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Cultural Invasion and Its Aftermath: Textual Reading of *Things Fall Apart*

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By

Tek Bahadur Chhetri

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled "Cultural Invasion and Its Aftermath: Textual Reading of *Things Fall Apart*," submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Tek Bahadur Chhetri has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee:

Members of the Research Committee

Supervisor

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date:

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Tek Bahadur Chhetri

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Abstract

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* establishes the perfect harmony of Nigerian Igbo culture in the first two-third of the text. The common tribal traditions like worship of gods, sacrifice, communal living, magic, leadership etc primarily cherished in the narrative, are contrasted to the creolization of native culture and disintegration prevailing in the society after the colonial invasion. Political invasion disguised in the form of missionaries bring about the total transformation in the society. Missionaries, as an agent of imperialism, give rise to the conflict in Igbo culture supporting the imperial policy of divide and rule. The Igbo contact with the white culture is so inexorable and insidious that it infects every strata of society - culture, religion and above all the psychology of the colonized. Gradually, the rift widens, brothers turn their back to one another and soon fathers and sons prove strangers to each other. Amid the anarchy and violence, the colonized natives are destined to suffer, to die. The death of the protagonist, Okonkwo, represents the larger Nigerian canvas and the subjugation of the natives in the hands of the colonizing power.

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I. Igbo, Achebe and the Critique of Imperialism

Unlike some African writers struggling to be counted among contemporary English-language novelists, Achebe has been able to avoid the European notion that art should be accountable to no one, and needs to justify itself to nobody. In his book of essays, *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, Achebe has embraced instead the idea of the African oral tradition that "art is, and always was, at the service of man" (13), "Our ancestors created their myths and told their stories for a human purpose" (14). For this reason, Achebe believes that any good story, any good novel, should have a message, should have a purpose.

Achebe's feel for the African context has influenced his aesthetic side of the novel as well as the technical aspects of his works. Achebe was the First Nigerian writer to successfully transmute the conventions of the novel, an European art form, into African literature. Achebe's portrait of culture in his fictional universe shows the existing socio-cultural situation of Nigeria. Many critics viewed Achebe's novels as a means of negotiating the conflicting culture to achieve a solid and positive sense of identity and desperate protest against injustice of the past. But *Things Fall Apart* presents the struggle between change and tradition, which leads to the downfall of the protagonist in the suspicion of losing social hierarchy in Igbo society, when white people imperialized Nigeria in the name of religious missionaries. Chinua Achebe portrays a very realistic picture of traditional Africa as well as its demise with the onset of colonialism. In *Things Fall Apart* he has attempted to vindicate the ways of tribal life in Nigeria-in particular among the Igbo tribe to which he belongs. He shows the reader the rich and complex traditions that made up African society before the invasion of the continent by Europeans.

Since *Things Fall Apart* was written at a time of great changes, it deals with the variety of issues central to the independent movement and other social and political upheavals in Nigeria. The time is often called the Nigerian Renaissance because in that period a large number of very strong Nigerian writers began to create a powerful new literature that drew on the traditional oral literature, European literature, and the changing times in Nigeria and in Africa at large. Writers as varied as Ben Okri and Wole Soyinka wrote in that context adding the energy to the Nigerian Renaissance. Achebe, however, is considered one of the earliest and best novelists to have come out of modern Nigeria, in fact one of the top English-speaking novelists of his time anywhere.

In 1958 much of Africa was still under the colonialist yoke, although a few countries had already achieved independence. Set in a time of great change for Africans, Achebe's novels illuminate two painful features of modern African life: the humiliations visited on Africans by colonialism, and the corruption and inefficiency of what replaced colonial rule. *Things Fall Apart* in particular focuses on the early experience of colonialism as it occurred in Nigeria in the late 1800's, from the first days of contact with the British to widespread British administration. Achebe is interested in showing Igbo society in the period of transition when rooted; traditional values are put in conflict with an alien and more powerful culture that will tear them apart. Achebe paints a vivid picture of Igbo society both before and after the arrival of white men, and avoids the temptation to idealize either culture.

In this context, he believes that the novelist must have a social commitment. In *Morning Yet on Creation Day* Achebe argues:

The writer cannot be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done ... I for one would not wish to be

excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than just teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one long night of savagery from which the Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them. (17)

Chinua Achebe has appeared as a well-known writer that he interprets his own culture for the world. Achebe believes that literature has social and political importance. It is much more than creative ornament. It provides a necessary critical perspective on everyday experience, educates us on the meaning of our actions and offers us greater control over our social and personal lives. According to Achebe, literature works by enabling us to encounter in the safe, manageable dimensions of make-believe, the very same threats to integrity that may assail the psyche in real life. And at the same time, through self-discovery it imparts a veritable weapon for coping with these threats whether they are found within our problematic and incoherent selves or in the world around us.

