

STUDENT MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT-2020

**Link No. 1-19/42 No: F.MRP-325/2019 (MRP/RUSA 2.0-STC JUNE 2019)
with the Financial Assistance from St. Theresa College for Women (A), Eluru**

**FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER
(Quality and Excellence Enhancing Activities)
RUSA SCHEME**

PROJECT TITLE

POST COLONIAL VIEW ON 'THINGS FALL APART'

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2019-20

CERTIFICATE

It is to certify that the Student Minor Research Project entitled “POST COLONIAL VIEW ON *THINGS FALL APART*” being submitted by **P.SINDHUJA & D.KEERTHANA**, III B.A. Lit. during the academic year 2019-2020 under my guidance to the coordinator RUSA.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Student Minor Research Project entitled “**POST COLONIAL VIEWS ON *THINGS FALL APART***” submitted to RUSA 2.0 scheme, under the guidance of Smt. K.L.Praphulla, Lecturer in English, Department of English (UG), Sri Y N College(A), Narsapur.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*I respect and thank **Ch. S. D. St. Theresa College, Eluru**, for providing me an opportunity under **RUSA** to do the project work in **Sri Y N College(A), Narsapur, WGDt** and giving us all support and guidance which made me complete the project duly.*

*I owe my deep gratitude to our project guide **K. L. Praphulla, Lecturer in English, Sri Y N College, Narsapur** who took keen interest on our project work and guided us all along, till the completion of our project work by providing all the necessary information for developing a good system.*

*I heartily thank **Dr. Ch. Satyanarayana garu, Our Beloved Secretary and Correspondent and K.Venkateswarulu, the Principal of Sri Y N College(A), Narsapur** and **Smt.S.M.Maheswari, HOD of English** for their encouragement and more over for their timely support and guidance till the completion of our project work.*

I would not forget to remember our sincere esteems to all staff in the department for their timely support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Postcolonialism”, in the words of Charles E. Bressler , “is an approach to literary analysis that concerns itself particularly with literature written in English in formerly colonized countries”^[1] (Ohadike, v). It usually excludes literature that represents either British or American viewpoints, and concentrates on Writings from colonized cultures in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, South America, and other places and societies that were once dominated by European cultural, political and philosophical tradition.

The postcolonial literature shows the outcome of Colonialism. It reveals the nostalgic nature of the colonized. It is “affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day”^[2] (Ashcroft). A colonized is bound to put up with the different perplexing situations. He has to have high resistance and fortitude against lots of uncalled-for and unavoidable conflicts. The postcolonial writers bring into light the suppression of an immense wealth of indigenous cultures beneath the weight of imperial control. Postcolonial literature knocks on the door of the colonized intending to commune with them. It aims at entering their internal sanctum and bringing into picture their cries of loss and their proclamations of birth. It is not a literature to prove the colonized as the victims, but it shows their confused sense of belonging. They find themselves in cultural, racial and historical hybridity, which make them oscillate between present and past.

The colonized countries such as Nigeria, Jamaica, Pakistan, Canada, Australia and Singapore have the significant features in the postcolonial literature, which reflected the indigenous cultures subjected to the colonial power about suppression and conventions of the colonizers. In the

context, Post-Colonial literature asserts the indigenous cultures to restore the cultural practices and traditions. The writers in the post-colonial period justified the location of the culture of their countries. The major preoccupation of the postcolonial writing is to revise the historical social norms in the perspectives to justify the actions of the society. The postcolonial writers mainly emphasized the indigenous people, places, and their practices to get rid on the stereotypes, inaccuracies and general influences in the spheres of education, social, legal and political settings. They articulated the modes of creative expressions through the folk-songs, tales, proverbs and pidgin structures; In short, a postcolonial study has the potential to bring together new communities, who are supposed to follow the consequences of domination and subordination during the colonial power.

As a part of its cultural heritage, Africa has rich literary traditions, although the further genres with touches of literariness had existed in an oral form till the spread of literacy, but not the novel. Narrative art is strange to Africa, it is found in traditional oral storytelling and epic sagas to honor the memory of dead heroes, leaders, kings, gods, good harvest, hunters and ancestors, and victory over the enemies. Hence, the modern African fiction written in English has been hybridized of the relations between indigenous forms of oral storytelling and the European literary culture whose locus was framed by the European novel; however, a dehybridization occurred through the genre novel, and its result was a focus on the birth of a sense of postcolonial Negritude among the colonized Africa.

African Literature is abounding with themes of African Culture, Conflict of Culture, Religion, Colonialism, and Modernism and the like. African literature can be divided into three distinct categories: pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial.

CHAPTER II

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY IN POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE

The term *Postcolonial* refers to the response to the colonial: racial difference, identity crisis, issues of cultural difference, cultural identity, legal inequality, subaltern theme and all of the submerged or suppressed contradictions within the colonial social order itself. So the term postcolonial is more preferred to post-colonial. It is associated with imperialism from the moment of colonization until 21st century. “*The word imperialism derives from the Latin ‘imperium,’ which has numerous meanings including power, authority, command, dominion, realm, and empire*”^[3] (Habib). It describes many interactions between ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized.’

The Post-colonial Literature implicates and explains the perspectives of the colonial process from the beginning of the colonial contact. All the post-colonial societies are subject in one way or another to overt or subtle of neocolonial domination and independence. The Post-Colonial Literature reflects the development of new elites with independent societies, often dominated by neo-colonial institutions: the development of internal classes based on racial, linguistic or religious discriminations: the unequal treatment of people in settler/invader societies. The Postcolonial Literature involves discussion about experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, ethnicity, place and responses to the colonial discourses of Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being.

Post colonial Literature in English

Postcolonialism literature in English One of the most influential novels of Postcolonialism is *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, explores the interaction between traditional African society

and British colonizers. In this novel the character Okonkwo struggles to understand and cope up with the changes got from Christianity and British control. His novel examines various situations occurred after the postindependence fictional West African village. Achebe conveyed through his novels how the British legacies continue to weaken possibility of uniting the country. South African novelist and Booker Prize winner J. M. Coetzee explores the themes of crime, revenge, land rights and racial justice post-apartheid South Africa. The plot of the novel strongly connected with the character David Lurie was expelled from for sexual harassment. Salman Rushdie's most popular novel *Midnight's Children* intertwines personal events into the history of India. The narrator in the novel is Saleem Sinai. Author used many devices like Magic Realism, Hindu story telling etc. In addition Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* surveys lots of postcolonial themes such as intersections between national and individual identity which caused in consciousness. It is set in a country house in Florence and describes the lives of a young woman and three men from various countries including a badly burnt English patient dying in a room. Some significant writers in postcolonial literature are like Ngugu wa Thiongo, Edwidge Danticat Leslie Marmon Silko, Jamaica Kincaid including Li-Young Lee contributed considerably. Ngugi's *Decolonizing the Mind* is a kind of multiple type genre and it describes various traditions of his people. It also presents how British education system tried to destroy the local culture and its language Gikuyu. Silko in his novel *Ceremony* celebrates various traditions and myths of the Laguna Pueblo and influence of white relation on local culture. It also shows how Native Americans hold a special position in postcolonial discourse.

The Central Ideas in Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial has many common motifs and themes like ‘cultural dominance,’ ‘Diaspora,’ ‘racism,’ ‘quest for identity,’ ‘inequality’ along with some peculiar presentation styles. Most of the postcolonial writers reflected and established many thematic concepts which are quite connected with both ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’. White Europeans continually accentuated on racial prejudice for their superiority over colonized. It was most evident in South Africa that the acts were incorporated in national laws. Among the most notable acts of this kind were ‘*The Groups Areas Act*’, ‘*Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act*’, ‘*Immorality Act*’, ‘*The Population Registration Act*’, ‘*Bantu Authorities Act*’, and ‘*The Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act*.’ Each of these acts were preventive, restricting and discriminating colonized from the ruling White. Both the writers Nadine Gordimer and Coetzee in their fiction showed how apartheid destroyed South Africa in many ways as emotionally, morally and economically. In postcolonial perspective, language played crucial role in control and subjugation of colonized people. Colonizers often imposed their language upon their subjects in order to control them. So most postcolonial writers address the issues in many ways by mixing the local language with imposed language, the result is a hybrid one that underscores the broken nature of the colonized mind.

Postcolonial theorists and historians have been concerned with investigating the various trajectories of modernity as understood and experienced from a range of philosophical, cultural, and historical perspectives. They have been particularly concerned with engaging with the ambiguous legacy of the Enlightenment—as expressed in social, political, economic, scientific, legal, and cultural thought—beyond Europe itself. The inheritance is ambiguous,

according to postcolonial theorists, because the period of Enlightenment was also an age of empire, and the connection between those two historical epochs is more than incidental.

