was the natural resource of her fiction. In the "Introduction" to *The Passion of Ayn Rand*, Barbara Branden writes:

Her person encompassed the grandeur of the heroes of her novels, their iron determination, their vast powers of intellect and imagination, their impassioned pursuit of their courage, their pride, and their love of life-as well as the terrors, the self-doubts, the lack of emotional balance, the private agonies that are so alien to an Ayn Rand hero. Her virtues were larger than life – so were her shortcomings.

<sup>15</sup> (Ibidem 1986 : i)

Not many in this century have been so admired and so savagely attacked. She is viewed as goddess, as a seminal genius and an ominously dangerous corrupter of the young, as the mightiest of voices of reason, and the destroyer of traditional values, as the espouser of joy and the exponent of mindless greed, as the great defender of freedom and the introducer of malevolent values into the main stream of American thought. <sup>16</sup>(Ibidem; 16)

Despite the furor her ideas have generated, despite the fact that they fill the pages of thirteen books, despite the fact that her philosophy has had a powerful and still accelerating influence on American culture, little is known about Ayn Rand, the human being; and still less about Ayn Rand, the woman. Her public and professional activities took place on a lighted stage; her private life was lived back stage, curtained from view.

But Rand was one of the most remarkable and complex individuals of the time. Those who worship Rand and those who damn her do her the same disservice; they make her unreal and they deny her humanity. But there was something infinitely more fascinating and infinitely more valuable than either goddess or sinner. She was a human being. She lived, she loved, she fought her battles, and she knew triumph and defeat. The scale was epic; the principle is inherent in human existence. Rand was greatly influenced by her father, "a silent, self made man with firm convictions, who considered ideas and the spread of ideas as the most important thing in life."<sup>17</sup>(Ibidem: 63) Franz Rosenbaun's strongest issue was individualism. He was committed to reason, but unfortunately not by stated conviction.

The three quests of the contemporary writer, that is, quest for survival, identity and authenticity are in line with intellectual movements in other fields of enquiry. Rand, in her later writings, was to exemplify this contempt for the social as a constantly recurrent theme. Lillian Rearden, the major female villain in *Atlas Shrugged* is characterized as someone whose emptiness of spirit is exemplified by her passion for social interaction, for parties, for being the centre of a crowd of people.

In the Rosenbaun's home, religion had little significance. While Franz Rosenbaum was non-religious, Anna Rosenbaum was religious in an emotional, tradition way, not out of conviction, more out of devotion to the religion of her own mother. She gave her children no religious training. Rand never denied she was Jewish, but in later years she declared herself to be a committed atheist for two reasons. Leonard Peikoff, quoting Rand, in *The Early Ayn Rand: A Selection from her Unpublished Fiction*, writes:

- i) I decided to be an atheist. I had decided the concept of God is degrading to men. Since they say god is perfect, then man is low and imperfect and there is something about him which is wrong.
- ii) ...Since no proof of the existence of God exists, the concept is rationally an untenable invention. It was all decided in one day. <sup>18</sup>(Peikoff 1984 : 36)

The essence of Rand's present belief is there. It focuses the issue of reason versus mysticism. She was not, a militant atheist. The belief in God seemed to her so patiently irrational, that it did not deserve to be fought. It was not the concept of God that she would battle throughout her life, it was what she saw as its source, its wider meaning: the rejection of reason. It was to the battle of reason, the tool and the lorry of the heroic man that she would dedicate her life. Rand would contend throughout her life that man's mind, his reasoning faculty, his power of grasping logical connections is his basic tool of survival: and mysticism, the anti-rational, the anti-logical as the instrument of death. To Rand, the physical manifestation of the power of man's mind is technology, a phenomenon which fascinated her even as a child. Intelligence was the quality she most admired, and she responded to it with the greatest pleasure and respect. In her earliest childhood, her intellectual precocity was recognized and admired by those around. She asked the right questions and believed that a mind needs the stimulation of its equals. She placed on intelligence what can be termed a 'moral' value/ intelligence and virtue were to become inextricably linked in her mind and her emotions.

There she saw neither unusual intelligence, nor the capacity for dedicated productive work that she believed to be its consequence. She saw no value that meant anything to her in personal terms. This was the beginning of a series of value clashes with the people around her that was to mark the whole of her life. Rand felt an angry defiance that was to characterize her attitude towards all of her values. "I know but they don't. This is mine. It's not theirs." <sup>19</sup>(Ibidem: 149) As a child and an adult, Rand worshipped joy. Rand believed that pain and suffering were meaningless aberrations, never a normal part of life, never to be considered important. Thus man's happiness as the goal and purpose of his life, became a fundamental theme in her writings, and despite the pain and bitterness that her life contained, it became a theme she struggled to keep alive in her life contained, it became a theme she struggled to keep alive in her life contained, it became a theme she struggled to keep alive in her psychology. In *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand's last novel, the first words that Dagny Taggart, the

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novel's heroine speaks to John Galt, the man she has waited all her life to meet are: "We never had to take any of it (pain and suffering) seriously, did we?" "No, we never had to", answers Galt <sup>20</sup>(AS, 866)

Rand had a passionate concern for spiritual consistency. This was also a significant element in alienating Rand from people and the world around her. The battle between good and evil was the major element she saw in literature. It later drew her to such disparate literary figures as Victor Hugo and Mickey Spillane; it caused her to see the world as a giant battlefield in which her personal god and devil were locked in endless conflict. There was good in the world and there was evil, one had to choose sides in the battle, and one had as writer and as human being, to enlist one's energies and one's life on the sides of the good. As Rand matured, the detective and the jewel thief became opposing philosophical ideas, but the principle remained the same.

Leafing through a boy's magazine of adventurous stories Rand came across one entitled, 'The Mysterious Valley' a heroic French detective in pursuit of a dangerous jewel thief. "It was a love affair for me from the first installment. That expression which I carried thereafter of the detective who overcame all the obstacles in pursuit of his goal and in the end was triumphant began with the story." <sup>21</sup> (Branden 1986; 153) One can observe in all her novels that the spirit of Cyrus intelligence, independence, courage, the heroic became the spirit of all the fictional characters she would create. The name 'Kira' which she chose for her first novel *We The Living* is the Russian feminine of 'Cyrus' and so also Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead*, John Galt, Hank Rearden and Francisco D'Anconia in *Atlas Shrugged*. As an adult, she translated Cyrus's courage into intellectual terms, but the basic nature of the heroic terms was never to alter.