Chinua Achebe was a prolific writer. Vast knowledge of European writing must have had deep influences in his literary career. However, he wrote consistently about the rich Igbo culture, colonial period, about the corruption, and the inefficiency of Nigerian political leader after achieving independence. Achebe represents a particular reality: a modern Africa whose rich variety of ethnic and cultural identities is complicated by the impact of European colonialism. Read by Western audiences, works like *Things Fall Apart* are intended to challenge stereotypes of Africans as primitive savages, and to present the complexities of African societies, with their alternative sets of traditions, ideals, values, and behaviors. Achebe is even more dismayed, however, to see Africans themselves internalizing these stereotypes and turn away from their cultures to emulate supposedly superior white European

civilizations.

Rose Ure Mezu pays respect to Chinua Achebe *The Role of Woman in Achebe's World* in a highly metaphoric way as:

The greatest accolade given him was summed up in one metaphor: the eagle on the iroko. Iroko is the tallest, strongest tree in the forest and that the eagle is, of course, the king of the birds. More than those of any other African writer, his writings have helped to develop what is known as African literature today. And the single book, which has helped him to launch his revolution, is the slim-classic volume called *Things Fall Apart*. (26)

Chinua Achebe's novels are viewed from divergent perspectives, and there are critical texts that have analyzed Achebe and his novels from various critical canons of literature. Many critics have viewed them from the perspective of political and post-colonial framework of criticism.

Things Fall Apart is significant because it began the vogue of African novels of cultural contact and conflict. Commensurate with its popularity, images of women receive attention, in a style that is expository rather than prescriptive. Achebe's novel mirrors the socio-cultural organization existing in the Africa of the era he describes. Rose Ure Mezu says that "Achebe's women are voiceless." Even though "highly visible, his women are virtually inconsequential" (26). She emphasizes that the world in *Things Fall Apart* is one in which "patriarchy" intrudes oppressively into every sphere of existence. It is an "androcentric" world where the man is everything and the woman nothing, in domestic terms, women are quantified as part of men's acquisitions. She argues, "As wives, women come in multiple numbers, sandwiched between yam barns and titles. These three-wives, yam

barns, social titles-are the highest accolades for the successful farmer, warrior, and man of worth" (Mezu 27).

She excessively emphasizes on virility; sex-role stereotyping, gender discrimination, and violence create an imbalance, a resultant denigration of the female principle. She observes the novel from the feminist perspective. She tells us about male dominated society and absence of that female principle that could have maintained balance and sanity.

Kwame Anthony Appiah writes, *Things Fall Apart* may well be Africa's "best-loved novel. It is read widely in Nigeria- where it was written and in the rest of Africa [...] There are, no doubt, many reasons why Chinua Achebe's first book has achieved its status as the archetypal modern African novel in English" (10). He further says:

Achebe's achievement is rooted in a mastery of form and of language ... literary craft-of diction, of narrative form of plot were almost entirely unprecedented ... and its structure was the episodic structure of an extended oral narrative...writing with these ambitions exists for the purposes of nation building; it aims to contribute towards the development of a modern national consciousness. (11)

Many critics observe him as "negotiator" of the conflict on culture to achieve a solid and positive sense of identity in the post-colonial states. Heather Sofield in *Post Colonial Identity, Post Colonial Literature*, opines that, "Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is the desperate protest against injustices of the past, Thereby characterizing identity in a retributive light"(275). This idea might be applicable to an individual struggling for the sense of 'self'.

Critics observe Achebe's writings in the category of post-colonial literature. As Paul Brians explains in *Notes on Things Fall Apart*:

The most striking feature of *Things Fall Apart* is to create a complex and sympathetic portrait of a traditional village culture in Africa. Achebe is trying not only to inform the outside world about Igbo cultural traditions, but to remind his own people of their past and to assert that it had contained much of value. All too many Africans in his time were ready to accept the European judgment that Africa had no history or culture worth considering ... He also fiercely resents the stereotype of Africa as an undifferentiated 'primitive' land, the 'heart of darkness', as Conrad calls it. Throughout the novel he shows how African cultures vary among themselves and how they change over time. (6)

Brians notes that Achebe is able to give the solid and positive portrait of a traditional village culture in Africa.

Achebe was the First Nigerian writer to successfully transmute the conventions of the novel, a European art form, into African literature. Heather Sofield in *Postcolonial Identity, Post Colonial Literature* opines:

Achebe seems to be a vision of optimism sharply contrasting the examples in literature. But we understand his ideas more clearly when viewed in the context of his own quest for identity. He credits his first book as being the primary step in his peace-making process. Achebe has used his education as a means by which to strengthen, not demean, his cultural heritage: a means to forge a new identity of his own [...]

There are many others who share this optimistic view and maintain that it is indeed possible to find a positive sense of identity in a post-colonial state. Further, literature of post-colonial nations, while being a

means for personal inquiry was the case for Chinua Achebe and his first book, can function as a forum that fosters an exchange of ideas and encourages that same personal inquiry on the part of the reader. Instead of offering portraits of loss and grievance, authors might, utilize their talents to re-invent identity, thus offering a new perspective to readers looking to literature for inspiration or guidance. (119)

Heather Sofield is highly optimistic in a sense he observes the novels as a "quest for identity" where Achebe is able to "re-invent identity", but he does not discuss about the coherence being lost by the interference of white people. The cultural heritage and the social harmony of Igbo has been destroyed. Achebe has been able to illuminate two emotionally irreconcilable facts in modern African life, the humiliation visited on Africans by colonialism and utter moral of what replaced colonial rule set in the historical context.