African Writers in Post-Colonialism:

African Literature forms a crucial segment of the 20th -century world literature. It stands for the writings of African national livings on African soil reflecting the African native issues related to culture and identity. The significance of African Literature lies in its Africanness, which is retained in spite its cosmopolitan origin. This is a unique feature of African Literature when compared to the literature of the other parts of the world, Further the lack of a written medium is balanced by Africa's rich heritage of oral literature. The African writers in the postcolonial period explicated the colonial powers of Europe in terms of protest, conflict, agony or neurosis. The European novelists like Joseph Conrad and Joyce Cary in their novels, *Heart of Darkness*(1899) and *Misterb Johnson* (1939) respectively, have created an Africa that is often atrocious and beyond redemption. Obviously, Europe felt no need to be more than condescending to Africa, which she first enslaved and soon after colonized. The African writer Chinua Achebe rightly says that "In their role she (Africa) had no need and made little effort to understand and appreciate Africa; indeed she easily convinced herself that there was nothing there to justify the effort"^[4] (Achebe, 1976). African writers used the English language as one of their legacies of colonialism to advantage. The writers from Nigeria have contributed a large to the magnificence of African Literature. Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, (1952) was the first ever published novel. The novelist projects a hero in search of his dead palm-wine tapster, in the Dead's town. During this quest, he does on evil after another, till he reaches his goal through complete perseverance. The novel is compared with 'Pilgrim's Progress' with the exception of

Tutuola, Okara and Ekwensi, quite a few Nigerian writers like J.P. Clark, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo and T.M. Aluko were all trained in the universities. They may be termed as *Africa's 'University Wits'*. They didn't succeed only in bringing self-knowledge but also provided the needed inspiration in speeding up the process of Independence all over Africa. Ekwensi, Achebe and Aluko with their all the time best novels, Clark and Soyinka contributed plays with great satires. Okigbo and Okara wrote deep, powerful and sensual poetry. The contribution of these writers can be considered into two stages. First, African values and predicament are expressed by Africans themselves, for the first time in a widely accessible medium. Secondly, African writing has the supernatural power of drawing certain patterns of their culture and heritage.

Among the African writers Chinua Achebe's novels and essays have played vital roles in the growth of postcolonial theory and indigenous knowledge systems. Chinua Achebe, a conscious artist, who as a native of Africa, penetrates through the root cause of the problems of his native fellow beings. People often call him the '*Father of modern African literature*'. He was a Nigerian writer who was one of the first to write a postcolonial novel that said, basically, "Screw you" to Nigeria's British colonizers. The major themes in his novels are the conflict between past and present, the changes formed by European imperialism and the erosion of traditions tribes and religion, conflict between old and new socio-economic values, traditional and new order of life, political corruption and opportunism. It is in this context that Achebe builds the past history of his country, and discerns its people to focus upon the present in the new historical realities.

CHAPTER III

CHINUA ACHEBE



Chinua Achebe, in full **Albert Chinualumogu Achebe**, (born November 16, 1930, Ogidi, Nigeria—died March 21, 2013, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.), Nigerian novelist applauded for his unsentimental depictions of the social and psychological disorientation accompanying the imposition of Western customs and values upon traditional African society. His meticulous anxiety was with emergent Africa at its moments of crisis; his novels range in subject matter from the first contact of an African village with the white man to the educated African's endeavor to create a firm moral order out of the changing values in a large city.^[5]

Achebe grew up in the Igbo (Ibo) town of Ogidi, Nigeria. After studying English and literature at University College (now the University of Ibadan), Achebe taught for a short time before joining the staff of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Lagos, where he served as director of

external broadcasting in 1961–66. In 1967 he cofounded a publishing company at Enugu with the poet Christopher Okigbo, who died soon thereafter in the Nigerian civil war for Biafran independence, which Achebe openly supported. In 1969 Achebe toured the United States with fellow writers Gabriel Okara and Cyprian Ekwensi, lecturing at universities. Upon his return to Nigeria he was selected research fellow at the University of Nigeria and became professor of English, a position he held from 1976 until 1981 (professor emeritus from 1985). He was director (from 1970) of two Nigerian publishers, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. and Nwankwo-Ifejika Ltd. After an automobile accident in Nigeria in 1990 that left him partially paralyzed, he moved to the United States, where he taught at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. In 2009 Achebe left Bard to join the faculty of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Chinua Achebe is known as the father of Modern African Literature. His groundbreaking first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) contested many colonialist prejudices concerning African civilization. It depicted life in an Igbo village at a period of transition, culminating by the arrival of British missionaries at the turn of the twentieth century and explored the various responses of the villages to the challenges of change. Achebe's subsequent writing extended and expanded his central themes, in works such as *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964) and *A Man of the People* (1966), while in 1987 he cast a critical eye over Post-Independence Nigeria in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Achebe criticized Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899) in an essay titled '*Conrad's Darkness*' (1972) caused considerable debate and made the ground fertile to discuss important questions of the complicity of the literary culture with political and racial politics. The suffering of the Nigerian Civil War in *Girls at War* (1972) and in *Beware Soul Brother* (1973), and the corrupt authoritarianism that has characterized Nigeria's Second

Republic in *Anthills in the Savannah* (1987). Indeed, the title of his commentary, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983) identifies a concern that has been central to all of his work.

As a corrective to European literature's stereotypical portraits of Africans as an unvarying, primitive force, Achebe strives to communicate the human complexity of Nigerian existence, to establish the independence of African literature, and to demonstrate the value of traditional Igbo culture. In *'The Role of a Writer in a New Nation'* (1964), Achebe states that his first priority is to inform the world that "African peoples did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless . . . , that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity"^[6] (Achebe, 1964). However, Achebe does not idealize the pre-colonial past, for he knows that it cannot survive unaltered in a modern world; instead, he encourages his readers to explore continuities with the past that can coexist with modern society.

The Major Themes of Chinua's literary works

The story lines in most of his novels turn around Nigeria's colonial period and political unrests in the post-independence country. In most occasions, Chinua Achebe uses his creativity to clearly bring out the intended sense of his writings, by illustrating the impacts of European culture and imperialism on African traditions. This approach is the defining characteristic of his debut novel, *Things Fall Apart*. However, Achebe's novels touch on a wide range of themes for instance the description and illustration of the Nigerian Igbo culture, effects of colonization on African traditions, the relationships between femininity and masculinity, etc.

The Theme of Culture and Tradition

In most of his literary works, Chinua Achebe makes several attempts to illustrate the exchanges of African culture, in this case the Nigerian Igbo and modernity as an effect of British colonization of Nigeria. In his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, the introduction of Christian culture in Umuofia village as a result of the arrival of European missionaries is met by sharp resistance and opposition by the locals who strive to defend their local heritage at all costs. In *Things Fall Apart*, the newly created roles of the District Commissioner and magistrate courts are interpreted by the locals as a way of locking them out in major decision making processes of issues directly affecting the community. This in effect acts as a springboard for their opposition to European invasion. The interference of local traditions by European culture is further depicted in the novel, *Anthills of the Savannah* by the character, Sam Okoli, a typical example of a Western educated individual who despises his native traditions. This makes it difficult for him to effectively play the role assigned to him by the author, i.e. the president of Kangan .

The Theme of Gender (Femininity and Masculinity)

The manner in which Chinua Achebe assigns roles to characters in his novels and other writings puts into reflection the individual roles of both men and women, in regard to the norms and expectations of the society. Tracing his origins back to the patriarchal Igbo community where important family decisions are made by the paterfamilias, Chinua tries to incorporate these societal elements in his writings. Looking at it from the traditional point of view, Igbo men were polygamous in nature and were allowed to beat up their wives in case of any domestic misunderstanding. This is probably why he depicts Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* as a man with three wives, and with a chauvinistic attitude that his masculinity allegedly overshadows anything feminine around him^[7] (Achebe, 1994).

On the other hand, he portrays women in his writings as cowards and submissive wives, not allowed to take part in either traditional or modern leadership roles. To reduce the chances of being branded as a sexist chauvinistic author, Chinua Achebe at one point tries to appreciate the role played by women in the society. This is seen in Chapter fourteen of *Things Fall Apart* in the characterization of Ani and subsequent discussions of Nneka, translated to mean, the supreme mother. In addition, arguments may be put across that the problems and tribulations faced by Okonkwo may be attributed to his attitude toward women through regular mistreatment and offenses made against the feminine gender.

In his other novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, Chinua Achebe treats women with respect as seen when he portrays Beatrice as an independent city woman fighting for her identity and position in the society. She is presented as a principled iron lady with both feminine and masculine character traits and does not rely on men for survival and security in marriage.

Factors influencing Chinua Achebe's writings

Just like any other author, Chinua Achebe's quality of writing has been absolutely influenced by several factors. To start with, he in most cases quotes, paraphrases and/or translates Igbo proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and associated folklore to portray Christian dogmas and European political ideologies. This creativity and innovativeness on his part makes it easy for his target audience to recognize with, and understand the context of his work. In addition, Chinua's understanding of African traditions, history, politics and the society at large makes it possible for him to compare European and African cultures before presenting perceptive and well thought out novels on the same.

The Igbo widely believe that at any given time, no single man or single idea can be regarded as the gospel truth. They believe in accepting corrections and learning from past mistakes and

experiences of one another. This attitude of the Igbo is partly responsible for his nature of writing in that he neither portrays fatalistic inevitability nor moral absolutes. This perception is illustrated in the novel *Anthills of the Savannah*, when Ikem, one of its characters accepts the fact that everyone has to accommodate opinions of other people in order to live in harmony.

Arguments may also be put across that the kind of education received by Chinua Achebe from early childhood to graduation is partly responsible for sharpening his writing skills. At a tender age, Chinua the Church Mission Society School before joining Umuahia's government college for further studies. He then joined the Ibadan University College, a constituent college of the University of London where he majored in English literature. This educational background makes it possible for Chinua Achebe to contribute in point of view touching directly on Christian doctrines, local politics and European affairs. His understanding of both African and European cultural traditions makes him better placed to critically explore a broad spectrum of issues revolving around race, religion, colonialism, academics and traditions. This has the general effect of minimizing biasness, prejudice and fixed mindsets in most of his writings. His works of literature therefore discusses various issues using varied cultural approaches, making them acceptable to various audiences across the globe.