When one looks at the life of Ayn Rand, one must wonder if the dogmatic absolutism of her certainty, the blinding conviction of her own rectitude and her spectral place in the world, the callousness of her intolerance for opinions that were not hers, the unwavering assurance that she was alone to know the truth and that others must seek it from her, the savage innocence of her personality, was not the fuel required for the height of achievement she attained. Just as when one looks at history's great achievers, one so often encounters the desperate loneliness and alienation which is perhaps the emotional price paid by men and women who see further than their brothers; so one also encounters these qualities in Ayn Rand. And one must wonder if they are not precisely the qualities that make possible the courage and uncompromising dedication of those who forge new paths through the unknown, enduring and persevering, shouting defiance at the enormity of the opposition which follows them at every step of their lonely journey, and adding new glories to our world. A lesser conviction would never have made it possible.

In contrast to those who have seen in the economic crises of the twentieth century, the waste of Capitalism, Rand, obsessed with the fear of collectivist association, has seen

universal salvation possible only through even more intensive laissez-faire Capitalism. While providing an ever-increasing audience with the soothing rationalization of self-primacy, all of Rand's works, expose the sharpness of the familiar line drawn between 'self' and other'; and thus she challenges us to recognize that the society which does not encourage individualism invites a tyranny of bland mediocrity. To prove her case, Rand offers us an extreme individualist hero in autofethistic armour, but whose pre-occupation, unlike that of Narcissus, actually strengthens him. Rand understandably fears centralized community, which robs the individual members of their independence and gives them, in exchange, rules, orders, and demands of conformity. Rand's personal experiences in Russia justify her attack on dictatorial collectivism.

Any Rand writing in an age of crisis during the Second World War finds (as Leonard Peikoff observes in *The Ominous Parallels*) that "America Reverses Direction". America, as conceived by the Founding Fathers, lasted only about a century. There were contradictions and government controls of various kinds from the beginning. But Irving Kristol, businessmen were social servants and should administer their 'social surpluses for the community. Henry Demarest Lloyd, a leader of the antitrust movement named, in his article, "The New Conscience" in the *North American Review*, the base of this new approach to government. "The principles of self interest", he said "is one of the historic mistakes of humanity"; what America needs is a system "in which no man will have a right to do with his own what he will, but only a right to do what is right."<sup>22</sup> (Lloyd 1888: 342)

America's capitalistic system breaks down and Rand fears that collectivism will harmonize with the American myth of rugged individualism and her fiction assumed a prophetic air. Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., in his book *Progressivism in America*, quotes Charles R. Van Hise, President of the University of Wisconsin and a spokesman of the Progressive Movement in 1910: "He who thinks not of himself primarily, but of his race, and of its future is the new patriot."<sup>23</sup> (Ekirch 1974:151) President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address of Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> 1961 said: "My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."<sup>24</sup> (Kennedy 1961) Irving Kristol, a neo-conservative intellectual, 1972, writes: "Self-government, the basic principle of this republic, is inexorably being eroded in favour of self-seeking, self-indulgence, and just plain aggressive selfishness."<sup>25</sup> (Kristol 1972:33).

Culturally and politically, World War I was the turning point. It marked the end of the individualist era throughout the West. The Americans yearned in 1920 to go 'back to normalcy' i.e. a return to a civilized world which respected man's rights and its consequences: international harmony, lasting peace, a rising standard of living, unobstructed freedom, self-confidence and hope for the future. Arthur. A. Ekirch, Jr. in *Progressivism in America* tells us that America faced "the aftermath of global breakdown, the mushrooming of



European dictatorships, the growing fear that the selfless crusade of 1917 had been a senseless slaughter, the growing claims of men's duty to their neighbour and the newer claim of America's duty to the world." <sup>26</sup> (Ekirch 1974:151) In 1919, quoting Herbert Hoover, a then capitalist, Arthur Ekirch observes that Hoover rejected laissez-faire in favour of the progressive middle way between socialism and anarchism. "We are passing" he said, "from a period of extremely individualistic action into a period of associational activities."<sup>27</sup> (Ekirch 1974:258-59) The New Dealers were more explicit than the Reformist Movement. "Whether we like it or not", sociologist Henry Pratt Fairchild wrote "The Great Economic Paradox" in Harper's Magazine that "modern life has become so highly integrated, so inextricably socialized, so definitely organic that the very concept of the individual is becoming obsolete".<sup>28</sup>(Fairchild 1932:64) The Great Depression was the result. If Americans were to reconstruct society properly, wrote John Dewey in "Antitrust Legislation" at the start of the Depression, it "would signify that we had entered constructively and voluntarily upon the road which Soviet Russia is traveling with so much attendant destruction and coercion."<sup>29</sup>(Dewey 1968:350)

The Founding Fathers had conceived 'rights' as entitlements to act and to keep the products of one's actions, not as claims to the actions or products of others. 'Equality' in the original American view, meant the right of everyman to independence – to make his way and sustain his life by his own effort; and 'opportunity' in the American sense of the term meant freedom. The New Dealers rejected this approach as unfeeling and cruel. While President Roosevelt believed in his "Inaugural Address"- San Francisco Speech of 1932, it was important to think less about the producer and more about the consumers, Dewey taught a generation that "the mind was not a private possession, but a social asset."<sup>30</sup>(Roosevelt 1932:64) Hence Rand believed that America was reaching a state of bankruptcy.

In her first two novels, *We the Living* (1936) and *Anthem* (1938), Rand satirizes social realism and total collectivism with all its ultimate consequences and tries to combat that absolute lack of individuality. In her major novel *The Fountainhead* (1943) Rand explores the theme of "individualism versus collectivism not in politics, but in man's soul". (TFH vi) and also the psychological motivations and the basic premises that produce the character of an individualist or a collectivist. In her last and most challenging best seller of the times *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) Rand pursues the theme of "the role of the mind in man's existence" (VOS 16) and as corollary the exemplification of a new moral philosophy: the morality of rational self-interest.