The order is disrupted, however, with the appearance of the white man in Africa and with the introduction of his religion. The conflict of the novel, vested in Okonkwo, derives from the series of crushing blows which are leveled at traditional values by an alien having more powerful culture causing, in the end, the traditional society to fall apart. Okonkwo is unable to adapt to the changes that initiated by colonialism. In the end, in frustration, he kills an African employee of the British- and then commits suicide, a sin against the tradition to which he had long clung. George P. Landow in *Art History* writes:

Achebe uses language, which he sees as a writer's best resource, to expose and combat the propaganda generated by African politicians to manipulate their own people. Faced with his people's growing inferiority complex and his leader's disregard for the truth, the African

writer cannot turn his back on his culture. (19)

His novels are viewed from the colonial point of view, focusing on the humiliation experienced by the indigenous people during colonization. Margaret Laurence in "Narrative Technique in *Things Fall Apart*" writes:

The flourishing of Achebe's literature which has drawn sustenance from both traditional oral literature and from the present and rapidly changing society. Thirty years ago Chinua Achebe was one of the founders of this new literature; and over the years many critics have come to consider him the finest of the Nigerian novelists. (98)

Things Fall Apart and *Arrow of God* focus on Nigeria's early experience with colonialism, from the first contact with the British to widespread British administration. Chinua Achebe creates in these two novels, a coherent picture of coherence being lost, of the tragic consequences of the African-European collision. In *The Novels of Chinua Achebe* Omaregie writes:

In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the newly converted Christians renounces their traditional lifestyle thus advancing the cause of colonialism. The European exploiters, oppressors and grabbers use Christianity as a tool to explain the manifest contradictions portrayed in African literature because of the working out of broader historical forces. *Things Fall Apart* tended to impute African society's problems to color prejudice rather than class conflict. (40)

Achebe is trying not only to inform the outside world about Igbo cultural traditions, but to remind his own people of their past and to assert its value. All too many Africans in his time were ready to accept the European judgment that Africa had no history or culture worth considering. He also fiercely resents the stereotype of Africa

as an undifferentiated "primitive" land, the "heart of darkness", as Conrad calls it. Throughout the novel he shows how African cultures vary among themselves and how they change over time.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, up to this date, has been the subject of discussion as it has never failed to provide critics with raw materials for their reading. The references from the various critics lead to conclude that the novel is, about Nigeria's early experience of colonialism; about the negotiation of identity which in the course of time, comes forth as an interesting novel. However, the novel has not been read as an inquiry into how the peaceful Igbo society, which is culturally elegant, is affected by cultural imperialism and how the natives were destined to suffer with in the civilizing mission of the white imperialists.

II. Traits and Tenets of Cultural Invasion

The invasion caused by imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a world scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively white or black or western or oriental. Just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages and cultural geographies. But there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival, in fact, is about the connections between things. Pin hierarchies, above all, not constantly to reiterate how the culture or country is number one, or not number one, for that matter.

Nineteenth century was called "the rise of West". And Europe held a grand total of roughly eighty five percent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions and Commonwealth. Joseph A. Schumpeter in *The Sociology of Imperialism* observes:

Imperialism is defined as the object-less disposition of a state to expansion by force without assigned limits. But actually history shows us people and classes who desires expansion for the sake of expanding, war for the sake of fighting, domination for the sake of dominating. It values conquest not so much because of the advantages it brings. Which are often more than doubtful, as because it is conquest, success, activity. Although expansion as self-purpose always need concrete object to activate it and support it, its meaning is not included there in- Hence its tendency towards the infinite unto the exhaustion of its

forces, and its motto: plus ultra. (254)

Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* observes that the vocabulary of classic nineteenth century imperial culture in places like England and France is plentiful with words and concepts like "inferior" or "subject races". Notions of "subordinate people," of "dependency," of "expansion" and "authority," out of the imperial experiences, notions about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticized or rejected (8).

Edward Said argues that these vocabularies show the hegemonic relationship between colonizer and colonized. The economists were hungry for overseas markets, raw material, cheap labor and profitable land. Defense and foreign policy establishments were more and more committed to the maintenance of the vast tracts, distant territory and large numbers of subjugated peoples. African writings are based upon the historical continuum, canalization of the economic, political and social practices established by colonialism.

Chinua Achebe observes beauty, strength and validity of traditional life and values. He deplores the imperialists and condescension and picture of coherence being lost. Distortion of the culture is the root cause of disorder. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* observes the importance of culture and the culture which helps to formulate the structure of the society:

Culture is all it means. All those practices like the art of description communication and representation that have relative anatomy from the economic, social and political realms...In time culture comes to be associated often aggressively, with the nation of the state, this differentiates 'us' from 'them' almost always with the same degree of xenophobia. (xii-xiv)

The clash between two cultures in Achebe's novel becomes a "xenophobia". Superiority complex of the colonizer in Umeofia creates riots within indigenous people and colonizer. As David Landes says in *The Unbound Prometheus*, "Europe in the early nineteenth century, the decision of certain European powers to establish plantations, that is, to treat their colonies as continuous enterprises" (37).