In one way or another, Chinua Achebe's attitude towards the universality of human nature and active involvement in Nigerian politics (at one time served as the vice president of People's Redemption Party in the early 1980's) also influenced his writings, making them to extend beyond the Nigerian borders and also beyond the political, sociological and anthropological concerns of the post-independence Africa. He also attempts to upturn the existing stereotypes and mindsets held by most westerners. Previously, most European literature work and narratives e.g. those composed by Doris Lessing and Alan Paton presented Africa as continent faced by

droughts, famine and constant turmoil. It is from this domain that Chinua's work unearths the myths and misrepresentations of Africa.

Achebe's writing Style

In his novels and short stories, Chinua Achebe incorporates various elements of oral literature at different levels so as to make his works interesting and appealing to the readers. Being a Nigerian Igbo by birth, he intertwines the oral traditions, folk tales and related narratives of his ethnic community into most of his books. A case example is the inclusion of the folk tale- *the Sky and the Earth* in his 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart*. Other than making the story line appealing, oral traditions in this case help in making it easier for his target audience to understand and/or interpret various themes of his novels. By way of example, the narrative on *the Sky and the Earth* is used by the author to emphasize on the theme relating various aspects of masculinity and femininity. This is seen when Nwoye, one of the characters in *Things Fall Apart* brands such tales as women stories to avoid being associated with femininity. This is despite the fact that he does like the narratives but only fears the wrath of his father.

Other than folk tales and oral narratives, Chinua Achebe widely uses proverbs, idioms and similes derived from the Igbo ethnic community so as to enable his audience and readers to make sound judgment of the community. This is portrayed in his books, especially the *Arrow of God* and *Things Fall Apart*, where Nwaka and Obierika are respectively regarded as great orators of their time.

In addition, use of folk songs and traditional dancing is a common characteristic of his writing style. In the novel, *No Longer at Ease* – 1960, women are at one point heard singing the Igbo's *Song of the Heart for Obi*. In *Things Fall Apart*, a comparison of songs sung by the Igbo and Christian missionaries reveals a sharp contrast between the two. In summary, widespread use of

oral traditions in his works is intended for emphasizing on the morals and relevance of cultural traditions to the modern society.

Chinua Achebe's other major writing style is depicted by his mastery and extensive use of English literature. His choice to use the English language in his works is in itself ironic based on the fact that he was an opponent of the colonization process and any elements of neo-colonization. In order to reach most people across the multi-ethnic Nigeria and other parts of the world, he had to use English, which by then was regarded as the post-independence Nigeria's national language. His mastery of the English language made it easier for Chinua Achebe to alter the English syntax, idiom and usage, giving it a completely new African approach to help him in translating and accommodating African ideas with no English equivalents.

CHAPTER IV

REVIEW OF THE NOVELS OF CHINUA ACHEBE

The main goal of Chinua Achebe was his society, more exactly, the fate of his people, they pertained as an authentic record of the changing African world. In his opinion, the writer must be in charge of his society. To him it was silly to consider art as a pure and independent being coming into existence by itself in an aesthetic void. Accordingly, his aim was to make his fiction an instrument of awareness seeking to elevate the social reality to a higher level because in the traditional African sense, art is in the service of man^[8](Achebe, 1978, p. 9) and the artist is a representative of his community, behaving as the conscience of his society. So the literary artist should face the reality and direct his comrades to see themselves as others see them. Edward Said argues that “Most interesting post-colonial writers bear their past within them- as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending toward a new future”^[9] (Edward, 1993, p.34). So it is through the visions of *Things Fall Apart* that the world turned out to be more appreciative of Africa and its people and at the meantime the reality embracing the stereotypical ideas that once existed about Africa started to surface in a much clearer light.

***Things Fall Apart* (1958)**

Things Fall Apart (1958), Achebe’s first novel, concerns traditional Igbo life at the time of the advent of missionaries and colonial government in his homeland. His principal character cannot accept the new order, even though the old has already distorted. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) has a broader scope than is suggested by the materialist and utilitarian preoccupations of nationalism.

It involves what the Manuel has called "an idealizing capacity" as a defining property of the utopian imagination^[10] (Manuel, 1979:5).

No Longer at Ease (1960)

Chinua Achebe attempts to chart the contemporary Igbo society in the novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960) which has suffered a loss of values due to its enslavement at first, and colonization later, by the European imperialist powers. *No Longer at Ease* (1960) is about the realistic picture of the Igbo life, which was published in the year of Nigeria's Independence. It was awarded the Nigerian National Trophy for Literature. The novel distinguishes the fact that "though set in Nigeria and concerned with Negro rather than white problems, is refreshingly free from rancor or hysteria"^[11] (Eko, 1975:16).

Arrow of God (1964)

In *Arrow of God* (1964), set in the 1920s in a village under British administration, the principal character, the chief priest of the village, whose son becomes a zealous Christian, turns his offense at the position he is placed in by the white man against his own people. *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) deal with corruption and other aspects of postcolonial African life.

A Man of the People (1966)

Achebe attempts to delineate issues in *A Man of the People* (1966) grappling with the postcolonial realities. He ridicules the corrupt leaders of Nigeria. It is about the silly and ignorant villagers, who were dancing themselves lame, waiting to blow off their gunpowder in honour of the minister M. A. Nanga, he who had moved the country down the slopes of inflation. The villagers accept the corrupt politician as the normal and sensible being who did not spit out the

juicy morsel that good fortune had placed in his mouth Odili Samalu comes to the capital to take a strategic post in the civil service. As we find “Achebe skillfully moves from the political to the personal”^[12] (Singh, 2006:148).

Anthills of the Savannah (1987)

The title of the novel comes from the proverb about “anthills surviving to tell the new grass of the Savannah about last year’s bushfires”; it denotes an idea about the usefulness of the narrative tradition in bearing the seeds of future renewal. Achebe exposes the readers to the much wider theatre of experience in Nigerian and global politics and culture. He considers the civil war in Biafran war, as one of the reasons, which virtually changed the history of Nigeria. It tells the story of three schoolmates, Ikem, Chris, and Sam, who became figures in the new regime in the fictional West African Land of Kangan.

Achebe also published several collections of short stories and children’s books, including *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (1973; with John Iroaganachi). *Beware, Soul-Brother* (1971) and *Christmas in Biafra* (1973) are collections of poetry. *Another Africa* (1998) combines an essay and poems by Achebe with photographs by Robert Lyons. Achebe’s books of essays include *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975), *Hopes and Impediments* (1988), *Home and Exile* (2000), *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (2009), and the autobiographical *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (2012). In 2007 he won the Man Booker International Prize.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In carrying out this research, various works carried out by critics of Chinua Achebe's literary works were explored. These include peer review journals and other scholarly sources. In order to ensure accuracy and reliability, some of his novels such as *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God* were studied closely and used at various levels during the analysis. It should however be noted that the methodology followed in developing this research project exempted some of his works, especially those touching on children stories and associated juvenilia.

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. It aims to find out the representative work of the novelist. The present study covers a close exploration of the postcolonial views in the novel *Things Fall Apart* and how the things fall apart are structured. They are examined and analyzed in the light of the visible and invisible impact of identity and culture related with gender, race, ethnicity, tradition, invasion, pacification and social pattern of Igbo people in Nigeria. However, some of the significant extracts or examples from the novels are selected for the application of the principles of the issues of identity and culture. While using this type of examination certain secondary sources have been taken into account. The research is completed by applying following methods.

- a. Collection and through analysis of primary and secondary data.
- b. Collection and through analysis of research articles, related journals and papers based on Chinua Achebe's novels.
- c. Research visits to various libraries for the collection of primary and secondary data.
- d. The use of webliography or internet sources in relation to Chinua Achebe's works.

Thus, the textual method and analytical method of study are used as the methodology for this research.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) published his major novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), in postcolonial Nigeria. In it he presents a colonial narrative using English as its primary mode of communication. However, his use of native Igbo words and the world they raise problematizes a Eurocentric hypothesis of the totality and universality of a given language, in this case, English. He employs acts of translation and introduces hybrid languages in order to bring about dialogue that subverts the dominance of any one language and the world that it creates for its speakers. In a parallel fashion, this thesis uses two different theoretical approaches that have not typically been placed in dialogue with each other — postcolonial theory and hermeneutics — to view and interpret the nuances present in Achebe’s text that neither could illuminate on its own. This dialogical approach reveals insufficiencies in the independent theories and allows them to mutually supplement each other. Together these theories show how the novel subverts the acknowledged authority of the English language and universalizing discourses in order to identify the confrontation of lived linguistic worlds and horizons in the postcolonial context. The novel reorients those structures of understanding and interpretation around a subject that has historically been denied a voice.

With his depiction of Africans in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe defies how Africans formerly have been described in European literature. In one of his lectures, he contends that Europeans have perceived Africa as “the other world”^[13] (Achebe, “An Image of Africa”, 1978, p.15).