Rand set forth the fundamentals of her philosophy, "a philosophy for living on earth" in her non-fiction works such as *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (1964), *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (1967) *For the New Intellectual* (1974) *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (1979) and *Philosophy: Who needs it?* (1984) In all these books, Rand puts forth her philosophy of Objectivism – the philosophy that holds man's life as the standard of moral values and regards Altruism as incompatible with man's nature. Rand also discusses the problems of the times namely, the validation of egoism, the evils of self-

sacrifice, the nature of government, individual rights, racism, the psychology of socialism and capitalism. Rand address any man who is willing to think, and challenges the philosophic doctrines of the times that create guilt, panic, despair, nihilism and boredom for man. Rand also deals with basic issues such as love, sex, morality, values, education, money, trade, censorship, and isolation, to prove that philosophy is a fundamental force in man's life and man needs it, as Leonard Peikoff says: "to think, to act, to live"<sup>31</sup>(Peikoff 1984:8) here on this earth. In writing her non-fiction Rand realizes that "non-fiction is my natural way of functioning".<sup>32</sup> (FTNI vii)

Rand is a polemical writer and so has roused heated reaction from various sources. Blind adoration of her precepts has even led to the formation of a 'cult' posing the question: "Is Objectivism a Religion"? This section glances at some of the important criticism available on her life, work and philosophy. It also establishes the need for the present study. Who is Ayn Rand (1962) by her disciples Nathaniel Branden and Barbara Branden<sup>33</sup> is a close biographical study. Albert Ellis in "Is Objectivism a Religion (1968)<sup>34</sup> & William O'Neil in With Charity Towards None (1971)<sup>35</sup> focus their attention on objectivism as a Religion and the contradictions and ambiguities in Rand's philosophy, respectively. In Answer to Ayn Rand: A Critique of the Philosophy of Objectivism (1974), John.W.Robbins points out that Objectivity is self contra ordinary and can only result in hedonism and anarchy.<sup>36</sup> While in The Philosophical Thought of Ayn Rand (1984), Douglas.B. Ramussen deals with Rand as a philosopher<sup>37</sup>. Barbara Branden in her The Passion of Ayn Rand (1986), gives an authentic portrait of Rand as a person and a writer<sup>38</sup>

A range of articles on Ayn Rand are also available and these can be catalogued into four major divisions.

1) Articles that study Ayn Rand as astounding phenomena and highlight her appeal especially among young people of the middle class, and her impact on the female psyche. For instance, Nora Ephram's article on The Fountainhead in the New York Times Book Review, and an article of Barbara Grizzesti Harrison, illustrates the two views respectively. Articles of this nature view Ayn Rand as a She- Messiah, who can hypnotize an audience.

2) Articles by Ayn Rand's detractors who are concerned with the potency of Rand's effects on young people in general – Bruce Cook, a Libertine and Catholic, for example, is afraid of what Rand's damaging views on charity and contempt for religion might do to youngsters. While Jeff Riggerback in "The Disowned Children of Ayn Rand", says that Ayn Rand's novels may instigate young people to rebel against elders and also damn establishments.

3) Articles that negatively criticize the growing number of Objectivists and followers of her philosophy. This includes Nora Sayre's article "The Cult of Ayn Rand," Ellis's "Is Objectivism a Religion?"<sup>39</sup> and Nathaniel Branden's "Break Free". In the later, the author acknowledges his role in perpetuating the Ayn Rand mystique of intellectual repressiveness that pervades the Objectivist movement.

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4) Specific and General Studies on Rand's works and ideas. There are only few professional journals that treat Rand's books from a pedagogical perspective. This includes the article by Mini Gradstein's "Anthem: A Book for all Seasons"<sup>40</sup> which suggests sixteen student projects for junior college readers. "Ayn Rand and Feminism – An unlikely Alliance" recommends Atlas Shrugged as a book which defines feminist premises, while Philip Gordon's "The Extrojective Hero: A look at Ayn Rand" is a psychological study (which uses F.S. Perl's 'Ego, Hunger, Aggression' as the basis for a generally negative analysis of the egoism of Rand's heroes.<sup>41</sup>

Rand's anti-collectivism and defense of Capitalism have influenced politicians in & outside America. Her ideas are seen as catalysts for further innovation in Libertine thinking. While writers like Stephen E. Taylor have questioned her theories and basic tenets, a few like Kenneth J. Smith and Hazel Barnes have found similarities between Rand's ideas and the principal hypothesis of Existentialism.

Thus from the above review of Ayn Rand's fictional, non-fictional and critical articles, it is evident that most of the existing studies on Rand have focused mainly on her core concept – Individualism. Moreover, her work has so far not been compared with other writers.

A rare attempt is here made to evaluate the works of Ayn Rand, the American Novelist, and a champion of 'Individualism', with Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian Novelist, and a champion of the Collective Consciousness.

The 'new voice' coming from Africa, speaking of the African in a world language was heard as far back as the eighteenth century. Literature from Africa holds great interest and fascination for people all over the globe for various reasons. Once considered an impenetrable mystery, unexplored and unregarded as Eustace Palmer in his book, An Introduction to the African Novel tells us, the Continent has lately come to make significant contributions in creative writing and is no more the Conradian "Heart of Darkness", or the strange abode of Cannibalistic rites and jungle drums. It can rightly boast of the heritage of a rich oral tradition, extending over centuries, besides the tangible body of works published during the middle of the present century. In fact, the emergence of a very large corpus of African Novels both in English and French has been acclaimed generally as one of the most interesting literary developments of the last thirty years.<sup>42</sup>(Palmer 1977:10)

There was a time when the literary image of Africa was created by non-African writers. Some of these writers were objective and sympathetic in their treatment of the African experience. Some used Africa as a kind of a backdrop, where the white man was able to work out his neuroses in stock patterns; still other non-African writers ruthlessly depicted Africa in primitive patterns which symbolically reflect the colonial rape that the

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Continent itself was physically undergoing. This literary distortion of Africa has also come to an end. In a period of barely twenty-five years, the situation has entirely changed. It is not so easy for the European or the American to write about Africa any more now that the African novelist has appeared on the scene. The African novel is both very young and very old; maturity was forced upon it just as African societies were going through the birth pangs of old age within a few years after they gained independence. What the Western novel became in a leisurely course of three hundred years; the African novel was forced to become, in a mere generation and a half.