Many critics opine that European colonization for the business motives was always profit based. There are several varieties of domination and responses to it, but the Western one, along with the resistance it provoked, is in part the subject of thinking. Western empires were concentrated upon profit, and the hope of further profit. Spices, sugar, slaves, rubber, cotton, opium, tin, gold, silver, are the main attractions of establishing empire in African countries and India too.

Opening of church and missionaries in the novel is the important samples of the implementation of cultural imperialism. Achebe wanted to show that the missionaries were highly successful in spreading the white culture and religion. The narrator in the novel says:

They had built their church there, won a handful and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. That was a source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan; but many of them believed that the strange faith and the white man's god would not last...None of them was a man of title...they were worthless, empty men. (*Things* 125)

The colonizers are able to establish themselves culturally, politically, economically and socially too. Indigenous people are divided into two groups: converters and conservatives. A kind of disruption happens in these two groups. A son rebels against his own father. The new religion undermines the hierarchies of the culture. Igbo faith

is integral to Igbo society but the new religion also comes with social and political attachments. Once land has been granted for the building of the church, the whites become difficult to dislodge. They bring their laws and their guns soon afterward, and Igbo men and women are forced to live under the colonial yoke.

Imperialism is a political fad that more than half of the world was confronted with. Most of the non-western and African countries suffered from racial discrimination, slavery, and economic, cultural, psychological and social, exploitation. Somehow they were searching for market for their production. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the opening of trading post and selling of yams marks the capitalist money economy. And opening churches, missionary houses in Umuofia are the examples of the implementation of cultural imperialism.

Invasion and African Literature

Africa has been seen by the Western world as a 'dark' continent. Geological explorations showed that the Sahara desert was initially a fertile area, overflowing in lush vegetation, animal and men. Africa, therefore, came to be known as an inhospitable place, in spite of areas with great rivers, thick forests and vast green-lands. This was mainly because the greater part of the continent was separated from Mediterranean civilization and was not open to outside influences.

The people in Africa learned to live in harmony with nature's changes. They developed a culture based on religion and nature. They worshipped many deferent gods and goddesses who represented elements of the natural world. They had priests who were capable of physical and psychic healing, oracles who could foretell the future, and spirits of ancestors who controlled traditions, gave orders and guided the tribe at time of crises. This system of control worked very well for centuries.

But changes occurred with the exploration and eventual economic and social exploitation of Africans by the Western colonizing mission. First came the slave trade where Africans were picked up from the West Coast of Africa and shipped off to distant places where they were sold off as slaves. This disrupted tribal life and also impoverished the land, for now there were no able-bodied men to carry on the hard work of crop-raising.

Then came the expansion policies of many countries, like Portugal, Holand, Germany and Britain who all began to carve out areas of Africa in order to build colonies for themselves. This was a major factor in destroying what was left of African civilization. Finally came the activities of Christian missionaries, who did not care to understand the religion of the people of Africa, whom they considered uncivilized and savage, and proceeded to convert them to Christianity.

Today African countries are self-ruled due to the widespread independent movements among countries in the twentieth century seeking independence from colonial rule. Although these were bloody conflicts, the end result was the formation of a country with an agenda that was African rather than European. Chinua Achche, in his novel, has brought to the reader a very realistic picture of traditional Africa as well as its demise with the onset of colonialism. *In Things Fall Apart*, he has attempted to vindicate the ways of tribal life in Nigeria – in particular among the Igbo tribe to which he belongs by showing the rich and complex traditions that made up African society before the invasion of the continent by Europeans. Frantz Fanon writes in *The Black Writer's Burden* that:

Without subscribing to the view that Africa gained nothing at all in her long encounter with Europe, one could still say, in all fairness, that she suffered many terrible and lasting misfortunes. In terms of human

dignity and human relations the encounter was almost a complete disaster for the black races. It has warped the mental attitudes of both black and white, in giving expression to the plight of their people, black writers have shown again and again how strongly this traumatic experience can possess the sensibility. They have found themselves drawn irresistibly to writing about the fate of black people in a world progressively recreated by white men in their own image, to their glory and for their profit, in which the Negro became the poor motherless child of the spirituals and of so many Nigerian folk tales. (86)

African writings are especially based upon anti-colonial, anti-imperialist concept. Colonialism had tried to justify its oppression and exploitation by resorting to claims, of racial superiority. The new African writer countered such claims by producing artistic works that showed that Africa has its own history, cultural, and civilization that were equal if not superior to that of the imperialists. The writers saw their societies put away the complexes of the years of denigration self abasement imposed on them by colonialism. The most representative works of this period include Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, set in Umuofia, an independent and progressive society before the intrusion and encroachment of colonialism. He shows that African society had its own order and spiritual crises before the intrusion of colonialism.