Joseph McLaren claims that *Things Fall Apart* was written “at a time when the most prevalent works of fiction about Africa were written primarily by Europeans”^[14] (Joseph McLaren, 2012, p.19). Majumder alludes to E. B. Tyler, an anthropologist, whose work is believed to be objective. Tyler writes the tourists, after reaching the impassable countries [in Africa] and seeing no police system available in their own countries, come to the direct conclusion that the cannibals live there as their wishes. We think it is a wrong belief, because, in these ‘uncivilized’ countries there are severe rules and regulations in each stapes of life ^[15] (Majumder, 2007, p. 137). Achebe’s objectives are obvious from the beginning; he wrote to teach and to disintegrate the prepositional vision Europeans had of Africans. The novel has gotten much consideration among critics for this reason. McLaren writes that “by portraying the cultural life of the Igbo [...] Achebe was able to counter Western images of Africa”^[16] (Joseph McLaren, 2012, p. 24). Furthermore, Alison Searle observes that “Achebe scrupulously creates the sense of a rich and coherent social fabric that has formed its own ideas about whites and their culture” ^[17] (Alison Searle, 2007; p.49). She continues to contend that Achebe rotates the narrative perspective from what had formerly been the standard: “Instead of gazing through the eyes of the European, the text displaces the assumptions of imperial narrative, and grants the terms of reference and mediating perspective to the usually suppressed ‘other’.

This novel is postcolonial in the sense that it draws a clear line between the colonizer and the colonized. Broadly speaking, this novel is a response to, as well as a record of the traumatic consequences of the western capitalist colonialism on the traditional values and religious institutions of the African people. In his article, *The Novelist as Teacher* (1965), Achebe dwells

upon, “the disaster brought upon the African psyche in the period of subjection to alien races”. This disastrous impact brought upon Africa is usually depicted in three phases. The first phase deals with the depiction of the strategies adopted by the white man, for forcefully introducing an foreign form of administration, education and religion and thereby inducing the natives to prefer western culture and regard their own religion with contempt. The second phase deals with the period of resistance on the part of the natives, and finally the third phase deals with the post – independence stage. In this novel, Achebe focuses on the first phase.

Summary & Analysis:

Things Fall Apart is centered on the life of the protagonist of the novel, Okonkwo. As the novel develops Okonkwo accidentally kills a man and he and his family are exiled from Umuofia. During his exile white missionaries arrive in Umuofia and change the village. When Okonkwo returns to his village he sees the major transformations that Umuofia has undergone during his exile.

Unhappy with the change, Okonkwo and other villagers come together to drive the white missionaries out of their land. Their efforts are in vain as the missionaries send their messengers to abort the meeting. Okonkwo kills one of the messengers and in shock at his actions the villagers let the other messengers escape. The messengers report back to the missionaries and they take off to bring Okonkwo to justice only to find him dead.

The novel has universal concern and appeal, because it is all about human environments in different socio-historical situations and in the chain of events in a universal order. While Achebe is going to portray the Ibo society and culture as a microcosm of African culture in general, he is also of the idea that socio-historic relations are based on economic system of society that is now undergoing changes - its shape and way of functioning - that while the traditional culture, history

was of feudalistic nature. The new system imposed on the African greatly influenced their values, codes of conduct, system of production and all this influenced the human-relationships, which are ingrained in the historic conditions and their way of living. Thus one can say that, the material ties between the nations are decisive and highly influential in the ideological give and take in terms of politics, education and religion, and these can further mould the fabrication of a society as a whole.

Things Fall Apart is a story told in dismay. Achebe presents a world, which is shedding nostalgic tears of the lost identity, a world which finds itself on the threshold of getting sealed in the dusted files of a forgotten history. The novel records a sensitive phase of the history, because Achebe picks up the situations from a transitional phase of the history. At the same time, the two-thirds of the novel is enclosed by the traditional cultural rhythms of social setup, which is mostly based on However, these social and cultural identities are invaded by missionaries and are the means of destroying Ibo society's acceptance of racial and cultural inferiority. The novel foregrounds Achebe's sense of Africanization in a postcolonial clash of European and African cultures – with African struggling to empower itself superior to that of its counterpart. Much of Achebe's novel is given to the account of religious beliefs and practices, not only because these are so significant a part of community life, but also because it is these beliefs that are later to be shown as being challenging and breaking down.

Post-colonialism expresses the opposite idea of colonialism. Hence, post-colonialism literature is a consequence of colonialism. Through literature we understand the primary focus of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, a novel written by an individual who grew up under colonial rule in response to the effects of colonialism on his culture, Achebe writes back at the writings of European writers and the misrepresentation of Africa in their writings. A colonized individual is usually

forced to follow the culture of their colony regardless if they are against it or not. Post-colonial writers usually write about how their rich native cultures were destroyed under the power of imperialism. Achebe believes that the African people must know and value their heritage, understand their history, and own a strong ethical code that condemns injustice and corruption wherever they occur. Thus, in a literary style that is direct and clear, his *Things Fall Apart* depicts the changing nature of Nigerian society from a dehybridization of falling apart to a hybridization of things becoming more and more united. The performance and skill Achebe showed in depicting the social-cultural and historical values of the Ibo society, in a very clearer way, with a meticulous detail that it characterizes the work of a social-anthropologist. He documented the social codes, traditions, conventions and customs in a very sharp and minute detail and their hemiplegic transformation crossing a phase of history in colonial set up that gave it the element of uniqueness and universality.

Significance of the Title of the Novel 'Things Fall Apart':

Things Fall Apart (1958), Achebe's first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), as the title suggests, depicts the anarchic tendencies in the Igbo society, which has the "great cultural past to boast of, like any other civilization of the world i.e. Chinese, Indian or Egyptian"^[18] (Rao,2003:10). If we take a closer look at the above mentioned culture, it is evident that at some point of time, after having touched the zenith, it was concealed by the inevitable forces of anarchy, at least for some time, which inevitably meant a change, a flux, a replacement of old values by a set of new norms and emergence of a new order. The novel portrays an image of an African society, reconstituted as a living entity and in its historic circumstance: an image of a coherent social structure forming the institutional fabric of a universe of meanings and values.

The Title- A Literary Allusion:

The phrase "things fall apart" is taken from the poem, "The Second Coming" by W.B. Yeats, which Achebe quotes more broadly in the epigraph. Achebe's literary allusion to Yeats' poem might deepen or extend—by comparison and/or contrast—the meaning(s) of Achebe's title and his novel. The beginning four lines of the poem are referred to as a foreword of the novel.

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

Yeats's poem is about the Second Coming, a return and revelation of sorts. In *Things Fall Apart*, this revelation refers to the advent of the Christian missionaries, further satirizing their supposed benevolence in converting the Igbo. For an agricultural society adapted to a series of cycles, including that of the locusts, the notion of return would be quite credible and familiar.

"The center cannot hold" is an ironic reference to both the imminent collapse of the African tribal system, threatened by the rise of imperialist bureaucracies, and the imminent disintegration of the British Empire. "Mere anarchy" is an oxymoron in a sense, since the definition of anarchy implies an indubitably potent level of radicalism. The abstraction in the language makes the poem's ideas universal: by referring to "[t]hings" falling apart as opposed to specifying what those collapsing or disintegrating things are, Yeats (and Achebe) leaves his words open to a greater range of interpretations. It is worth noting, in addition, that Achebe cuts away from the poem just as it picks up its momentum and begins to speak of "innocence drowned" and "blood-

dimmed” tides. It is a measure of Achebe’s subtlety that he prefers a prologue that is understated and suggestive, rather than polemical, raving, and violent.

Things Fall Apart can be said when something we believed would last forever comes to an end. The title *Things Fall Apart* refers to the fact that without proper balance, things do fall apart. The notion of balance in the novel is an important theme throughout the book. There is a system of balance, which the Igbo culture seems but at the end of the novel the society people cannot listen the leader, so a chaotic situation is created.

Okonkwo’s Life Falls Apart:

At the beginning of the novel we see Okonkwo as a flourishing leader of the Igbo people. But the novel ends with his tragic end. Thus, we can say that the novel *Things Fall Apart* depicts how Okonkwo’s life falls apart. He is a well-known person throughout the nine villages and beyond. He is a warrior and wrestler who gains respect through his athletics. He is a fierce-free individual. He hasn’t lost one fight or any battles. And for this the people of the village love him. He is also appreciated because of his wealth.

Okonkwo's life first begins to fall apart when he kills Ikemefuna, a prisoner who stayed at Okonkwo's home. Okonkwo takes part in his murder, despite warning from his friend, “That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death.” But when he hears Ikemefuna’s crying, ““My father, they have killed me!” as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down.” Okonkwo’s fear of being weak, which is one of his tragic flaws, drives him to rashness, and in the end it contributes to his own tragedy that his own life falls apart.

Another momentous incidence where Okonkwo's life falls apart was when he was thrown out of the clan for seven years. From this event, one can see that Okonkwo's hopes dreams have begun to fall apart. His hopes of being a rich and popular individual had drifted away with this disturbing incident. Another episode that demonstrates the downfall in Okonkwo's life was when Nwoye, his oldest and favorite son, converted to the white men.

Okonkwo's life finally shattered after his returning to his village where he finds that everything is changed. Embittered and inconsolable for the demolition of his clan's independence, and fearing the humiliation of dying under white law, Okonkwo commits suicide and his life totally falls apart.