The African novel was born in the 1950's which saw the flowering of African writers in English with Amos Tutuola's *Palm Wine Drunkard* (1952), which was the first to immediately gain international reputation. The second major novel, radically dissimilar in theme from Tutuola was Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the City* (1954). The first Nigerian writer to transmute successfully the conventions of the novel as an art form into African Literature was Chinua Achebe. His *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was the first solid achievement whose explicit influence on subsequent novelists could easily be detected. The evocation of the tribal Society acquired an added dimension in the hands of this competent craftsman, with the publication of this remarkable work. Later came *No Longer at Ease* (1960) *Arrow of God* (1966) *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannahs* (1987) where he attempts to satirize the political corruptions of Post – Independent Nigeria. The variety of life in Africa is echoed in the multiplicity of approaches in the novels. A novelist usually needs a base, a point of view, an understanding, and this is not always easy to achieve in an Africa shifting from rural to urban conditions, from farming to industry, from communal values to individualism and from oral to written concepts of communication. These shifts and the tensions imposed by them are the stuff their literature is made up of.

African novelists deal with themes varying from folk culture to self-conscious literary tradition engendered in the third world. Colonialism vanishes, to be replaced by other forms of government, with corruption and turbulent armed struggle, hindering the full achievement of the Continent's immediate potential in many areas. The works of Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, James Ngugi, Camare Laye, Lenrie Peters, and Ayi Kwei Armah are amongst those well-known outside as well as inside Africa. These writings have vigour of language and that language communicates the cultural, social and racial ideas, the nuances of an expanding consciousness with all its sense of excitement and of tragedy, with all its conscious blending of the old and the new.

Much of Achebe's works are the consequences of his own personal life experience. Chinua Achebe, the son of a catechist for the Church Missionary Society, resettled at his ancestral home, Ogidi. He had his primary education at the Society School and his first lessons were in Ibo.

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Achebe learnt English quite early and at fourteen, was one of the few boys selected for the Government College at the Umuafia a very considerable distinction. At eighteen, he matriculated at the New University College, Ibadan, to study Medicine, and then changed his subject to Literature and as Arthur Ravenscroft in his book *Chinua Achebe* has observed: "his formal studies in English Literature would have been very similar to those of a British undergraduate".<sup>43</sup> (Ravenscroft 1969:27) British education was in a sense, sacred to the generation who sent their children to the University. The children themselves, (Robert Wren, in *Achebe's World : The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua of Achebe* observes, may have been less reverent but they know well that the University was the sole route to senior ranks of the civil service, which was being reluctantly but assuredly nigerianised in anticipation of self rule.<sup>44</sup> (Wren 1980:1)

For Achebe the British Higher Education made available not the British past but much of the Nigerian past also. At some point during his studies at Ibadan, from 1948-1953, the future novelist began to correlate his sense of literature and his sense of Nigerian history and tradition. He recalled much of his home life; and encountered in the writings of novelists, anthropologists, colonial officers and missionaries, a Nigeria at once familiar and alien – like one's own image in a distorting mirror. A profound change took place, a change that was revealed in four stories that Achebe published as a student in *The University Herald*. These were reprinted in a larger collection entitled *Girls at War and Other Stories*. (1972)

Achebe had become aware that he himself being a mission school boy and University educated, had lost his ancestral knowledge and did not understand his past well enough to perceive its innate dignity.

This early condition of his, Achebe describes as 'a crisis of the soul' where everything alien was considered 'good' and everything local or native, 'inferior'. This process of Europeanization exerts a pressure on all the young intellectuals of Achebe's generation. It is true that Achebe has minimized this effect in his own upbringing. Unlike Obi Okonkwo's parents in *No longer at Ease* who reject their past, Isaac, Achebe's father, seems to have spoken freely of it and was not unduly troubled 'was' and to some extent still 'is'. Continuing festivals recur, attitudes and philosophies persist, but not everything remains. Achebe had to use whatever resources he could. What the village had lost, he had to rediscover. "I didn't do any research as such", he told Dennis Duerden in Sept. 1965:

This is largely picked up ... this is the life that interested me, partly the life that I lived and the life that was lived around me .... supported by what I heard in conversation. I was keen on listening to old people and what I learned from my father.<sup>44</sup> (An Interview with Achebe, p.64)

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Thus Achebe belongs to the group of African writers who began writing out of an eagerness to prove their own identity. Convinced that Africa too has her vision, Chinua Achebe says in *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, that “Americans have their vision; we have ours; we do not claim that ours is superior; we only ask to keep it.”<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem* (Achebe 1970: 61)

Achebe's belief that the voice of Africa should be heard, is born out of his conviction, as G.D.Killiam observes in *Exile and Tradition: Studies in African and Caribbean Literature* : “Africa is not a geographical expression, it is also a metaphysical landscape; it is in fact a view of the world and of the whole cosmos.”<sup>46</sup> (Killiam 1976:2) Like his contemporaries Amos Tutuola and Camara Laye, Chinua Achebe began writing during the colonial encounter. Adrian Roscoe, in *Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature* observes that they show “an eagerness to sink a tap root into the soil of their own artistic tradition”<sup>47</sup>(Roscoe 1971:11), convinced of the truth of the African proverb which Claude Wauthier quotes in *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa* “a tree can grow by sinking its root into nourishing soil”<sup>52</sup> (Wauthier 1978:66)

Chinua Achebe believes that art should always be in the service of society. So he writes as a literary historian. The writer has to be socially relevant and be “the voice of vision in his own time”.<sup>53</sup> (*Ibidem*: 69) Thus Achebe writes “out of an African experience and a commitment to an African destiny”<sup>54</sup> (*Ibidem*: 72) The novels therefore speak of a certain place, and “evolve out of the necessities of its history “past and current and the aspirations and destiny of its people.”<sup>55</sup>(*Ibidem*: 74)