Wailer Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* and Amilcar Cabral's *National Liberation and Struggle* reveal the political, economic and social circumstances that formed the sensibility of most African writers. The productions of Cocoa, spices, rubber, etc. mark the beginning of an international capitalist economic order, so detrimental to Africa. Mono-culture, introduced by colonialism, made the African producer helpless in the face of capitalist maneuvers. Thus, they

illuminate the various types of mentalities or ideologies that inform African Literatures. Different kinds of contradiction are visualized in African writings. If we observe the African writings we find painful experience of the natives. In Pepetela's *Mayombe*, the narrators notes that: "My land is rich in coffee, but my father was always a poor peasant...In Dembos men lived wretchedly in the midst of wealth. Coffee was everywhere hugging the tree. But they stole from us in the price sweat, was paid for with few worthless coins" (156).

People were merely exploited for the work but not for the wages. It was very difficult to achieve the comfortable living hood. The slaves did not have their own family. They were behaved as object or commodities. The white people snatch the grown up children to put them into the slave market. *In I Will Marry When I Want*, Gicaamba says "I wouldn't mind, son of Gathoni/If after selling always our blood/Our village benefited/But look now at this Village/There is no properly, there is no wealth" (56).

The profits form agricultural and commercial works were completely rewarded to colonizers. The natives and the labor always devoted their blood for the benefit of their master. The opening of Trade Center, Missionary education and churches make deviate the Igbo people from their religion, their community, rituals and ceremony. All the social phenomena like occupation, power, rituals, and religion are in the category of culture. Social suppression has also had bad impact within the native people. Likewise in Pepetela's *Mayombe* the narrator says:

You earn twenty escudos a day for chopping down trees with an axe.

And how much does the boss earn for each tree? A pile. What does the boss do to earn this money? Nothing, nothing...so, how thousands a day and give you twenty escudos? What right has he? (19)

Most of the African writings are appealing for their social rights. They are talking about the injustice in the society. We can see the example of inhumanity in *Things Fall Apart*, as the narrator says, "The six men ate nothing throughout that day and the next. They were not even given any water to drink and they could not go out to urinate or go into the bush when they were pressed" (167). African writings are based upon the inhumanity of colonizer before the achievement of independence.

Beti observes, "African dependency upon the European also ultimately produced neocolonial class stratification of Africans who manipulated the colonial economic structures for their own benefit" (24). In *Mission to Kala*, the colonial authorities nominate the chief of Vimili who goes on to live an opulent life at the expense of the people:

The colonial Administration who had nominated him in the first place buttered him up. In return, he obeyed their commands like a robot and knew they would not throw him out. In the days of the forced labor gangs he had been feared by everyone because he betrayed fugitives to the authorities and acted as an informer- He used our traditional tribal hierarchy as a vehicle for his underhand intrigues, and flouted our laws and customs when he no longer needed them. (Beti 18)

In this context, as Rodney puts, that "The European exploiters, oppressors and grabbers use Christinanity as a tool to explain the manifest contradictions portrayed in African literature because of the working out of broader historical forces" (12).

African writers claim that Europeans employed Christianity to consolidate their control over the indigenous people. As W. Gicaamba in *I'll Marry When I Want* notes:

Religion is not the same thing as God. When the British imperialists came here in 1895. All the missionaries of all the churches held the Bible in the left hand and the gun in the right hand. The white man wanted us to be drunk with religion while he in the meantime was mapping and grabbing our land and starting factories and businesses on our sweat. (56-7)

African writings talk about the injustice of the past, color prejudice by the colonizers, anti-colonial struggle, independence, and neocolonialism. They appeal for social rights and human rights. Some of the writings are written with patriotic feeling and national liberation. Writers began to understand that the roots of social contradiction and conflicts lay in class differentiations and cultural imperialism. Writers began to understand hegemonic power relations. They are appealing for social justice, equality, human rights, etc not only in colonial period but postcolonial period too.

African literature brings out the truth about Africa. They examine the political, economic and social circumstances that impelled the sensitivity and ideologies of African literature and writers on colonialism, respectively. They also discuss the historical connections that make it possible to analyze African literature dealing with pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial phases of African history.

Colonialism denied Africa the right to cultural development and self-expression and set up a state of siege that it justified with theories about cultural assimilation. As a consequence a kind of identity crisis emerged within aboriginal culture. They become aware of the identity, colonial culture and the values imposed by oppressors. Liberation struggle rejects cultural domination by the foreign power by denying the culture of the oppressor. Thus, Cabral argues that "the tie between a people's identity and the reproduction and maintenance of the social system of a

specific set of institutions affects both culture and the people's intimate sense of selfhood" (*Houseboy* 55).

The structures that the colonialists introduce affect both the people's culture and their sense of selfhood. Societies respectively are culturally transformed by the introduction of the capitalist cash nexus, bourgeoisie religions, and European educational systems. The alternatives colonialism provides for these are schools, stores, roads and hospitals-structures that the colonialists use to impose and consolidate their own culture on the colonized thereby altering the African culture. The narrator in *Things Fall Apart* has mentioned the event of European educational systems:

So he built a school and a little hospital in Umuofia. He went from family to family begging people to send there to his school. But at first they only sent their slaves or sometime their lazy children, Mr. Brown begged and argued and prophesied... In the end Mr. Brown's arguments began to have an effect. More people came to learn in the school ... They worked on their farms in the morning and went to school in the afternoon ... New churches were established in the surrounding village and a few school with them. From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand. (155-56)

Imperialist domination for its own security requires cultural oppression and the attempt at direct or indirect destruction of the essential elements of the culture of the dominated people. The narrator in *Things Fall Apart* further says:

Apart from the church, the white men had also brought a government. They had built a court where the District Commissioner judged cases in ignorance. He had court messengers who brought men to him for

trial ... on the bank of the Great River, where the white men first came many years before and where they had built the center of their religion and trade and government. (150)

The missionaries have brought British colonial government with them. Missionaries were often viewed as agents of imperialism. There is a saying common to Africans alike; which goes like this: "Before the white man came, we had the land and they had the Bible. Now we have the Bible and they have the land" (*Things* 155).