The Society Itself Responsible For Falling Apart:

At the beginning of the book we see that the Igbo people have a strong faith in their traditional religion. The religion of the Igbos consisted in the belief that there is a supreme God, the creator of the universe and the lesser gods. The supreme God was called Chukwu. The other gods were made by Chukwu to act his messengers so that people could approach him through them. People made sacrifices to the smaller gods, but when they failed, the people turned to Chukwu. Ancestor worship was also an equally important feature of the religion of the Ibo people. There were many superstitious ideas related with their religious belief. They believed in evil spirits and oracle. One of such Oracles is responsible for Okonkwo's sacrifice of Ikemefuna. This incident underlines the superstitious brutality of traditional Igbo society. We also find the brutality, injustice and the inhuman activities in some other rituals or rules such as – people who are affected by some severe diseases are carried on the Evil Forest to die and they do not get any burial and twin babies are thrown out in the Evil Forest just after their birth. The ultimate result of such brutality is when the people, who are dissatisfied with these rules such as- Nwoye, the

mother of three twin babies, get the opportunity to change their religion they do it and the society ultimately falls apart.

CHAPTER VI

RESEARCH CONTENT

THEMES IN *THINGS FALL APART*

Language:

"I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings."

—Chinua Achebe

Language as a Sign of Cultural Difference

Language is an important theme in *Things Fall Apart* on several levels. In demonstrating the imaginative, often formal language of the Igbo, Achebe emphasizes that Africa is not the silent or incomprehensible continent that books such as *Heart of Darkness* made it out to be. Rather, by peppering the novel with Igbo words, Achebe shows that the Igbo language is too complex for direct translation into English. Similarly, Igbo culture cannot be understood within the framework of European colonialist values. Achebe also points out that Africa has many *different* languages: the villagers of Umuofia, for example, make fun of Mr. Brown's translator because his language is slightly different from their own.

The Igbo depend on their language to differentiate them from other cultures. They also depend on language to define their social rank in their society. Okonkwo, for instance, when being compared to his father Unoka is considered as a wealthy man and not only because he has married a lot of women or his household produces many yams but because of his strength that helped him defeat one of the strongest wrestlers in the village^[19] (Achebe 6). On the other hand, Unoka was a drunkard who had only one wife, not many yams and had no titles to his name by the time of his death^[19] (Achebe 6). The village had named him *agbala* a term Igbo use to refer to “women as well as to men who have not taken a title”^[20] (Achebe iii) consequently a man who deserves no respect from society because he is not “wealthy”.

In a 1966 essay reprinted in his book *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, he says that, by using English, he presents "a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world-wide language." He recommends that the African writer use English "in a way that brings out his message best without shifting the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. [The writer] should aim at fashioning out English which is at once universal and able to carry his unusual experience." Achebe accomplishes this goal by innovatively introducing Igbo language, proverbs, metaphors, speech rhythms, and ideas into a novel written in English.

Achebe agrees, however, with many of his fellow African writers on one point: The African writer must write for a social purpose. In contrast to Western writers and artists who create art for art's sake, many African writers create works with one mission in mind — to restore their own national culture in the postcolonial era.

The Use of English

Achebe presents the complexities and depths of an African culture to readers of other cultures as well as to readers of his own culture. By using English — in which he has been proficient since childhood — he reaches many more readers and has a much greater literary impact than he would by writing in a language such as Igbo. Writers who write in their native language must eventually allow their works to be translated, frequently into English, so readers outside the culture can learn about it.

The Igbo vocabulary is fused into the text almost seamlessly so the reader understands the meaning of most Igbo words by their context. Can any conscientious reader of *Things Fall Apart* remain unfamiliar with words and concepts represented by *chi*, *egwugwu*, *ogbanje*, and *obi*? Such Igbo terms as *chi* and *ogbanje* are essentially untranslatable, but by using them in the context of his story, Achebe helps the non-Igbo reader identify with and relate to this complex Igbo culture.

Chi, for example, signifies a significant, complex Igbo concept that Achebe repetitively refers to by illustrating the concept in various contexts throughout the story. Achebe translates *chi* as *personal god* when he first mentions Unoka's bad fortune. As the book progresses, it steadily picks up other nuances. The *chi* concept is more complex than a personal deity or even *fate*, another frequently used synonym. *Chi* suggests elements of the Hindu concept of karma, the concept of the soul in some Christian denominations, and the concept of individuality in some mystical philosophies. The understanding of *chi* and its significance in Igbo culture grows as one progress through the book.

Another example of Achebe's incorporation of Igbo elements is his frequent reference to traditional Igbo proverbs and tales. These particular elements give *Things Fall Apart* an authentic

African voice. The Igbo culture is fundamentally an oral one — that is, "Among the Igbo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten"(Chapter1). To provide a genuine feel for Igbo culture would be impossible without also allowing the proverbs to play a noteworthy role in the novel. And despite the foreign origin of these proverbs and tales, the Western reader can relate very well to many of them. They are woven smoothly into their context and require only occasional explanation or elaboration. These proverbs and tales are, in fact, relatively similar in spirit to Western sayings and fables.

Modern-day readers of this novel not only relate easily to traditional proverbs and tales but also empathize with the problems of Okonkwo, Nwoye, and other characters. Achebe has skillfully developed his characters, and even though they live in a different era and a very different culture, one can readily understand their motivations and their feelings because they are universal and timeless.

Speech patterns and rhythms are occasionally used to represent moments of high emotion and tension. Consider the sound of the drums in the night in Chapter 13 (*go-di-di-go-go-di-go*); the call repeated several times to unite a congregation followed by its group response, first described in Chapter 2 (*Umuofia kwenu. . .Yaa!*); the agonized call of the priestess seeking Ezinma in Chapter 11 (*Agbala do-o-o-o!*); the repetitious pattern of questions and answers in the *isa-ifi* marriage ritual in Chapter 14; the long narrated tale of Tortoise in Chapter 11; and the excerpts from songs in several chapters.

Achebe adds another twist in his artistic use of language by integrating a few examples of Pidgin English. Pidgin is a simplified form of language used for communicating between groups of people who normally speak different languages. Achebe uses only a few Pidgin words or phrases — *tie-tie* (to tie); *kotma* (a crude form of court messenger); and *Yes, sah* — just enough to

suggest that a form of Pidgin English was being established. As colonialists, the British were adept at installing Pidgin English in their new colonies. Regrettably, Pidgin occasionally takes on characteristics of master-servant communication; it can sound superior on the one hand, and submissive on the other. Furthermore, using the simplified language can become an easy excuse for not learning the standard languages for which it substitutes.

Achebe's use of Igbo language, speech patterns, proverbs, and richly drawn characters creates a genuine African story that effectively bridges the cultural and historical gap between the reader and the Igbo. *Things Fall Apart* is a groundbreaking work for many reasons, but particularly because Achebe's controlled use of the Igbo language in an English novel extends the boundaries of what is considered English fiction. Achebe's introduction of new forms and language into a traditional (Western) narrative construction to communicate unique African experiences forever changed the definition of world literature.

Igbo is a society that also appears to be sceptical about change. They refuse to send their children to school where they stand a chance to be able to read and write in the English language. Despite Mr Brown's efforts to show the villagers that they need to learn English because they are now being ruled by the District Commissioner and other white missionaries who only communicate in English, the villagers still remain reluctant in educating their children ^[21](Achebe 128).

Quest for Identity

The title proposes the identity issues of Igbo society, which has a great cultural past to boast of, like any other ancient civilization in the world. Structured on a limited frame of 152 pages, the book, which is no more than a novella, successfully reflects the issues of identity and the values of unspoken and unheard of phases and facets of African life. It is

set in the 1890s and portrays the clash between Nigeria's white colonial government and the traditional culture of the native Igbo people. It explodes the stereotypical European portraits of native Africans. Achebe effectively counters the persistent and self-serving European stereotypes of African identity, particularly the notion that traditional African identity of the Igbo clan. It is however, a society that cannot survive and unaltered in the modern world. Like W. B. Yeats 'The Second Coming' (1919) from which the novel takes its title, *Things Fall Apart* as an ironic and apocalyptic dream of the failure to maintain order and balance.

“Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”^[22](Yeats, 1919: verses 1-4).

The title of the novel is ironic resting on the distortion of Igbo identity by the invasion of missionaries and resulted into the pacification of Igbo tribe. It represents the complex, advanced social institutions and artistic traditions of Igbo identity prior to its contact with Europeans. Achebe rightly says that the novel “*Things Fall Apart* was an act of atonement (or rather, “at-one-ment”) with my past, the ritual return and homage of a Prodigal Son” (Achebe, 1965:38). The sentiment expressed by Achebe retrospectively about the novel. It focuses the Igbo rituals and identity with allusions to the Bible, especially to Jesus Christ's parable of the prodigal son in St. Luke's Gospel, ^[23](Navarre, 1999-2005: verses

18-32).

Kwame Anthony Appiah declares that “*Things Fall Apart* as Africa’s best-loved novel”. He further adds that it is “archetypal modern African novel in English”.^[24] (Appiah, 1994: ix) His focus upon the late nineteenth-century portrayal of Igbo culture by Achebe in the novel is commendable and can serve as an appropriate starting point for full-fledged investigations into the issues of the portrayal of African culture, the process of colonization and the resultant issues of identity and hybridity, in the light of postcolonial critical theories. The columnist, Fafa, Foofo says

“Achebe introduces the various aspects of any civilization in “*Things Fall Apart*”: an economy, family, a system of justice, language, socio-cultural relations, foreign relations, warfare, sports etc. He also introduces the many values of traditional and modern African society: honesty, self-determination, hard work and humility”^[25] (Foofo: 2013).

