



FICTIONAL MATRICES OF CULTURE DYNAMICS AND ANTI-COLONIAL LONGINGS IN EASTERINE IRALU'S *A NAGA VILLAGE REMEMBERED* AND CHINUA ACHEBE'S *ARROW OF GOD*

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ABSTRACT

Tribes have mysterious opinions about the evils. They believe that all natural things have living soul. They also experience that Evils if not appeased injure the humans in several paths. These animist thoughts control the cultural science of mechanical force of the tribes. Colonial rulers in different countries of the world like Indian countries or African countries or elsewhere exploited the tribesmen, read their cultures and made us familiar about alterations in the world. In acting so they encountered opposition sometimes overpowered it and at other times tamed to the hindrance also. Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God (1964) and Easterine Iralu's A Naga Village Remembered (2003) describe animist rituals and tribal opposition to the colonial government in their particular milieus.

Keywords: Tribal, Naga Resistance, Agricultural Activities, Traditional Culture, Celebration.

INTRODUCTION

Achebe's protagonist Ezeulu has opposed the colonial government by not supporting the power of a warrant chief as was laid on him by the British administration. Though he was generous to Christianity, the religious tolerance did not mean subordination to the alien-government. Ezeulu opposed his opponents from his own companionship as well as the foreign masters strictly showed the power of cultural quality of his nation. The fictitious tale reveals rhythms of Igbo's conscious existence, the world of rituals, gods, evils, spirits and related ecology. It has numerous equalities with *A Naga Village Remembered* in connection of animist, rituals, contention in the tribal worlds like the professes of rival Okperi tribe over

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a piece of farm place held by Umuaro and the Naga tribes' abundant raids on Assam for head and hunting.

Easterine Iralu's *A Naga Village Remembered* shows the violent Naga resistance to the colonial government in India in the battle of Khonoma began on 22 November, 1879. Highly outnumbered by the British army, the people of Khonoma receded to their invincible mountain fort and the fight turned into a siege of the tough small Angami village for four months. On 27 March, 1880, a treaty between the representatives of the British rule and the elders of Khonoma brought result to the clash. Before this battle, Britishers made an attack on the village with solid hindrance from the villagers. While showing the history of resistance to the colonial government by the Nagas, the novel reveals the chapters from indigenous stories. Connecting to conscious existence and culture ecology etc. Animist rituals like Terhase (creating peace with the spirits) Tekhukete (ritual of penetrating tiger at a tiger-killed by men), Puhu (an important ritual), Kelipie (an agricultural festival), Sekrenyi (festival purification Rhoutho (ritual genna day), Terhunyi (harvest festival), Geida (first festival after marriage), Teimvukie (a ritual preceding harvest) etc and spirits and gods like Vo-o, Chukhilo, Kepenuopfu Kirhupfumia and others delineate the secretive cultural conscious existence of the Angami Nagas of Khonoma Village.

The tribal resistance to the colonial government was not only desired to neglect economic domination of the colonial masters, but also to keep the cultural power. As such the cultural splendour and dynamics both the tribal traditions were presented in the respective fictitious tales. The anti-colonial desires in *Arrow of God* were not that fierce as they were expressed in *A Naga Village Remembered*. The arrival of colonial masters in both regions fetched in the new cultures and religions. The missionaries established schools and hospital. They introduced European pleasant ways for their own goals and for the local common people and the strangeness of their orders and pleasant ways were praised by the tribesmen, though religious conversion was not praised by most of them.

The tribal cultural traditions of both Naga Hills and Nigeria are animist by nature affected by the local religious exercises:

...religious being a socio-cultural phenomenon includes man's endeavour to link natural and supernatural world for realization of his own interest as he perceives.
(Behra 2000)

The religion of both the tribes upheld the luminous animist exercises that attached hunting, battles, agricultural activities, worshipping ancestors and spirits, merry creating, giving feast

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to the clansmen, elders for their blessings, purification experiencing numerous rituals, enjoying the entering of new house, bride price offering, medicinal practices, adopting titles, following no action day, polite speech, humble salutation and demeanour etc.