Belonging to the first generation of Nigerian novelists who are committed to the colonial struggle, its aftermath and Africa's rehabilitation, Achebe returns to the past in his novels – a past which was wiped out by two important incidents – colonialism and the slave trade. Roscoe, quoting Achebe observes that “no thinking African can escape the pain of these two important incidents as it is the wound in our soul”.<sup>56</sup> (Roscoe 1971:133) So Achebe recreates the simplicity, charm and significance of the traditional Ibo life, the devastating, effect of colonialism on this rich culture and the cultural neurosis that set in as a consequence. The five novels analyzed in a thematic order, are a rolling survey of the history of Nigeria from 1850 to the early twentieth century. Achebe's deep and abiding interest in history is not a reverence for a lifeless subject of remote antiquity, but “an accumulation of human achievements, a testimony of the triumph of human ingenuity and will, reaching down ancestral roots”.<sup>57</sup> (Roscoe 1971:13) This detribalization, anxiety and the freezing of the old ceremonial order is traced out through the five novels. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the people* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah*. (1987)

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African fiction has five general subject areas, and though these areas did not appear in African fiction one after another, the basic situations within the societies did occur in this sequence, as the works of Chinua Achebe illustrate. When Achebe's own experiences and those of his society were essentially limited to traditional African life and the initial conflicts with western religion and colonialism, the novels which resulted could only be one such as *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. After his society has undergone a more direct confrontation with western education and urbanizations, then only could Achebe write *No Longer at Ease*, illustrating, as it were, these conflicts with westernization. Then as Achebe's society sped past independence and was confronted with the increasing problems of political and economic stability and these new problems became a part of the collective consciousness, a novel such as *A Man of the People* could appear. And about two decades later, contemplating on the solutions for the problems that affected his society, could he write his fifth novel *Anthills of the Savannah*. In this novel Achebe's increasing concern with an individual's life also appears. The theme of the subject matter of the novel becomes more inner rather than outer directed. The broadening experiences of the African writer have constantly reflected the most contemporary problems confronting African societies.

In the novels mentioned above, Achebe reflects upon the changes which have taken place in Ibo and by implication, Nigerian life, as a result of what he calls the 'chance encounter', <sup>58</sup>(Killiam 1977:46) between Europe and Africa during the imperial colonial period. Achebe has also written a number of critical works on Africa and African writers. In his prose writings Achebe comments on the inheritance that African writers and society have received from the colonial period.

A vast ocean of criticism has been written on Achebe's fiction. Some of the most important and significant ones are mentioned below. Chinua Achebe (1969) by Arthur Ravenscroft is a critical comparison of Achebe's life and works with other Nigerian writers. *In Morning yet on Creation Day* (1975) Achebe illustrates the ethos of traditional Ibo society and discusses the role of the artist in his society. While David Carroll's *Chinua Achebe* (1980) gives a critical evaluation of Achebe's writings, *Achebe's World: The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe* (1981) by Robert Wren explores Achebe's novels in their historical context. *The Writings of Chinua Achebe* (1977) by G.D. Killiam show the anthropological and sociological significance of Achebe's work, and Bernth Lindfor's *Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe* (1979) analyses how Achebe's works assist in the decolonization process of peoples who have suffered the trauma of foreign conquest. Yet another enlightening work is *African Writers on African Writing* (1978) by G.D. Killiam which also discusses the anthropological importance of writers like Amos Tutuola, Cyprian Ekwensi, James Ngugi, Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. Most African writing is concerned exclusively with the reality of African life.

Achebe's prose writings reflect three essential and related concerns:

- i) The legacy of Colonialism at both the individual and societal level.
- ii) The fact of English as a language of national and international exchange.
- .iii) The obligations and responsibilities of the writer.

Achebe's prose, when considered with his fiction offers and assessment and an apology for his adoption of a world language, his choice of subject matter and his obligations as an African to his culture and his craft. Glancing at his fictional and non-fictional works and the review of the criticism done so far, the researcher observes that though a variety of criticism has been done on Achebe, the proposal of comparing and contrasting the African novelist with an American novelist is an innovative adventure. For the first time in literary history, the work of Chinua Achebe is evaluated alongside the work of Ayn Rand, exploring the specific concept of 'The Rise of Individualism Versus the Awakening of Collective Consciousness'.

As a novelist, Achebe writes out of the necessity to help his society to regain its belief in itself. His word is a record of an ancient and deeply articulate culture and its gradual decay, as the materialistic outlook of an alien culture, slowly seeps into this once hallowed world of rich tradition and culture.

For the African intellectual and creative writer like Achebe the arrival of the colonizer on the continent had many repercussions. For example:

- 1) Disruption of the strong bonds of kinship which held the clan together.
- 2) Loss of identity for many elders as the traditional roles assigned to them gradually became irrelevant and this power was transferred to the Colonial administrator.
- 3) Economically, the land was grabbed and monopolized by the Colonizers.
- 4) The White missionary discussed tribal religious ideas and practices as 'heathen' 'pagan' – an attitude later condemned by leading African Nationals.
- 5) Socially, exchange of cultures qualified as 'civilizing process' or as Achebe statistically characterizes it, "the pacification of the primitive tribes of the lower Niger" (TN 46), led to socio-cultural alienation and consequently a tragic protest and conflict was born.



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But despite its deforming and ever stifling effects, colonialism has made for certain dynamism in what were essentially static tribal societies. Time has come to move beyond the dualism of:

- 1) Black versus White
- 2) Colonizer versus Colonized
- 3) Monotheism versus Polytheism

to a more carefully defined critical encounter.

In this study, the researcher attempts to show how the lives of the major characters develop from a primarily communal, tribal existence to a more western, individualistic one. The change along this dimension can best be traced through a study of the many-faceted interactions of a monotheistic, individually centered Christianity and a polytheistic socially oriented tribal religion. This process involves adjustments, denials, acceptances of each other's creeds and principles on the social as well as individual levels. Religion being a major force in the traditional communities that holds its members together, the slightest threat to its power and integrity paves the way for substantial changes in their very apprehension of life. It is this complex and subtle phenomena symbolized by a few significant characters that one sees in Chinua Achebe's novels.