The rise of government by dictatorship Throughout Africa, which characterized the 1970s, perpetuated the political, economic, and social practices of colonialism. The age of independence also witnessed the emergence of social classes and class contradictions-a development that disappointed and shocked many African writers, who created artistic works expressing disillusionment with postcolonial African society.

Cabral also proves that culture reflects the aspirations of the "petty bourgeoisie", which, like those of all other classes, derives from their class. The new African ruling middle class is "underdeveloped, has no economic power, and, therefore, reflects the culture of the metropolitan bourgeoisie with whom it economically allied itself to exploit the own people" (National 15). Members of the new African ruling middle class have assimilated the colonizers' mentality and regard themselves as culturally superior. Their imitative culture reflects the political and economic dependence of this class on the metropolitan bourgeoisie and this has been the focus of many African writers who deal with the theme of cultural influence, Ousmane in *The Last of the Empire* Observes:

Are we businessmen? I say no! Just clodhoppers . . . We are nothing better than crabs in a basket. We want the ex-occupier's place? We

have it ... Yet what change is there really in general or in particular?

The colonialist is stronger, more powerful than before, hidden inside us

... What are we? Clodhoppers! Agents! Petty traders' In our family we

call ourselves "businessmen"! Businessmen without funds. (91-2)

In *The Last of the Empire*, Ousmane portrays the young generation as avid to embrace the foreign colonial culture that the older generation had fought to remove. This is a clear demonstration of cultural imperialism.

The impact of culture of the colonizer prevailed not only in colonial period but also continues in postcolonial period. A bourgeoisie group is emerged within natives. They have followed the borrowed culture. The problem of class difference can be seen after achieving independence in African nations. African literature developed as a direct response to concrete historical conditions, which transformed the function and both ideology of the African writer and the artistic forms used.

Achebe's approach sharply contrasts to the negritude writers of the same period, whose artistic works idealize Africa. The ideological concerns of the Virgin writer reflected the general mood of African nationalism. These writers erroneously analyzed imperialism and social situations from the standpoint of race instead of class conflict. African writer remodeled the English language to suit their subversive purposes. Thus, Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* uses Igbo modes of expression to preserve Igbo tradition and to resist the imperial culture of the invaders.

III. Cultural Invasion and Its Aftermath in *Things Fall Apart*

Things Fall Apart in works, ethics and morality, People are usually punished for their evil doing. The person portrays the clash between Nigeria's white colonial culture and traditional culture of the indigenous Igbo people. Igbo people and their religious spirits make them believe who is progressive and successfully awarded with prestigious titles. Apart from that they used to avoid effeminate and lazy people like Unako, the father of the protagonist. He was idle, poor, profligate, and a coward. They prefer productive, wealthy, thrifty, and brave people. People's sense of self-worth is dependent upon the traditional standards by which society judges him- The narrator reveals the importance of own strength in the novel:

"Hold your peace", screamed the priestess, her voice terrible as it echoed through the dark void. You have offended neither the gods nor his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm", the evil you have done can ruin the whole clan- The earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us increase and we shall all perish. (14)

Igbo peoples are much conscious on maintaining peace in society, "My father told me that he had been told that in the past a man who broke the peace of village was dragged of life on ground through the village until died" (27). In such way people have to pay great fees for the distortion of peace.

A kind of chaotic situation emerges when white men come to Igbo land which Achebe in Second Part of *Things Fall Apart* quotes in the conversation of Okonkwo and villagers:

He sipped his wine. And he was riding an iron horse. The first people who saw him ran away, but he stood beckoning to them. In the end the

fearless ones went near and even touched him. They consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them... so they killed the white man and tied his iron horse to their sacred tree because it looked as if it would run away to call the man's friends ...They were locusts, it said and that first man was their harbinger sent to explore tire terrain. And so they killed him. (120)

In such a way white men came to the traditional Igbo land. They were able to capture land and convert the indigenous people in to Christianity. The native people were colonized economically, socially, psychologically, and culturally. None of the colonizers made necessary reform. They always inclined to expand industry and commerce. As the narrator explains about the inhumanity of the whites:

The three white men and a very large number of other men surrounded the market. They must have used a powerful medicine to make themselves invisible until the market was full. And they began to shoot. Everybody was killed, except the old and the sick who were at home ...Their clan is now completely empty. Even the sacred fish in their mysterious lake have fled and the lake has turned the color of blood. A great evil has come upon their land as the oracle had warned. (221)