Arrow of God defines individual Cultural resistance to Christianity. Igbo theology summons up a male to be individually powerful by the traditional standards of the god within his conscience or chi.

(Jahan 110).

The protagonist Ezeulu, Chief priest of the god Ulu, aspired to keep the traditional culture and religion of Umuaro, the group of six villages, titled, Umuachala, Umunneora, Umuagu, Umuezeani, Umuo-gwugueu and Umuisiuzo. In the distant past, all these distinct villages worshipped district gods till the present main God Ulu, the defender of Umuaro, whose main priest is Ezeulu, was developed and esteemed by all. Umuaro was covered out of the higher Nigerian region titled Okperi. The tribes of Umuaro still have hostility with Okperi over a farmland and in the past battles fought on this case were eventually settled by the British District officer situated at Okperi. Captain Winterbottom who was a comrade of Ezeulu. Though Ezeulu was the defender of local Culture and ritual, he was generous and his comradeship with Mr. Winterbottom created him to send his son Oduche to the missionary church to learn Christian religious rules. But unfortunately Oduche changed Christianity and pushed Ezeulu into his enemies' hostility.

Ezeulu had two energetic enemies in Umuaro. They were Nwaka, the mall of great title in the place, supported by Eru, the god of wealthy and Ezidemili, the priest of the god Idemili. Ezeulu believed his half – brother, Okeke Onenyi, the famous medicine-male of Umuaro as his rival and opponent, though Okeke was not like that, Okeke stated that Ezeulus were unions of both magic and medicine. But it was his father, the previous Ezeulu who provided the medicine strength to him parting it from his half-brother, Ezeulur. Medicine and magic mingled together created Ezeulu's strength limitless. The new Ezeulu of Umuaro was protested by his opponents, Nwaka and Ezidemili and their followers in everything. This protest had obsessed Ezeulu most of the times. Besides he had some obsessions due to his polygamic conscious existence, kids from three spouses and their demeanours and postures. Beyond these Ezeulu's own haughtiness and singularity of conduct happened his opponents. He realized that Christianity, the recent religion is like leper.

Allow him a handshake and wants to embrace.

(Achebe 42)



As a protector of religion and culture, he was chiefly limited to Ulu's sacred place. He noticed the picture of new moon and ate the pure yam accordingly. As per his guidance; all community festivals liked the recent Yam festival, Pumpkin Leaves festival were managed. His anti-colonial technique was revealed only when he refused to adopt the offer of the post of Warrant chief and support with the British government.

A Naga Village Remembered explained violent hindrance of the Khonoma village to the British rule. This opposition was both for frugal and religio-cultural reasons. Khonoma, the little Angami Naga Village of 500 houses were nestless amidst mountains as high as 7,000 feet and these haggard mountains from an original fortress around it. The kingdom of Kachar, Manipur and other villages helped Khonoma in district wars against their opponents by sending their armies. This courageous village of soldiers tribes like Semo and Merhu scarcely counted over a thousand at any provided period in her history. In 1832 the first British expedition to the Naga Hills was carried by Captain Jenkins and Captain Pemberton. The aim of this expedition was to get a path from Manipur to Assam via Naga country so that their subjects in Manipur and Assam could be secured from any further Burmese attack. But the British imperial Army encountered violent opposition from the Naga tribes. From 1832 to 1880 A.D., Khonoma struggled with the British army's frequently. In 1880, a big aggression was discharged three invasions on the village with the purpose of oppressing the anti-colonial emotions of the village.