J.Jahn Munty, in *An Outline of the New African Culture*, claims "that such as encounter is one primarily of Monotheism versus Polytheism".<sup>59</sup> (Jahn 1961:58-59) It is almost incomprehensible here to have a formed distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'secular'. This lack of distinction is a key point of contrast with a more modern society. In such societies every human being belongs to the whole community. His life participates in rituals, beliefs, ceremonies, festivals of that community. Thus deeply aware of the communal aspects of his very existence, no individual can think of detaching himself from the religion of his group:

For to do so is to be severed from his roots ..... Therefore to be without religion amounts to a self –excommunication from the entire life of society and African peoples do not know how to exist without religion.<sup>60</sup> (Mbiti 1967:1)

Life is a profoundly religious phenomenon, with vague religious notions concretized in modes of worship: Magic, Totemism, Fetishism and Ancestral worship. These symbolize the tribal power to reach out to the masses and hold them together as a solid whole. These manifestations merge into the texture of social life, assimilating every individual into its strong inescapable currents and leave no space for individualism or aesthetic pursuits. Celebrations for a new born child, marriage and death are more social functions than a

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personal individual affair, because it is the interest and concern of the whole tribal community.

This socio-cultural conflict that existed and the gradual emergence of the autonomous individual, independent of the determining hold of the tribal community, gives rise to the growth of a whole new individualistically oriented structure : Socio – political as well as cultural. With the coming of Christianity the emphasis is shifted from communal to personalized living supporting individual achievement. This symbolizes a positive dynamic future oriented view: For Eg. Progressive but corrupt new found individualism and new found humanity, sympathy for the down-trodden outcast victim, and cosmic oneness of the universe. It also symbolized a negative view: for example: selfishness, competition, materialism. Within such a world, personal realities of an individual world view are indeed alien and unacceptable. It's evident that change will not be easy.

The planting of organized Christianity in Africa was a terrible exploitation politically, economically, socially, religiously. Claude Wauthier observes in *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa*:

The Bible redeemed the African individual from the power of superstition, individuality, crushing tradition, witchcraft that makes not for progress. The same Bible is helping the African individual to reassert himself above colonial powers (Wauthier 1978:218) But three aspects resulted in the growth of individualism directly:

- i) Increased formal educational facilities;
- ii) Urbanization;
- iii) Independent church movements.

There was no stopping this new rhythm. Africa could not be the same anymore. Change was total and affected individuals, tribes and the whole nation. Socially, this was termed 'detrribalization' at many levels:

- i) Family level: Educated youth symbolized a new set of values, expectations, economic standards, cultural concerns and world view. Polygamy and female circumcision no longer existed.
- ii) Urbanization: significant features of modern Africa – quest of new pastures.

Urbanization brought in new problems: Eg. Economic imbalance, unemployment, broken families, social evils and desire for new ethics. The individual had to seek for a new identity in these new forms – political parties, clubs, church denominations, associations etc., There is

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a change from traditional 'We' to the life of the 'I' in the reality. This resulted in a painful discovery, a sense of isolation in the midst of large masses of people. J.S. Mbiti in African Religions and Philosophy observes that:

The individual simply discovers the existence of his individualism but does not know of what it consists. He has no language to perceive its nature and its destiny. <sup>61</sup>(Mbiti 1967:225)

The individual is in conflict with new forces and new values: Eg.Nwoye's and Oduche 'in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. Their individualism is vague and Blurred, They do not as Mbiti points out know of what it consists, and they have no language to explain its nature and destiny. Going further from a tribal culture towards a more industrialized and urban culture, one meets characters like Obi in No Longer at Ease, who gropes in the dark in the same external pursuit. The forces that shape his gate are absolutely novel and different from the ones faced by his counterparts in an earlier age and surroundings. The socio-economic factors that constitute the milieu of their existence and pave the way for conflicts are complex and varied. And finally another form of 'individualism', where attempts to assert the integrity of individual as leader combating tradition and bureaucracy are portrayed in Achebe's last novel Anthills of the Savannahs.

The felt experience of African life has gone far beyond the pictures presented in these works to encompass entirely new perspectives in societies which in a few short years have moved from illiterate to literate, from communal to Individual from largely rural to increasingly urban, and the fiction itself has mirrored these evolutions in its own patterns. Situational plots are being replaced by works which concentrate on character and individuality. Description and the treatment of time and space are becoming more typically a western experimentation. Experimentation tends now towards Western techniques which replace the traditional conscious or sub-conscious incorporation of oral literary materials into the text. African fiction is growing out of the collective experience of the society in which the writer lives, out of the reservoir of ideas and experiences of the total consciousness of the society itself. The African writer functions as the historian of his continent's widening outlook on life, moving away from limited closed-off societal view of the village and clan to an ever widening world view.

Rand and Achebe are significant juxtapositions, provocative as well as enlightening. In a bootstrap universe like ours, everything is related to everything else, and accordingly our search for similarities is legitimate. Again in our world of infinite variety, multiplicity and mutability, there is never any exact mimicry or repetition. Between these extremes of total relatedness and uncompromising uniqueness, one is free to infer what parallelisms seem striking.

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The article offers discriminating comments on the works of Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist and Ayn Rand, the American novelist. The idea is to bring the insights of these two very prominent yet totally different critics together, to compare and complement one another. Achebe has his own vantage point in viewing the cultural scene in the West, with his own optimum degree of involvement and detachment and brings to bear on it, his own sensibility, born out of his own very different cultural milieu.

There is a need to read American and African literature, to have a feel of the American and African life and understand the workings of the American and African psyche. Rand and Achebe have struggled to present various aspects of the American and African self in the context of a historical moment.

At the root of the novelist's business lies the implicit recognition that while every culture has its characteristic moral attitudes and values, no culture has an absolutely monolithic code; that alongside the voice of conformity there exists, however small and isolated the voice of dissent. This dissenting voice provides a healthy tension between the community and the individual. Since dissension from the established code can assume various forms, a culture carries within it, a multiplicity of moral consciousness.