Some men killed the white man and tied up his iron horse. Not long afterward, three white men arrived with a large number of African attendants. They saw the bicycle and left. Several weeks later, three white men and a man of African subordinates came into the Abame marketplace armed with powerful guns. They shot everyone at sight. The only survivors were those who were lucky enough not to be in the market

that day, and these refugees have scattered. The village of Abame becomes completely empty. This ominous incident foreshadows the future that threatens Umuofia. The whites send a few men to explore the terrain, and on the slightest provocation retaliate with terrible force. Although the people of Abame were wrong to murder the white man, the retaliation of the white man is excessive. For the ignorant and fearful murder of one man, the whites responded in a brutal way that destroyed the whole village. European imperialists brought death and destruction on all of their subjects, innocent and guilty alike. A kind of fear overpowers the Igbo as Obierika says in the novel, "But I am greatly afraid. We have heard stories about white men who made the powerful guns and the strong drinks and took slaves away across the seas" (122).

The structure of old tribal society was broken without putting anything in its place. There was political predominance. The native aboriginals were behaved as labor, slave, savage and a subhuman being. The ancestral God and Goddess of natives and the social costumes were destroyed. As Jean Paul Sartre in *Colonialism and Neo-colonialism* argues:

Colonialism denies human rights to people. It has subjugated by violence and whom it keeps in poverty and ignorance by force, therefore, as, Marx would say, in a state of subhumanity. Racism is inscribed in the events themselves in the institution, in the nature of the exchange and the production. The political and social statuses reinforce one another: since the natives are subhuman, the right does not apply to them. (2)

White people treated the natives as a beast of burden. As Edward Said argues that "The orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture"

(*Orientalism 2*), the post-colonial critics believe that the colonizer provided the psychological service in order to brainwash of the natives. They went to the African nations as a cultural project. The natives developed inferiority complexes among them. Okonkwo refuses to talk about his own son because Nwoye is one among the converters.

The novel deconstructs the long tradition of thinking that all Africans are primitive and mindless savages. When white people entered into Nigeria they were totally ignorant of the richness and the complexity of Igbo life. The culture was impressively rich and civilized with tradition and laws that placed great emphasis on justice and fairness. The people were ruled by simple democracy and not by a king.

Cultural, social, political, and economic downfall can be seen within the Igbo because of the interference of colonizer. Taking its title *Things Fall Apart* from W.B. Yeats' poem "The Second Coming", Achebe generalizes the "fall (ing) apart" of the native things in Nigeria after the cultural invasion of the colonizers. Yeats' poem reads:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer:
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst
 Are full of passionate intensity. (1-8)

"The Second Coming", written after the catastrophe of World War I and with the rise of communism and fascism, is a compelling glimpse of an inhuman world about to be

born. Kwame Anthony Appiah in *Things Fall Apart* thus says:

Yeats's poem 1921 is, of course extremely familiar, and its first stanza has seemed to many, in the seventy years or so since it was written an apt characterization of our times. But Yeats' talk of second coming was meant more than metaphorically: for Yeats history comes in cycle, a 'widening gyre' like rising and widening circle of the falconer's flight, in which each great cycle of age gave birth to another that was, in some twenty centuries of stony sleep', the two millennia of the Christian cycle that had followed the Roman Empire, and he saw in the terrible destruction of the first decades of the century sings that this Christian cycle was coming to an end. Whatever was to follow- whatever ... rough beast, its hour come round at last/Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born ... The principles of the new cycle would be radically at odds with the old Christian principles. (xii, xiii)

Naturally, there are ironies and reversals in Achebe's appropriation of Yeats's imagery: for the cycle that is ending is, for Achebe, an age of autonomy in his Igbo homeland: and the cycle that will follow will be a Christian cycle, the cycle that for Yeats is coming to an end. Because Achebe was writing in the late fifties, his audience could be presumed to have had a sense of the new age that had been brought by Christianity in Igboland. His preliminary task, therefore, was to establish a plausible version of the old cycle, the cycle of the pre-colonial culture of his homeland.

Likewise in *Things Fall Apart* the tradition of story telling, symbolic gods and imagery, and the idea of democracy prove Igbo people as cultured and civilized. But the Christian missionaries caused disorder in it. As the narrator says in the novel:

He told them that they worshipped false gods. gods of wood and stone ... He told them that the true God lived in on high and that all men when they died went before Him for judgment. Evil men and the heathen who in their blindness bowed to wood and stone were thrown into a tire that burned like palm-oil. But good men who worshipped the true God lived forever in His happy kingdom. We have been sent by this great God to ask you lo leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die. (125)

The divide and rule policy of the colonizer is employed within the Igbo homeland. The missionaries want to prove Christianity as the best religion and they propagate that the innocent people should avoid ancient gods and suggest them to follow Christianity. The Igbo society of *Things Fall Apart* is shown as having grown from a long tradition of careful decision-making and a careful system of religious, social and political beliefs.