The first dispatch against Khonoma was carried away by Captain E.L.D. Wood in 1844. The British troops burnt down the village on their going. The second expedition dealt with the place in 1849. When the British rule observed that Khonoma had assisted the males of Mezoma protested against government. During this journey the houses of the Thevo clean and Merhu family were blazed. The third invasion showed place on December 10, 1850 carried by Captain J. Butler and Major Foquett, Lt. Reid and Lt. Bivar. The well created Semo fort provided a fair opposition. As the night came and battle stopped all the villagers ran away to the mountain fort. The British army adopted the village the next day and burnt the houses of Khonoma again. Between 1850 and 1865, the Khonoma village created nineteen attacks on British territory and during these attacks two hundred thirty two British troops were ceased wounded and imprisoned. Khonoma was a continuous thorn in Assam's body for the constant attacks of head and booty hunting. On the morning of 14th October 1879, Mr. Damant, the Political representative and first Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills visited to Khonoma with twenty one military and Sixty five police troops. But he was brutally killed, thirty eight of his men were killed, nineteen wounded and the survivors scattering away were pursued down the valley and they desperately created their way back to Kohima. The soldiers of Khonoma burnt down the Kohima garrison.



The garrison survived a long siege and the last British dispatch on Khonoma was postponed 22 November 1879. The fight of Khonoma which began on 22 November 1879, was a fierce battle and siege of Khonoma village for four months. The villagers of Khonoma put up powerful vindication. They perished four hundred house with this objective. The scientifically protected Angami fortress and steep hilly region and forest and compact bushy roads affirmed very hard terrain for the British warriors. The British had their big guns but the people of Khonoma were guarded by the original world they had always survived so close to unpolished nets of cane held rocks and when they clear the cane, a shower of rocks fell upon the rising warriors, ceasing and hindering any further invasions. When the British troop's planning altered to wearing down the soldiers, fifty five warriors attacked Baladhan tea plantation, ceasing Mr. Blyth, the Manager, and sixteen of his workers. They pillaged the land, burnt it down and came back to Khonoma protection. The British government at Kohima remembered this humiliation added to injury. The chastisement was very harsh. Khonoma was erased to the ground, its inhabitants diffused. The eders of Khonoma defined that this attack on a British dominion and its subjects was essential because the people were culturally tied to avenge their fallen people. After a four month siege of the village, worst suffering destruction and sickness the elders of Khonoma experienced the requirement of peace- creator. The legendary soldier Pelhu with his people marched to the British camp at Mazoma, leading a male tragopan, the symbol of peace in his grip. General notion adopted from Pelhu's bird and the treaty was resulted between the village representatives and the agents of the British administration at Mezoma on the 27 March 1880.

Besides the severe anti-colonial desires of the Khonoma villagers, their religious and cultural agilities opposition to the recent religion and explanation of the new religion in the cue of their animist beliefs, taboos, rituals and numerous patterns of conscious existence was presented in the novel. Whereas the Nagas were more hostile than Nigerians in wars and raids, both the tribes were equal in their postures to war. Both the tribes were very culturally similar.

Arrow of God showed the socio-cultural and religious circumstances of Nigeria of 1920s, *A Naga Village Remembered* presented the Naga culture, chivalry and religion during the 19th century. Both the writings recreated the history of religion and culture of the respective places, the subsequent alterations and cohesion in the tribal traditions. *Arrow of God* sought into the limits of individual strength in an order directed by tradition.

But *A Naga Village Remembered* affirmed the force of the clan instructed tradition. Whereas Angami Nagas haughtiness of culture, and overestimation of strength and Ezeulu's haughtiness and over-estimation of his forces of manipulation fail wretchedly. He manipulates:

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....mainly to restore some religious order in the traditional community.

(James 44)

When misery attempted to menace the tribes of Umuaro they discarded the god Ulu and adopt Christinity, the new religion. Thus the myth of Mask Dancing (the need to move with the times (Lahiri 121) was justified. The early Christains slowly overcome by the benefits of education, the village manufactured some of the perfect musicians, scientists and doctors after 1930. In their recreation of history, both the novelists revealed common cultural and religion relations which exposed their structures of identity creation. The equal and unequal fields of the cultural identities had been revealed under the following themes.