Things Fall Apart (1958) is divided into three parts. The first part of it transmits to the pre-colonial Igbo Clan in Nigeria. The second part discloses the social identity, judicial system, and customs of the clan, banishment of Okonkwo to Mbanta village and the arrival of missionaries in Nigerian villages. The third part distinguishes the disruption of Igbo culture, the clash between new faith i.e. Christianity and traditional Igbo social patterns, pacification of Igbo clan and the things fall apart at the end by the tragic end of the protagonist Okonkwo. Achebe reveals the friction within the individual and the friction between the individual and Igbo society and the way both account for the transformation of identity and culture throughout the novel.

Achebe has penetrated the native African identity and culture in his narrative, along with the portrayal of the weaknesses of that culture and society. Further, the novel is a fine manifestation of the instance of reflecting issues of identity and culture in every sense of the word.

Issues of Identity in the Novel ‘*Things Fall Apart*’

The Igbo people historically called as Ibo are an ethnic group of south-eastern Nigeria. They are known as one of the largest ethnic groups of Africa. In rural Nigeria, Igbo people are mostly craftsmen, farmers and traders. Before colonialism, the Igbo people were living in politically fragmented groups.

The first part of *Things Fall Apart* (1958) deals the pre-colonial identity of the Igbo people in the nine villages of Nigeria. Achebe mirrors the pre-colonial aspects of the Igbo people in the novel by featuring the beliefs and social patterns of the society which are deeply rooted in the primitive culture. Don C. Ohadike points out;

“The Igbo myths point to the origins of agriculture, the antiquity of the family, and "Above all, since this myth makes no mention of migrations from distant places - as opposed to the majority of African traditions of origin - it suggests that the Igbo people have occupied their present locale for a very long time, a suggestion that is confirmed by archaeology” (Ohadike, 1978: ii)

Social Identity

Things Fall Apart (1958) relates the social identity of the Igbo people in Nigeria. The first part of it focuses on the pre-colonial structure of Igbo society. They had no centralized political structure. They lived in independent villages and towns ruled by their elders.

Don Ohadike points out the Igbo social structure as:

“There were the lineage groups and on the basis of the lineages formed a compact village or a town named as ‘obodo’. Relationships were based on the blood ties, and each person traced his or her descent to three groups. First, a person belongs to the smallest social unit known as uno, or house. This was a natural family, consisting of a man, his wife, or wives, and their children. The second group was a umunna, or lineage, composed of a number of related houses. Finally, a group of lineages formed a concept of village or town, Obodo”^[26] (Ohadike, 2009: xix).

The story of the wrestling match between Amalize, the cat and Okonkwo is an instance of the identity of the village that used to be decided through the wrestling contests. Achebe puts in,

“Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on his solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was a great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino”^[27] (TFA: 1).

Okonkwo distinguished himself and got the honour to his village, he impressed all the

villagers by his reputation as a wrestler throughout the nine villages of Umuofia. The wrestling match is to honour the concept of identity of the Igbo people in and around the nine villages of Nigeria. The value of physical power is considered not only in the wrestling matches but also in farming and rural activities. Achebe writes ‘Okonkwo’s prosperity was visible in his household. He had a large compound enclosed by a thick wall of red earth’^[27] (TFA: 11). As a prosperous farmer Okonkwo entitles the repute and “the elders, or *ndichie*, met to hear report of Okonkwo’s mission Okonkwo was, therefore, asked on behalf of the clan to look after for three years Ikemefuna lived in Okonkwo’s household”^[27](TFA: 10).

In Igbo clan, the man, who fails to progress beyond the most junior titles was a man without status in the eyes of his people. Unoka, father of Okonkwo died without a title as he didn’t work hard. Subsequently, he lost his reputation in the clan. Achebe reveals that the man having more wives can be called a reputed man in the society. He points out the status of Okonkwo as:

“There was a wealthy man in Okonkwo’s village that had three huge barns, nine wives and thirty children. His name was Nwakibie and he had taken the highest but one title which a man could take in the clan. It was for this man that Okonkwo worked to earn his first seed yams”^[27] (TFA: 15).

The identity of a wealthy person in the clan is considered by the number of wives, children and, more important, yams. Yam is the main crop in Igbo villages as it is

considered as the 'king of the crops'^[27] (TFA: 18).

The Igbo clan in Nigeria has a patriarchal social identity. The women are supposed to be the followers of the men. There are the rigorous beatings of the women. The violence is forbidden during the sacred *Week of Peace*. It makes to note that the violence is accepted if there is no celebration of the sacred *Week of Peace*.

Masculine Identity and Igbo Ethnicity.

The masculine identity of the Igbo people in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is reflected by order and hierarchy. Both concepts are related to their change and the issues of anarchy in society. The arrival of the missionaries is regarded as the main cause of the chaos resulting from their infringement in Igbo culture and tradition. The blend of the traditional cultural patterns and ethical power is attributed mainly to men by the patriarchal society. The pride of male power is affected with the various aspects of order and hierarchy, particularly honour and the sense of duty, which are the attributes of men. Moreover, those attributes constitute the status, respect, honour in the name of prestigious titles in Igboland. Williams Raymond relates about the masculine identity differ with the certain projection of reality. He puts in:

“Dominant traditions often aspire to ‘an active and continuous selection and reselection’ and ‘a projected reality’, with which we have to come to terms on its terms, even though those terms are always and must be the valuations, the sections and the omissions of men”^[28] (Raymond, 1980:16).

Derek Wright points out;

“Okonkwo’s cult of virility, by mistaking the nature of courage and confusing gentleness with weakness, upsets the sexual equilibrium that maintains a delicate between male values and female and maternal ones”^[29] (Wright, 1990:78).

The obsession with masculinity is an essential shield marked by excessive indulgences expressed in Okonkwo’s assertiveness. But there is no any place for a man who is improvident. “When Unoka died he had taken no tile at all and he was heavily in debt”^[27] (TFA: 6). the person, who appears to be lazy is looked upon as *agbala*, meaning a womanish in the Igbo clan.

The novel threads the pre-colonial and colonial masculine identities of Igbo people in Nigeria by featuring significant moments of the ‘socially structured’ issues of Umuofia and Mbanta. The masculine traditions operate as forms of consciousness that act particularly the power of village with specific powers and values of Umuofia. It is ‘not only ‘feared by its neighbours. It was powerful in magic’^[27] (TFA: 8). Achebe predominantly explains the powerful men of magic, war and medicine and other dominant figures are mainly men.

Igbo is a compassionate yet violent society. This is seen through the character of Okonkwo who is generally a representative of the tribe. However, Okonkwo’s actions show that Igbo only become violent when certain factors force them to be. For example, Okonkwo shoots one of the messengers who are sent by the missionaries to break up their meeting^[30] (Achebe 144).

Okonkwo is rejected even as a dead man simply because, as one of the clansmen said, “It is against our custom.” said one of the men. “It is an abomination for a man to take his

own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen”^[27] (TFA; 151). However, the narrator expresses some compassion through the character Obierika:

“Obierika, who had been gazing steadily at his friend’s dangling body, turned suddenly to the District Commissioner and said ferociously: “That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog...” He could not say any more. His voice trembled and choked his words”^[27] (TFA: 151).

It gives an insight that the Igbo people sustained their beliefs till the arrival of the missionaries in Igboland. The tragic end of the protagonist is a consequence of the masculine issue of the identity as Okonkwo realises that the people of his clan are failed to resist the rules of the missionaries, and they had started to act as women losing the power of war or conflict with missionaries.

Cultural Identity

Things Fall Apart (1958) mirrors the cultural identity of the people through the multidimensional panorama of the Igbo society. However, ‘culture can be transmitted or acquired through information or symbol. ‘Cultural identity is those attributes, behavioural patterns, lifestyles, social structures and norms that distinguish a people from other peoples’^[31] (Omekwu, 2003). The harmonious existence of Igbo in the nine villages of Nigeria perpetuates the cultural aspects of their own. The arrangement of wrestling matches is one of the parts of it that used to be decided the identity of the village. The columnist, Michael Dirda says that ‘*Things Fall Apart* has long been revered for its

imaginative re-creation of Ibo culture just before it collided with British colonialism'^[32] (Dirida: 2008). The arrangement of the New Yam Festivals makes a sense of the unified kinsmen in the Igbo society and their beliefs towards rejoice. The fellow feeling of brotherhood is a typical one when Okonkwo invites his kinsmen to a moonlight dinner to offer his 'Kola nut' for their kindness.

The changes in the social patterns and the ethics make the drastic changes in the identity of the people. Nwoye, the son of Okonkwo works hard to help his father during the planting season is an instance of pride for Okonkwo. But when the 'ill- fated' Ikemefuna killed mercilessly by the villagers. Nwoye shifted his focus from the Igbo ethics to Christianity. The arrival of the missionaries in the Abame village is another example of the change in the social pattern. When the missionary entered the Abame village, the Igbo people 'killed him and tied up his iron horse to the silk cotton tree'^[27] (TFA: 102).

The decision by the rulers of Mbanta to allocate land to the missionaries was the worst mistake the Igbo could make^[33] (Achebe 105). It gave the missionaries the impression that the Igbo are a weak society that they could easily influence with their culture. However, it can also be argued that the decision by the Igbo to keep the piece of land where the evil forest lay is an indication of the respect and loyalty they still have for their own culture ^[33] (Achebe 105). But, because the Igbo fail to make known to the white missionaries the dark nature of the forest, any remorse concerning the new culture and religion is lost. Hence, the white missionaries remain unopposed and in control of Umuofia and its people.

