

## A postcolonial reading of Things Fall Apart

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since its release in 1958, Chinua Achebe's novel Things Fall Apart has garnered global readership, extending beyond Africa. Additionally, it stands as one of the most exceptional literary achievements of our century.

After being published for six decades, the work has achieved a global sales figure of 20 million copies and has been translated into over 60 different languages. Things Fall Apart offers a valuable platform for examining the intricacies of Achebe's opposition to colonialism and his unique literary style, sometimes referred to as "Achebeism," within the context of African literature. The novel's title, "The Falcon Can't Hear the Falconer, Things Are Falling Apart, and the Center Is Unprotected," has significant symbolism. "The falcon is unable to hear its falconer, there is a state of chaos and disintegration, and the central authority is vulnerable." Preservation of natural resources and protection of the environment. This paragraph explores the notion of "modernity" and its relationship to the expression of primal impulses in humans. The primal nature of modernity is also apparent in Achebe's magnum opus, Things Fall Apart. Similar to Yeats, Chinua Achebe expressed sorrow at the decline of religious belief and the tragic loss of lives among the Obi people.

قراءة ما بعد الاستعمارية لكتاب الأشياء تتداعي

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## المخلص

الأشياء تتداعى"، وهي قصة ما بعد الاستعمار، نالت ثناء النقاد. من خلال فرشاة تشينوا أتشيبي، يصبح تعقيد ثقافة الإيغبو موضوعاً مع ظهور تاريخ المعركة بين الحضارتين. يواجه أوكونكو، وهو شخصية معروفة في مجتمعه، تحدياً من الثقافة الجديدة التي قدمها المبشرون البيض الذين يبشرون بالرسالة المسيحية. إن الخلافات الأولية بعد دخول الثقافة المسيحية هي انقسامات على المستوى الفردي ثم على مستوى المجتمع. عندما يتحول العديد من الإيغبو، بما في ذلك أبناء أوكونكو، إلى حالة من عدم اليقين والاضطراب في القرية. يتمتع شعب الإيغبو بأسلوب حياة مستقر لا يستطيع الأوروبيون فهمه. لذا فهم لا يحترمون العادات الثقافية لشعب الإيغبو. ما يصوره أتشيبي في هذه القصة هو أن الأفارقة ليسوا متوحشين وأن حضارتهم ليست غير مبالية. تصل الأمور إلى ذروتها عندما يفشل أوكونكو في النهاية في إعادة شعبه إلى الثقافة التي شاركوها من قبل. إن مشاعر البيض تجاه السود فيما يتعلق بالمسيحية هي تذكير صارخ بالمعاملة الشبيهة بالعبيد التي تلقاها السود تاريخياً من البيض. يوضح أتشيبي أن تصوير الأفارقة في الأدب والتاريخ ليس صحيحاً، بل يُنظر إليه من خلال عيون الأوروبيين. ونتيجة لذلك، يشنق أوكونكو نفسه عندما يدرك أن القاعدة والنظام الذي بناه مرفوض تماماً من قبل شعبه وأن الإيغبو قد تمزقوا وفقدوا كرامتهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قراءة ما بعد الاستعمارية، كتاب الأشياء تتداعى.

**As a postcolonial text.**

Things Fall Apart is an important work of postcolonial literature that recalls the lives of strong Nigerians under colonial control and gives hitherto unknown insights into African culture. Things Fall Apart is one man's sad and emotional experience and a strong and complicated political statement about cross-cultural contacts within the wider background of the advent of colonialism. "The falcon cannot hear the falconer." [1].

The title "Things Fall Apart" was inspired by W.B. Deleted. Yeats. Set in Nigeria, this novel describes the life of the Igbo people during the wave of colonialism in Africa. The novel narrates the narrative of Okonkwo, the son of an activist who resolves to stand up and follow

tradition rather than fail like his father. But as the title of the novel implies, his life went wayward [2].

As a postcolonial narrative, the work gained considerable critical praise. From Chinua Achebe's viewpoint, Igbo culture and its intricacies are issues that open up two parallel cultural historical narratives.

According to O'Reilly (2001), while dealing with postcolonial writings, authors are conscious of four main themes: "the use of indigenous cultural traditions, the adoption of English, and the impact of colonialism and colonialism (cultural, psychological, and political ). Its consequences" (p. 61). Achebe handles these three issues completely and brilliantly in *Things Fall Apart*. The work discusses the "cultural traditions" of the indigenous Igbo people. It highlights the cultural, psychological and political consequences of colonialism on the Igbo people. To adequately explain these two themes, Achebe depends on English as a vehicle of communication. The first of the three key difficulties of postcolonial literature identified by O'Reilly, that of indigenous cultural traditions, is devoted greater attention since it is strongly tied to the content of this article[3].