Both Rand and Achebe deal with self-definition as a moral and social concern in the twentieth century novel; and have expressed their moral values as part of their uncompromising dedication to truth. In contemporary American Literature, the concept of morality has been an expansive and adaptable one. The limits of morality have extended to include the idea of individualistic realization. The individual tries to extricate himself from the surrounding images, myths, stereotypes and values in order to learn to see itself. Rand and Achebe have expressed their concern for the individual by revealing the emptiness and pathos in the lives of their characters who seem to have little freedom to find the moorings in a society from which they have no escape.

Both Rand and Achebe are novelists with a purpose. Their novels attempt to prove a premise, draw conclusions from a whole category of forces, social tendencies, race impulses and their works are devoted to the study of man. While Rand attempted to restore the dignity of the individual; Achebe's objective was to restore the faith in pre-colonial humanity of African society and the dignity of the African national consciousness. Achebe found it necessary to remind the world of the pioneer role played by the African continent in providing civilization to mankind; while Rand observes in the 'Introduction' to *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* that the goal and purpose of my writing is the projection of an ideal man and the portrayal of a moral ideal as my ultimate literary goal as end in itself'.<sup>62</sup> (Rand 1964: iv)

Plot, the conception of a well-made story in Rand's fiction takes on a widely different importance in Achebe's fiction. While Achebe's plots are situational, wherein not just one individual, but an entire group of people (a tribe, a clan, a village) become ultimately affected by the major event of the narration. But Rand's plots circulate around the individual character, as she believed a plot to be a purposeful progression of events. Barbara Branden in *The Passion of Ayn Rand* says that "the progression of a human life consists of a random series of disconnected, unchosen events, united by any common theme or purpose and leading in the end to the grave".<sup>63</sup>(Branden 1986:155)

Unlike in Rand's fiction, characterization is almost de-emphasized in Chinua Achebe's works. There is not much of character introspection and character development in Achebe's works, because of the African concept of group solidarity; yet his characters are very emotionally gripping and fully capable of drawing in the reader, though the character is not developed in any significant relationship to events. But Rand believes character to be the novel's prime concern, as she is a champion of the individual cause. All her characters are romantic rebels pitched against restrictive and mundane societies. In all their rebellion, they act alone and on principle. They are intellectually gifted and have unusual talents. Unlike in Rand's fiction woman characters in Chinua Achebe's fiction have relatively minor and functional roles. But of Rand's five protagonists three are women; in spite of this, Rand cannot be called a Feminist writer as she believes not only in hero-worship, but the "cult of man worship".<sup>64</sup> (Ibidem: 361) But Rand's fiction, more especially *Atlas Shrugged* as Mimi Gradstein in her article: "Ayn Rand and Feminism "An unlikely Alliance" observes, can be prescribed for women's studies as Rand highlights a lot of feminist issues in the novel. (Gradstein 1982:16)

On the contrary, Achebe does not project women characters too much because his, is a chauvinistic, male dominated society. But in *Anthills of the Savannahs*, David Maugham Brown observes "a remarkable development is seen in Achebe as a novelist, because of his attitude to women and their role in society and his concept of 'gender transfiguration'<sup>65</sup>(Brown 1990: 231)

While Rand explores the theme of life in all her novels, Achebe tends to ignore the love theme, except for the Obi-Clara episode in *No Longer at Ease*. But Achebe's novels are quite domesticated in the sense that a lot of rituals, ceremonies, functions, marriages, births and deaths, etc., pervade his novels. With Rand, marriage, child bearing any kind of ritual or ceremony is totally missing; and the marriages that do exist like Hank Rearden's and Lillian Rearden's and Peter Keating's are scorned at, by implied contrasts to relationships like Howard Roark's and Dominique Francon's, John Galt's and Dagny Taggart's. This shows Rand to be a novelist who transcends most manmade institutions.

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Hence it is not surprising that Rand is an atheist while Achebe is a theist. Rand believed in the 'cult of man-worship', Achebe believed in an 'agrarian cult' "for wherever the African went there was his religion".<sup>66</sup> (Mbiti 1967:2) He deified the sky, the trees, the earth the moon and the stars, all of nature as it were. Both Rand and Achebe overflowed the petrified separative frontiers of their own times and in their attempt to describe their experiences and findings, spoke in myths and legends. Achebe is not a repetition of Rand but they are two mighty rivers that run parallel to each other and yet they meet from time to time. The proper thing then would be to see Achebe in a perspective of Rand and vice-verse, and this can heighten the appeal of such a study.

Rand and Achebe lived far apart in place, time and circumstances, yet on a closer scrutiny, one lights upon much agreement in the seeming disagreement.

Both Rand and Achebe chose to write in the English language. It seemed to both of them that speaking in their native language became a conscious activity and so it had lost its premier position to another, i.e. (English language) which came more easily and naturally to them.<sup>67</sup>(Okara 1990:14) But unlike Rand, Achebe uses pidgin, Ibo proverbs and folk lore which enhance the lucidity of his style.

Both Rand and Achebe explore the theme of the 'Individual versus Society'. Though Rand champions the cause of the individual, she also portrays in her chapter titled 'Atlantis' her concept of an ideal society. Achebe supports the cause of the collective initially but gradually moves on to speak of a balance that is to be maintained between the individual and society.

Both writers present the ambiguities and dilemmas, the pains of involvement and the pangs of isolation within the individual's social consciousness, as it enacts its drama of self-exploration and understanding.

Both the novelists dramatize the development, the change, the adjustment and transformation of their protagonists. While Rand's protagonists exemplify Hubert Bonner's Hellenic model of excellence and a life perfected, Achebe's protagonists exemplify Bonner's Hebraic idea of responsibility and discipline in a life shared.

Both Rand and Achebe wrote against the background of myths and to explore their stand, Rand uses the myth of Atlas, the myth of Prometheus, the myth of Atlantis and the myth of Adam. Chinua Achebe explores the Cultural Hero myth.

Both Rand and Achebe can be termed epic writers attempting to write in the epic form. Achebe is a traditional epic writer celebrating the traditional cultural hero, embodying

the total culture of a whole people. Rand has no native tradition, but the major theme of all epic poetry is heroism itself- heroism as the perilous mythification of man.