Religious Identity

Religion is a prominent part of any society. It shapes the moral and ethical limitations to control the act and actions of human beings into a particular manner of existence. The religious identity among Igbo people plays a crucial role in day to day activities. The Igbo people lived in the villages enclosed by their farms till mid-twentieth century. They focused on their religious beliefs on three types of supernatural beings: God, spirits and ancestors. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) deals with the supreme God 'Chukwu' among the people. 'Chukwu is seen as a powerful, magnanimous God, the one who holds the knife and the yam and provides people with wealth, rain, and children, and who is merciful toward rich and poor, male and female, child and aged. Every morning the father of the family offers prayers to the Supreme Being.

The supreme God 'Chukwu' does not intervene in the minor problems of human existence in the Igbo families, however; such issues are left to the spirits and ancestors, who are often described as messengers of 'Chukwu'. There are the personal Gods of the Igbo families named as 'Chi' these are the personal wooden gods and the Igbo people worship their wooden gods which are known as the ancestors for the well beings. The spirits are powerful in three dimensions such as space (sky) earth (land) and ancestral world. The space spirits exist through thunder, lightening, sun, and moon. The earth spirits exist through nature spirits, rocks, hills, cave tress and farms. The guardian spirit of the earth is 'Ani'. The ancestral spirits serve as a protector of hunters, farmers, fishermen, medicine men and other professional guilds.

It is also believed that the ancestral spirits called 'chi' evaluate the fate of an individual. During festivals, they visit the human world as guests in the form of masquerades or incarnation. But the spirits of evil people roam as the 'ogbanje' or the ghost. 'Ogbanje'

spirits are normally the possession of the female bodies. Michael Mozia asserts;

“The earth-spirit sanctions the prohibitions or moral norms and the ancestors communicate same to the living...The living makes sure that these prohibitions are not broken”^[34] (Mozia, 1982:222).

Things Fall Apart (1958) is indeed a classic study of the issues of identity and culture because it focuses on the conflicts between the Igbo people and missionaries pertaining to a great conversion in Nigeria after colonialism. Achebe intensifies to mirror a sense of identity of the Igbo people with their past and pride in it. It is also intended to make the rest of the world to know about Africa’s rich culture and heritage. The novel puts across, in compelling and genuine fictional terms, that the African societies had a great culture of their own. The issues of identity and culture are successfully portrayed to uphold the systematic process of demolition created upon the Igbo identity by the colonial power and alien culture of them.

Mission & Colonization

It goes without saying that “mission” and “colonization” are two different things. Yet in 19th century history, and hence also in *Things Fall Apart*, they are so closely related, that, especially from the perspective of the Africans, they can hardly be notable. I therefore want to point out the basic differences as well as the connections of mission and colonization, and their significance for the story told in *Things Fall Apart*.

Differences

Mission of course goes back to Jesus' order "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" ^[35] (The Holy Bible. Mt. 28, 19), and seeks to win over converts for the Christian faith.

Colonisation (at least the type practised in Nigeria) is the taking of control over an area (dominion) for economic purposes ^[36] (cf. Brockhaus, "Kolonialismus")

With a definition of culture as "the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organisation of a particular country" ^[37] (Oxford), we find that both mission and colonisation unavoidably influence culture: Mission is about beliefs and religion, and colonisation concerns not only trade customs, but also local law and government, since the colonisers in Africa established their own government and judicious system, and declaredly wielded power over the native people.

Consequently, the villagers of "Things Fall Apart" oppose this oppression almost from the beginning: "the District Commissioner judged cases in ignorance" ^[38] (Achebe); the song about "Kotma of the ash buttocks"^[38] (Achebe) also expresses their condescension for the white man's government and its supporters.

With mission, in contrast, there has always been the idea of *accommodation*, a type of evangelism that is considerate of the native culture and seeks to adapt the Christian belief to the local traditions and world view ^[39] (cf. Brockhaus, "Akkommodation"). Even the first missionary, the apostle Paul, said that "unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews" ^[40] (The Holy Bible. 1 Cor. 9,20).

In "Things Fall Apart", Mr Brown is a representative of this moderate approach to mission.

The Missionary Characters

At his first appearance in Mbanta, Mr Brown is accompanied by an Igbo interpreter, Mr Kiala, who asserts that “he was one of them, as they could see from his colour and language”, and that “the white man was also their brother, because they were all sons of God”^[41] (Achebe) This acknowledged fraternization mirrors both a Christian world view and the missionary’s intent to associate with the villagers on an equal footing; and that he lets Mr Kiala speak first (and not only translate) may be taken as a symbol of respect for the Igbo and their customs of communication.

Mr Brown is also portrayed as “very firm in restraining his flock from provoking the wrath of the clan”, and he “came to be respected even by the clan, because he trod softly on its faith”^[41] (Achebe, p.178). He even “made friends with some of the great men of the clan”, and in his discourse with Akunna, he adopts the Igbo name *Chukwu* for God^[41] (cf.p. 179). On one of his “frequent visits to the neighbouring villages”, he is even “presented with a carved elephant tusk, a sign of dignity and rank”^[41] (Achebe, p. 179).

Also his name gives a significant hint: Brown being a compromise between black and white, Mr Brown is indeed a character that mediates between the natives and the Europeans.

His civility and diplomacy become evident also in combination to the methods of his successor Reverend Smith, who “condemned openly Mr Brown’s policy of compromise and accommodation” and “saw things as black and white”^[41] (Achebe, p. 184).

Reverend Smith does not appear to care about understanding the Igbo’s way of thinking; instead, he sets great store in “such things as the Trinity and the Sacraments”^[41] (Achebe, p. 184), which are exactly the things that the natives find incomprehensible and awkward^[41] (Achebe, cf. p.

147). He is hard on those who have not entirely given up all of the old superstitions, whereas the “over-zealous converts” now “flourished in full favour”^[41] (p. 185).

The substitution of missionaries also marks a general change in the Europeans’ behaviour towards the natives, changing from supercilious yet benevolent to intolerant and aggressive. This is a turning point in the novel. Under Reverend Smith’s leadership, a “great conflict between church and clan in Umuofia” gathers and is finally touched off when Enoch unmasks the *egwugwu*^[41] (Achebe, p. 186). When the elders of the clan eventually burn down the “church which Mr Brown had built”^[41] (Achebe, p. 191), it is not only Mr Brown’s church that turns to ashes, but also his policy of accommodation.

Intertwining of Mission and Colonisation

Although pursuing a basically different aim, the missionaries often depended on the support of the colonial power. In the protectorate treaties between local indigenous governments and the British administration there was usually a stipulation that guaranteed the protection of all white clergymen of the Christian religion^[42] (cf. Obielu 162). (Note that in “Things Fall Apart”, the Umuofia elders are imprisoned by the District Commissioner for burning down the church.)

The colonisers certainly profited from the missionaries’ efforts: their educational work not only enabled co-operation between locals and Europeans, it also prepared the soil for the establishment of a colonial government. Achebe’s missionary Mr Brown is aware of these connections when he says “that the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women who had learned to read and write”^[41] (Achebe, p. 181).

The Christian faith, in spite of all efforts to adapt it to the Igbo culture, was chiefly perceived as the white man's religion. In "Things Fall Apart", the white man's religion and the white man's government always belong together in the eyes of the Umuofians.

CONCLUSION

Things Fall Apart is Structured

The Mission of Missionaries in Things Fall Apart

To realize the execution and effects of the coloniser's religion on traditional African villages, it is essential that we begin by exploring how Things Fall Apart is structured. As a whole, we can see how the novel portrays graphically how colonized subjects perceived the arrival of the colonizing European. The theme succeeds in depicting Umuofia as a lively and sophisticated

society, with its own complex culture and along with elaborate moral, ethical and religious codes. Achebe recalls an era when a traditional African community is irreversibly transformed by the arrival of a 'new God'. The 'white man and his religion are dominant in about one third of the novel . . . through most of the novel Okonkwo is passive or subordinate, though he is the link that holds it all together'. Okonkwo clearly stands for the beliefs and traditions of his culture, and implacably against the encroaching influence of the colonial religious 'gang', and until they were 'chased out of the village with whips there would be no peace'. Okonkwo's suicide, therefore, becomes a symbol for the death of African religion and culture that has been disregarded by the white colonialists. Consequently, Christian disregard for the customs and religion of the tribe creates an atmosphere of lawlessness and dislocation within the village.

Furthermore, one of the ways in which the white man's religion was implemented was through the native's themselves; 'the white man began to speak to them. He spoke through an interpreter who was an Ibo man . . . the white man was also their brother because they were all sons of God'. By implementing a strategy of using the native as a means of communicating back to the native is a convincing practice that promotes this foreign religion. As a result, they contribute in strengthening the colonizer's ideologies and values, as 'they have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government'. Thus the narrator argues that those who have 'deserted us and joined a stranger to soil their fatherland' are directly responsible in upholding Igbo's sense of displacement as well as contributing to the loss of ancestral memory. To fully understand the extent of those 'brothers' who have deserted their religion and culture, we must focus on how the Western framework of the novel enables Achebe to voice his own views on religion. Mikhail Bakhtin argues that 'everywhere there is one face – the linguistic face of the author, answering for every word as if it were his own'. It is interesting to see how Bakhtin identifies the direct

narrative of the author, rather than simply looking at the dialogue among characters, as the most primary location of this conflict. This source of conflict is one of the central themes of the text and is also obvious in Achebe's own life. Hence Bakhtin states that a 'writer makes use of words that are already populated with social intentions of others and compels them to serve his own new intentions, to serve a second master'. This can also be understood as being associated to the colonisers who parade their religion through the native. As a result, it is imperative that we take the novel out of context in order to fully understand how the institute of the colonialist religion affects not only Igbo society, but the author's own life and how this conflict is still apparent today.