In Nigeria harvesting of yams was chief agricultural agilities. The periods of harvesting were directed by the priests like Ezeulu who was protector of religion, period and culture. He noticed the lunar cycle numbering from the new moon day and declared the days of festivals and harvests. Before harvest, the New Yam Festival was arranged, date of which was declared by Ezeulu. The Pumpkin Leaves festival was another festival connected with harvesting. Other created like Kolanut and palm wine oil were constructed from originally developed plants. Angami Nagas were best peasants. They stated:

..... a household is not worthy of its name if its granaries are empty.

(Iralu 10)

Men and Women operated in the land. There were various agricultural festivals like Rhoutho Ritual of seed sowing, Tiemvukie, Liede, Kelipie, Terhunyi Thekranyi, and Kerutsu. Rhoutho (Ritual of Seed Sowing), Tiemvukie C A Ritual preceding harvest when a pig was killed and a part was provided to each house of the village. This meat was cooked on the day of Liede, the harvest initiation day by a woman, Bilipfu, who declared blessing on the day of harvest. Kelipie, a festival in the middle of the agricultural year with enough singing Terhunyi; harvest festival with much delight, Thekranyi, a festival held from the incomes of age-growth through community area function.

Kerutsu, the first day of field- going for married couple. The Nigerian tribes of Umuaro prayed to several gods, secretive objects of nature and men. The tribes of Umuaro obtained their gods from their Kinsmen in Okperi. As under the blessings of Ulu, they survived peacefully. Ulu was the main god and Ezeulu was the main priest. The several villages of Umuaro had their gods Eru, Idemili, Ogwugwu, Udo belonged to Okperi. The ancestors asked their kins to Umuaro to summon these gods not as Udo, Eru, Ogwugwu but the son of Udo, Eru and Ogwugwu. Nigerians had faith in sprits, which lived in the trees, plants, bush

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and several lands. They were visible in odd hours and if not transquillized acted harm to the humans. A night spirit summoned Onyekulum stayed in Ugili tree between Umuachala and Umunneora. There was the tradition of praying the ancestors in Umuaro. During the festival of Oso Nwanadi irritable spirits of kinsmen dead in the wars or in other paths were opposed. On the night of Akwv Nro widows gave foofoo and palm nut soup to their separated spouses who survived in Ani-Mmo (heaven).

Angami Nagar prayed ancestors, gods and spirits. Kepenuopfu was the maker deity prayed by the Angamis. At the time of crisis an Angami declared protection from the god with the speech:

*Sky is my father, earth is my mother, I believe in Kepenuopfu
(Iralu 57)*

Vo-o was the name of the spirit appeased at the seed sowing ritual, Chukhieo was the spirit protector of wildlife. It accepted the hunters play if it was appreciated with them. Once Chukihieo was caught in the grip of Levi's father. Feeling that it was no animal, he instantly freed it and got a deer at its hint. Thevo, the elder priest who conducted rituals Bitter wormwood was considered that this wood offered security against spirit. Terhase was the ritual of creating peace with spirits. On the declining of the full moon, this festival was organized. The priests of Thepa and Theva clans acted the rituals to pray the spirits Vo-o. The priests received a Chicken beyond the village gate and spilling the phrases of giving release the chicken. Spiriting, Spirits lodging on human souls and taking them away from known to alien world was summoned spiriting. In these matters there was danger of conscious existence. The kids were spirited away at distinct periods. They usually were fed insects and foundations of plants for restoration. Those who went to look after missing children who were spirited away stick better wormwood behind their ears before they arrived at the forests:

*The spirits are not malevolent to one who has performed the rituals.
(Iralu 35)*

This tiger was summoned a *were-tiger*. Sometimes a tiger in forest went near anyone without loading anyone. In such matters, it was believed that it was a *were-tiger*. Angami Nagas summoned the tiger elder brother' because man, tiger and spirit were brothers. Kirhufumia was ill-natured females with force to curse people and plants. Dzunha was a river between Jotsoma and Khonoma. It was understood that the deadly spirits which stayed in this river harm humans.