In his *Orientalism* (2001), Edward Said claims that the (created) Orient is a European fabrication, a place where romance, exoticism, vivid memories, landscapes and unique experiences have existed from time immemorial (p.01). Tyler writes. "Travelers who reach the banned areas [in Africa] realize that they have no police system and assume instantly that cannibals live there as they please[4].

For in these 'uncivilized' cultures there are rigid norms and restrictions at every stage of life. (For colonization, this immense continent (Africa) was a nest of barbarians, a country of cannibals, full of superstition and fanaticism, condemned to be scorned, cursed by God. In this regard Achebe distances himself from Said: *Things Fall Apart* has become a discourse of anti-orientalism because of its honest description of the

existence of the Igbo people. The lives of the Igbo people has been glorified and perverted by Europeans. But by offering a depiction of pre-colonial Igbo life, Achebe strives to recover African history from the viewpoint of Africans"[5].

A postcolonial analyzing of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is one which analyzes the e book via the prism of postcolonial philosophy. Postcolonial theory is a department of take a look at that investigates the cultural, social, and political legacy of colonialism. It studies how colonialism has stimulated the identities and reviews of colonized peoples, and it discusses the approaches in which colonized peoples have opposed and challenged colonialism[6].

One of the key subject atters of a postcolonial studying of *Things Fall Apart* is the relationship among the Igbo human beings and the British colonizers. Achebe indicates how the British colonial authorities systematically undermined and destroyed Igbo culture and society. He also suggests how the Igbo people resisted colonialism in numerous ways, each overt and covert[7].

Another key topic of a postcolonial studying of *Things Fall Apart* is the function of Christianity in colonialism. Achebe indicates how the British missionaries used Christianity to justify their colonization of Africa. He also suggests how Christianity divided the Igbo people and undermined their conventional beliefs and practices.

Here are a few unique examples of the way a postcolonial reading of *Things Fall Apart* would possibly approach the radical[8]:

- The novel's identify, *Things Fall Apart*, can be visible as a reference to the breakdown of Igbo culture and society beneath British colonialism.
- The novel's protagonist, Okonkwo, may be seen as a sad parent who is caught among the traditional Igbo world and the present day British colonial global.

- The British District Commissioner, Mr. Smith, who serves because the antagonist of the e-book, may be interpreted as a representative of the British colonial administration.
- The portrayal of the Igbo human beings in the book challenges the derogatory stereotypes of Africans that were commonplace in European literature during that era.
- The novel's finishing, in which Okonkwo commits suicide, can be visible as a sad image of the defeat of the Igbo humans inside the face of British colonialism[9].

Overall, a postcolonial interpretation of *Things Fall Apart* is one which perspectives the paintings as a forceful indictment of colonialism and its impact on African peoples. Achebe's tale is a reminder that colonialism changed into no longer merely a political and economic gadget, but also a cultural and social one. It had a prime influence at the lives of colonial peoples, and its legacy remains felt nowadays [10].

In addition to the above, here are some other key issues that a postcolonial studying of *Things Fall Apart* may explore:

- The relationship among tradition and modernity
- • The nature of power and authority
- The significance of identity and resistance
- The effect of colonialism on gender and own family relations
- The possibility of reconciliation and recuperation

Postcolonial criticism has been influential inside the study of *Things Fall Apart* because the 1980s. It has helped us to peer the novel in new and challenging methods, and it has spread out new avenues of interpretation[11].

It is important to note that postcolonial grievance isn't the only manner to read *Things Fall Apart*. There are many different legitimate interpretations, and the first-class manner to read the radical is to deliver your personal ideas and perspectives to it[12].

Everything goes apart resulting from Okonkwo's lack of ability to restore his human beings to the cohesive lifestyle they formerly shared. White views in the direction of blacks in connection to Christianity are harking back to how blacks had been historically treated via whites as slaves. Achebe illustrates that the representation of Africans in literature and records isn't authentic, however as a substitute displays the ideals of Europeans. Having watched the degradation and loss of status of the Igbo people, Okonkwo hung himself whilst he observed that his regulations and commands were absolutely neglected by using his own humans [13] .