Both were influenced by Aristotle. While Rand follows Aristotle's principles of logic and the importance he gave to Reason and the mind, Achebe falls in with Aristotle's concept of tragedy and the tragic flaws in characters which bring about their downfall. But Rand does not fall in with the Aristotelian definition of tragedy. Tragedy must entail the three-fold relationship of man, society and God. Each individual has to accommodate himself to a broader context and undermining the social system is a moral, which refers either to a specific deity or to an agreed act of guiding assumption about right or wrong. In Rand's fiction, the pendulum swings between these aspects and usually settles on the individual; Alastair Niven in "Chinua Achebe and the Possibility of Modern Tragedy", says that "the focus is more evenly distributed and the dominating faction in the relationship of Man, Society and God is the middle one- the Society". <sup>68</sup>(Niven 1975:45)

Except for the above similarities, Rand and Achebe cannot apparently have much in common. On the one hand, the contrasts between Rand and Achebe are strikingly many – in temperament, attitude, style and literary tradition. And the contrast which makes a whole world of a difference is the fact that while Rand is an expatriate writer, Achebe lives in his homeland.

An expatriate writer like Rand enjoys a unique position. She is not committed, except to her private sensibility or vision. She can tell unpalatable truths, tell them slant, be a prophet, a soothsayer, a doom watcher, and her brand or apocalypses of times can be a little too uncomfortable for the genteel taste. She looks at creeds, cultures, and countries and sees enough and tries to debunk their blue print for reconstruction. Rand is a social deconstructionalist who believes in stripping the American society of its pretences and their defense mechanisms. It is obvious Rand does all this with irony, passion, and prophecy. Killiam, quoting Achebe in African Writers on African Writing, says that Achebe is militantly African and believes in the writers mission "which is to teach my readers that their past was not one long night of savagery from which the first European, acting on Gods behalf, delivered them". <sup>69</sup> (Killiam 1978:41) Achebe is forthright and can sound even didactic when he says that he is out to help his society regain its belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement. <sup>70</sup> (Ibidem: 3)

There are enough bones of contention for the two writers to come once to a head on collision, if ever they decide to confront each other. For they assume different intellectual positions. In tone, attitude, philosophy, Achebe is aggressively confident and positive, like Rand. Unlike Rand, Achebe is a spokesman for the African way of life. Quoting Achebe, Killiam says that the African writer has a distinctive function to perform:

We must first of all set the scene which is authentically African; then what follows will be meaningful and deep. And setting the scene means to recreate the past, not only for enlightenment of our detractors but for our own education. Because the past with all its imperfections never lacked dignity, (Ibidem: 44) the African writer should learn to do without “this aura of cosmic sorrow and despair” even though it happens to be a sentiment guaranteed to win applause in the West”.<sup>71</sup> (MYCD, 32:33)

Quite contrary to Rand, Achebe does not totally champion individualism.

It is apparent from this, then, that the difference between Achebe and Rand is radical in attitude and perception. But this does not mean that Achebe doesn't see any cracks in his “society or ambivalences in his culture; and is out to whitewash Africa and set himself up as a conscious propagandist”.<sup>72</sup> (Ibidem 32-33) Though Achebe's overtly intellectual stance proclaims his African militancy, his fiction tells a different story. The novelist usually tells us the whole truth and this qualifies in an important way his ostensible ideological stance.

Of the two writers, Rand is the more sweeping exercise. This study is no commentary on them, but just what one individual feels about probable future world order in the light of the topic: “The Rise of Individualism Versus the Awakening of Communal Consciousness” which has plagued the world ever since man evolved on this planet. But American Literature and African Literature are one, as art and humanity are one, and their literary evaluation will be strengthened because of their inter-relatedness.

Categorizing is a dangerous game. Experience themselves defy this sort of thing. Each writer is unique and so are his experiences. Where experiences are translated into fiction, there are a thousand results. The categories and the generalization in this study resulted because of necessity and practically and they admittedly have their short comings.

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### **Profile of the author**

Dr. Hyacinth Pink, Author and Poet, presently the Prof. and Head of the Dept. of English, post-graduated at the Madras University; and bagged the ‘Gold Medal’ for both the M.A. and M. Phil. Degree. Dr.Pink specialized in Comparative Literature, her area of expertise being American and African Literature. Her Doctoral Dissertation was ‘Highly Commended’ where she disproved some of the philosophical theories of both these two writers- Ayn Rand and Chinua Achebe.

Dr. Pink has a rich, varied teaching and research experience of 39 years (1978 till date), where she held responsible portfolios and has carried out her leadership role in a qualitative and innovative manner.

Dr. Pink has successfully guided and produced 7 Doctorates & 34 M.Phil Scholars. Miss Pink has completed 7 UGC Sponsored Major projects and 2 Minor projects. Dr Pink has to her credit, 76 research activities.(26 Research Papers in International Journals, 45 Research Papers presented at International Conferences; authored 9 ELT Books and 1 book on Literary Criticism) Dr. Pink has published more than a hundred poems.

Dr.Pink is not only an expert in English Language Teaching and Literature; but also in Journalism and Mass Communication, Women’s Studies, Comparative Literature, Skills development, Critical Thinking & Reasoning & Creative Writing.

Dr. Pink’s top skills are: Research Skills ‘Teacher-Training Skills, Recruiting Skills, Personal Skills, Placement Training Skills, Material Production Skills, Leadership Skills, and Critical Thinking Skills & Content Writing Skills

### **National &International Positions**

Dr.Pink has a Membership in International & National & local bodies: To mention a few:-  
Country Director for the Results International Project with London (2003- 2007).  
Life Member –International Research Society for Children’s Literature (2008-till date).

Life Member of MELTA (Malaysian English Language Teachers Association) (2007-10).

Member, UGC Experts Committee for Major Research Projects to evaluate fresh proposals as well as mid-term review of the ongoing projects (2009 – 2012).

Life Member – English Language Teachers Association. ELTA, Chennai.

Expert Member, Strategic Quality Consultant, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) (1994 – till date).

Dr. Pink is the recipient of 2 AWARDS:

i) Dr. Radhakrishnan State Level Gold Medal Award for Research and Innovation, Sept 5th, 2016.

ii) World Education Congress–Prof.Indira Parikh-50 Women in Education Leaders July 4th & 5th 2019.

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