In Arrow of God, the wedding ceremony of Obika son of Ezeulu, feast and the bride price offering had been shown. His bride reached with her people like her mother, several girls of her own age and women. Most of the females carried head-loads of the bride's dowry to which they had all shared wooden bowls, mortar, pestle, baskets, mats, ladles, posts of palm oil, cooking-pots brooms, smoked fish, locust beans, heads of salt and pepper baskets of cocoyam and fermented cassava. There were also two plates, iron pot and lengths of cloth. Ezeulu's three campuses were full of comrades and relatives. The girls sang a song creating a circle around the bride and the bride danced to their song. As she danced, her husband-to-be and other family member of Ezeulu broke through the circle one or two at a time and stuck.

When money fell at her feet, one of the girls selected it up and kept it in a bowl. The custom of dancing and singing was followed by the feasting which lasted till sunset. In the feast there were pots of bitter leaf, soup, foofoo, egusi soup, two boiled legs of goat, two large bowls of cooked as a fish derived out whole from the soup and legs of sweet liquid touched from the raffia palm. Obika and his bride Okuatu came to their hut after the sacrifice at the crossroads near the bride's village. In the sacrifice the medicine-male acted his rites at the cross roads where a hole was dug and the sacrificial offerings were buried. The medicine male uttered the acquittal to ward off evils from the bride. After the marriage night, if the bride was confirmed virgin, the bridegroom gave the bride price to his mother-in-law. Obika sent a huge goat and other objects as bride price to his mother-in-law.

In *A Naga Village Remembered* Levi's marriage with Pelhuvino (Penu) was highlighted. In this Angami marriage, after the proposal came from the bride's side, the mother of the bridesgroom sent an invitation to her brother. The bridegroom's maternal uncles strangled a chicken there and made it fast till it ceased. In demise if the Chicken's right leg crossed out the left then it affirmed to be a good ritual. The marriage proposal affirmed to be an ideal proposal and was fixed. On the day of wedding early in the morning, Levi's eldest aunt was sent to the house of girl with a spear, salt and a chicken.

The household will fetch and drink water from the water source as long as others are fetching and drinking of it. They will be able to make a fire as long as others. Their progeny shall be numerous, as numerous as the progeny of spiders and crabs; they shall be blessed with long life. They shall live to be ancestors and grandparents and prosper in their life.

(Iralu 49-50)

Lesu drank deeply, his aunt served the bride with brew. After sometime the feast started, all the peoples at down to eat together. The Angami wedding ceremonies were not lengthier than the Nigerian marriage ceremonies.

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Both the communities contemplated Na Work Day. In Angami this day was summouned genna day. It was a tobooo to operate in lands in those days. Eke day was the no work day in Okperi. Khunuo Lievi was the hardest genna (no work day) in Khonoma. This day was believed to stop harm of crops by animals.

In Umurao, Nwaka, the richest person was the man of great title. Some of the elders adopted three or more titles. Angami soldiers through their heroic action took many titles. Father of Levi was a highest title-receiver. Pelhu, the protagonist of the Battle of Khonoma, was a title receiver. Levi desired to happen a title taker like his father. Not fury souls was the path to correct style of living. One can complete the accountabilities of manhood by never becoming arrogant and esteeming himself. Obscenity of statement should be prohibited and one must be polite and generous. Both Nigerians and Nagas were very conscious in their demeanour and salutations. Though drinking brew was a custom.

Both the writings reveal several similar religious exercises of Nigerian and Naga tribes. Besides the animist rituals and chivalric deeds were very traits to them. Their beginning of anti-colonial desires exposed their close affection for their culture. Though colonialism overpowered them and their anti-colonial desires weakened yet in this post-colonial and no colonial age, the anti-colonial powers of the past evoked deep sense of the cultural past and an essentiality for re-celebration of those rich times.

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