### **The conflict between Igbo culture and Christianity:**

In his novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe depicts the great battle of influence of Christianity given by the whites. The novel contains a narrative form called allegory, where conventional ideals emerge in the plot. African melodies are portrayed via numerous traditional songs performed by youngsters, such as "It is raining, the sun is shining, the lonely tree is clothed and eaten" (p. 25). In addition, Obi members follow a sort of religion with teachings based on what their forefathers done. This is the belief of the Obi system and is mainly handed on verbally. However, new Christian faith systems started to oppose this style of thinking, particularly among the younger population, and anxieties about the perils of Western Christianity spread across the city. entirety of Umuofia. [14].

This new religion is irreconcilable with the ideas Okonkwo and his people hold dear. While the district commissioners hope that the new religious culture they have brought with them would provide stable government in the area, Okonkwo believes that 'the whites have actually introduced a religion of crazy'. In other words, this new religious culture symbolizes a new generation of beliefs. Okonkwo views the Christian

faith as the reverse of 'peripetia' or, in Aristotle's phrase, 'the movement from one condition to its opponent'. [15] .

As a consequence of the postcolonialism of European missionaries, Achebe noticed the destruction of a rich indigenous culture under imperial control. Okonkwo finally commits himself owing to the cumulative stress and shame. The story therefore depicts how the African experience is at contrast with current society, which increasingly impacts the younger generation. This contrast grows even more severe when Nwoyi begins attending to church and his father rejects him. "Answer me before I kill you," the father yells, wrenching the boy's neck [16] .

#### **Language as an important aspect of postcolonial fiction:**

By showcasing the innovative and sometimes formal language of the Ibo people, Achebe underlines that Africa is not a mute and unintelligible continent, as works such as *Dark Depths* indicate. On the contrary, Achebe intersperses terms from the Ibo language throughout the narrative, indicating that Ibo languages are too complicated to be directly translated into English. Similarly, Igbo culture cannot be understood from the concepts of European imperialism. Achebe also underlines the multiplicity of languages spoken in Africa by stating how the people of Umuofia insulted the Brown translators for being somewhat different from their own [17].

On a macro level, it is vital to recognize that Achebe authored *Things Fall Apart* in English. His objective was to analyze and improve the picture of Africa given by many colonial authors. To accomplish so, he had to employ English, the language of the colonial authors. By employing Ibo proverbs, traditional stories and songs, Achebe was able to capture and communicate the rhythm, pattern, rhythm and beauty of the Ibo language [18] .

**The democratic nature of Igbo culture**

The democratic essence of the Igbo people is simple to grasp. They have their own system of law and order where they are not permitted to utilize their social rank to evade punishment. From this text we learn that Okonkwo suffered two penalties for his sins and misdeeds. Unlike the severe penalties inherent in European legal systems, such as the death sentence or life imprisonment, in Igbo culture everyone is treated equally. Therefore, they live in a more civilized and compassionate society than whites [19] .

**Superstitions of the Igbo culture**

Achebe addresses both the wonderful features of Igbo culture and the superstitions that some Igbo hold sacrosanct. The superstitions prevalent among the Igbo provide Europeans the chance to destroy their social cohesiveness. Whites make the most of this characteristic for their own gain.

For example, they transfer ill or dying persons who cannot be rescued, like Unoka, to the awful forest to die [20].

They avoid calling snakes snakes since they can hear themselves when they call them snakes and they do not whistle at night for fear of bad spirits [21].

**Conclusion**

Things Fall Apart, a postcolonial story, has gained critical praise. Through Chinua Achebe's brush, the intricacy of Igbo culture becomes a topic as the history of the battle between the two civilizations emerges. Okonkwo, a well-known character in his society, is challenged by a new culture introduced by white missionaries preaching the Christian message. The initial disputes after the entrance of the Christian culture are divides at the individual level and subsequently at the community level. When many Igbo, including Okonkwo's sons, convert, there is uncertainty and upheaval in the village. The Igbo have a sedentary



manner of life that Europeans can not grasp. So they do not respect the cultural customs of the Igbo people. What Achebe portrays in this story is that Africans are not savages and their civilization is not indifferent. Things come to a head when Okonkwo ultimately fails to restore his people to the culture they once shared. White emotions towards blacks in connection to Christianity are a stark reminder of the slave-like treatment blacks historically got from whites. Achebe illustrates that the portrayals of Africans in literature and history are not true, but perceived through the eyes of Europeans. As a consequence, Okonkwo hangs himself when he realizes that the rule and order he has constructed is entirely rejected by his own people and that the Igbos have been ripped apart and lost their dignity.

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