A sense of dislocation is apparent in Achebe's childhood whereby he grew up in a community in which many people still lived a traditional way of life. On the other hand Achebe's father, Isaiah Achebe, had converted to Christianity as a young man and had become a teacher for the Church Missionary Society. Achebe was to have a 'strict upbringing, but he also grew up surrounded by neighbours and an extended family who continued to practice the Igbo traditional religion'. This split identity and concern for the future generations of Africans, is also expressed by Okonkwo who 'saw himself and his father crowding round their ancestral shrine waiting in vain for worship and sacrifice and finding . . . his children . . . praying to the white man's god'. In his autobiographical essay, Achebe relates some of his earliest memories growing up in his African village, Ogidi, in the 1930s:

We lived at crossroads of cultures. We still do today; but when I was a boy one could see and sense the peculiar quality and atmosphere of it more clearly . . . On one arm of the cross we sang hymns and read the Bible night and day. On the other my father's brother and his family, blinded

by heathenism, offered food to idols . . . What I do remember is a fascination for the ritual and the life on the other arm of the crossroads.

The important question of Achebe's relationship with traditional Igbo culture and the influence of his Christian upbringing foreshadow the cultural and religious clash that will take place in Nwoye's life. The question of Achebe's personal subjectivity becomes a crucial feature for an understanding of his narratological perspective in *Things Fall Apart*. The narrator states; 'to abandon the gods of one's father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the very depth of abomination'. It is for this reason as to why 'the sons and daughters of the Igbo Christians who had renounced African traditions would become writers and nationalists bent on recovering and re-valorising the traditions their fathers had denounced and desecrated' [8]. Therefore, *Things Fall Apart* is an atonement of Achebe's past that emphasises the effects of when a new religion coincides with a traditional religion that has been practiced for hundreds of years. Achebe was evidently also aware that his Euro-Christian upbringing and sensibility had created a displacement with the history of his own Igbo culture. The produce of the colonizer's religion in *Things Fall Apart* became the work of a 'prodigal son' [9], one who sought to recover and explore this denigrated history and culture in his fiction. The sense in which Achebe exhibits his double cultural awareness is a crucial element to the way the novel develops its realist style, whilst presenting Okonkwo's [and Achebe's] personal grief; 'He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart, and he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women' [133].

A further aspect we must consider is the way in which the 'white men' brought religion as well as trade, that helps promote a new source of profit to the villagers. They had built 'a trading store and for the first time palm-oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed

into Umuofia' [130]. Inevitably, with this opportunity (coinciding with the white man's emphasis on their religion as being 'peaceful' and 'civilised') the villagers become reluctant to sacrifice the new trading community to fight for their independence. It is this idea of peace through religion which is the beginning stages of colonization. If the colonizers change the fundamental beliefs of the villages, they are able to control the natives more easily. As a result, the introduction of a foreign religion begins to destroy and fragment the structural foundation of the Igbo society. It has torn apart Okonkwo and his young converted son in a society that is based on the strength of the family unit. By infiltrating and targeting younger generations and those who are marginalized in the village, the colonisers are securing the prosperity of the Empire in the future of these villages. When the missionaries first appear in Mbanta they are confined to the Evil Forest, a space that is considered to be 'alive with sinister forces and powers of darkness . . . and evil diseases' and a place that 'was a fit home for such undesirable people'. One of the elders believed that the missionaries will certainly come about their deaths in a few days. When the missionaries failed to succumb to the 'sinister forces' of the Evil Forest –

Everyone was puzzled. And then it became known that the white man's fetish had unbelievable power. It was said that he wore glasses on his eyes so that he could see and talk to evil spirits. Not long after, he won his first three converts.

It is highly significant that the first converts to the new Christian religion are predominantly from among subaltern groups. The efulefu – who are the 'worthless' men; the agbala – women and untitled men; the osu – a taboo caste who have been dedicated to deities; and the women who have had their twins cast into the Evil Forest. As the missionaries and colonial administration begin to establish themselves in the village, it is from the ranks of these despised and marginalized groups within Igbo society that the new church and government functionaries and

pupil-teachers are drawn. Critics outline that under colonial rule, this reversal of the established hierarchies in pre-colonial Umuofian society ‘draws upon an eminently Christian trope, encapsulated in the biblical sayings about the last coming to be first and the meek inheriting the earth’. In *Things Fall Apart* ‘all the first converts to the new religion, the first minor functionaries of the colonial administration, the first teacher-pupils of the new school, are drawn from this subaltern group. For this group, things certainly did not fall apart’. It is in Achebe’s belief that he is ‘acutely alert to the potentially ironic significations present in any situation’, and therefore it comes to no surprise that he portrays the colonial encounter as both a site of oppression and one of liberation for different type of groups within Umuofian society. Although the colonial religion liberates certain groups, the overall effect of encouraging this civilised and prosperous religion is devastating upon the traditional followers – both the majority and those marginalized. Once again those who are marginalized in the traditional Igbo religion and have joined the missionaries are once again dislocated and alienated within their own community.

Okonkwo describes the missionaries as ‘a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens’. In this schema of the colonial encounter, Umuofia is initially symbolised as masculine and dominant. On the other hand the white missionaries are defined as feminine and subordinate, which results in the missionaries being viewed as unthreatening to the patriarchal hegemony and, therefore, tolerable: ‘They asked for a piece of land to build their church . . . [the peers] offered them as much of the Evil Forest as they cared to take. And to their greatest amazement the missionaries thanked them and burst into song’. This ‘effeminacy’ soon became highly contradictory as the economic changes brought about by the new colonial administration began to impinge on the Umuofians high regard for wealth: ‘The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store . . . and much money flowed into Umuofia’. When the ‘feminine’

Mr. Brown is replaced by Reverend James Smith as head of the church, the narrative begins to embody a more masculine framework: 'He saw things as black and white. And Black was evil. He saw the world as a battlefield in which the children of light were locked in mortal conflict with the sons of darkness'. We can see how Reverend Smith voices one of the recurrent discourses of colonialism. Frantz Fanon focuses on the idea that 'The colonial world is a Manichaeian world'. Religious domination and economic exploitation created by the arrival of missionaries projected a set of antithetical values and attributes from the 'civilizing' Europeans onto the marginalized colonies. In this Manichaeian world the native is viewed by the missionaries whom are 'wicked', and who 'kill your fellows and destroy children' and worship 'false gods' and are irrational and depraved. On the other hand, the Europeans are rational, virtuous and 'good men who worshipped the true God lived for ever in His happy kingdom' [106].

As a result, one of the central ideological justifications of the British colonial enterprise was the replacement of the presumed anarchic 'savagery' of African societies with a form of 'civilization'. British colonialists emphasises that this civilization can only be achieved through a 'true God'. However, what the colonial missionaries failed to understand was that Igbo society already had a highly evolved system of agriculture, trade, religion and individual and collective democracy. It was 'our own brothers who have taken up his religion [who] also say that our customs are bad'. Hence, through the structural framework of the novel, Achebe succeeds on depicting Umuofia as an ordered and sophisticated society that has a complex juridical system and a highly developed religious-belief system with elaborate moral and ethical codes. This structure of the Igbo way of life is destabilized by the arrival of missionaries who presented their religion and culture as more civilized and profitable than the Umuofians. The novel investigates

the deeper social factors that the mission introduced into Igbo culture, and the way these interacted with customary practices of commerce, social relations and education. Obierika, outlines that religion is a subtle ideological method of invasion that enables the white man to establish his hegemony in Mbanta:

‘He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart’.

The reverberation of the title indicates the instrumental role that the missionaries played in the desecration of his culture. He criticises the displacement of his society that inevitably followed, seeing it as introducing separation that destabilized the structure of the clan. But it is the imperial operations of the colonial administration that began to infringe immediately after the arrival of the missionaries that particularly distresses him. However, Achebe expresses the mutual engagement that marks this process: the decision of the Igbo people themselves to participate in white systems of education as well as commerce contribute to the destabilising of traditional structures. We can see how:

‘Mr. Brown begged, argued and prophesized. He said that the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women who had learnt to read and write . . . New churches were established in the surrounding villages and a few schools with them. From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand’.

Consequently, the missionaries were the pioneers in formal education in Umuofia, hence the building of schools is another strategy in colonizing the Other. It has been argued that the establishment of schools in Africa during the colonial era was another technique in converting the ‘savage’ and reinstating western ideals. Indeed, as a Roman Catholic Missionary in Nigeria

once said: 'Those who hold the schools hold the country, hold its religion, hold its future'. Furthermore, 'formal education became the bait with which the young generation in Africa was enticed to Christianity'. The missionaries target and 'educate' those young and marginalized in Umuofian society, like Nwoye 'who is now called Isaac . . . (who Mr. Brown sent) to the new training college for teachers in Umuru'. As a result, missionary schools reiterate western religious values and it is also a method that lulls the native in a sense of 'belonging'. It is for this reason as to why the missionaries 'information shaped the Westerners' perception (and that of many Africans) of Africa and its peoples'. Therefore, the institution of education is another colonial strategy in dominating and dislocating a traditional way of life.