

## The Family, Tradition and Change in Africa: The Perspective of Postcolonial African Fiction

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**Abstract :** The literary representations of the family, tradition and change in African literature offer an immense, and as yet little theorised area of literary scholarship. Therefore, this paper explores the nexus among the family, tradition and change in five purposively selected post-colonial African fiction: Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Wale Okediran's *Tenants of the House*, J. M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*, Tsitsi Dangrembga's *Nervous Condition* and Meja Mwangi's *Striving for the Wind*. The methodology centres on analysing, questioning, undermining and celebrating the family and its contemporary vicissitudes as depicted in the texts. This is with a view to exploring the postcolonial novel with references to concepts developed by major theorists in the field of postcolonial studies, including Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Kwame Appiah and Achille Mbembe. It is revealed that in spite of the fact that the family is a vital institution, the primary social unit in any community, an agent of acculturation and the first focus of development, independence and growth, the texts reflect a diversity of problems confronting the family unit in Africa. These include the multiple problems of disrupted family lives, enforced family separation, political and personal violence with the domestic environment. It is concluded that the post-colonial African novel is a quintessential weapon to analyse the continent, opening up to the reader the specific expressions and experiences of human lives and their wider contexts. Therefore, the post-colonial African novel is a primary socio-cultural indicator representing an immense variety of lived realities in the continent. The study, therefore, suggests a concerted concern with the preservation of traditional family structures and other related aspects, such as cultural values, spirituality, gender roles and mutual trust.

**Keywords :** family, African fiction, postcolonialism, African tradition, domestic dissonance

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