The novel illustrates the struggle and transformation of the traditional Igbo society under British colonialism. Okonkwo lives a successful life of Igbo standards and is well respected by his tribesmen, until he accidentally likes the life of one of his clansmen and is banished from the village. After seven years, Okonkwo returns to his village to find his previous prosperity but the Umuofia is under the colonial laws. Additionally, he finds that his tribe's religious beliefs are rapidly being replaced by Christianity Okonkwo opposes these new practices and struggles to stop the destruction of his Igbo culture. Okonkwo attempts to rally his tribesmen, but finds little support. The tribe is divided, and only a few people continue to defend the Igbo ways. Some have already freely embraced Christianity, while others have simply given in to the "white men's" new ways. Igbo people are divided into two groups; the

fundamentalist group of the protagonist Okonkwo and the group of converters. They are in clash. The fundamentalists have killed the converters and disorder occurs in the society.

Arrival of Locust is the symbol of the arrival of white settlers, who will feast on and exploit the resources of Igbo. The narrator portrays the event artistically as:

In this way the moon and seasons passed. And then the locusts came. It had not happened for many a long year. The elders said locusts came once in generation reappeared every year for seven years and then disappeared for another lifetime ...They came in the cold harmattan season after the harvest had been gathered, and ate up all the grass in the field. (47)

The very word "cold harmattan" refers to death and disorder, which Igbo people are going to be confronted with. The fact that the Igbo eat these locusts highlight how innocuous they take them to be. Similarly those who have converted to Christianity fail to realize the damage that the culture of the colonizer does to the culture of the colonized.

In a way the rich culture of Igbo is distorted and it becomes Xenophobia. Culture is the preliminary phenomena, which can associate people and dislocate them too. People easily start to believe in what is thought to be one's own, without any evidence and reason and are even ready to fight against interference and assimilation. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* opines "Culture in this sense is the source of identity and rather combative one of that as in recent returns to culture and tradition" (xii). Achebe is careful in portraying the complex, advanced social institutions and artistic tradition of Igbo culture prior to its contact with the Europeans. He depicts the European intention of colonizing Nigeria by changing the culture and religion of the

people of that place.

Things Fall Apart is the tragedy of Okwonko. The arrival of the white men is a kind of interference in Igbo tradition, customs and beliefs. Another part of Achebe's portrait of Igbo culture is to show that the African tribal cultures were long dismissed by white scholars as barbaric and evil and that led to their patronizing attitude towards them. This provided them with the motivated desire and need to interfere and civilize the Igbo, thereby bringing about a change in their daily life and changing them forever.

Opening of churches and missionary houses suggests the cultured exploitation by white people and a way to motivate the mind of the local people of African origin. The humiliation vested on Africans by colonialism ultimately leads to the death of the protagonist in the novel. The hero is deeply dedicated to the traditions and social hierarchies of the people.

Okwonko finally gives up in despair. He kills himself so that he will not be executed under the white men's law. In this way fall occurs in the Igbo society, and it begins to fall apart. Religion is threatened. Umuofia loses its self-determination and the very centers of tribal life are threatened. As the narrator in *Things Fall Apart* remarks that the "white man has put a knife on the things that held us together, and we have fallen apart" (161).

Earlier they have complex social institutions that used to administer justice in fair and rational ways. But the coming of the British upsets that balance. Although the British claims that local laws were barbaric, and used this claim as an excuse to impose their own laws, soon it is proved that British law was hypocritical and inhumane.

Disorder and the Loss of Igbo Harmony

In course of extending the geography of the nation the colonizers exploited the natives economically, politically and psychologically. The native aboriginals were behaved as a labor, slave, savage and a subhuman being. Although proclamation of humanity is urged in allover the world, it remains only in words. The colonized lands proved to be highly productive for the raw materials and the cheap labour for the settlers. As Edward Said in *Orientalism* argues:

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe. It is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest colonies, the source of civilization and languages, its cultural contestant and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. (1)

The colonizers are highly benefited from the colonized country. Cheap Labor, enough raw materials help them to flourish different industry in colonized nation.

Achebe expresses the event of the arrival of the colonizers that they brought chaos with them. The arrival of the white man in Umuofia shattered riot on its horizons. The narrator reveals in the novel:

And then quite suddenly a shadow fell on the world and the sun seemed hidden behind a thick cloud ... Locusts are descending ... at first a fairly small swarm came. They were the harbingers sent to survey the land. And then appeared on the horizon a slowly moving mass like a boundless sheet of black cloud drifting towards Umuofia. Soon it covered half the sky, and the solid mass was now broken by tiny of light ... They settled on every tree and every blade of grass; they settled on the roofs and covered the bare ground. Mighty branches broke away under them. (48)

The language that Achebe uses to describe the Locusts indicates their symbolic status. The repetition of words like "settled" and "every" emphasizes the sudden and ubiquitous presence of these insects; they also hint at the way in which the arrival of white settlers takes the Igbo off guard:

They settled on every tree and on every blade of grass; they settled on the roofs and covered the bare ground. Mighty tree branches broke away under them, and the whole country became the brown earth color of the vast, hungry swarm. (49)

The Locusts are so heavy they break the tree branches, which symbolizes the fracturing of Igbo traditions and culture under the onslaught of colonialism and white settlement, "It told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them" (120).

Achebe's goal in writing *Things Fall Apart* was to recapture the life of his tribe before the first touch of the white man sent it reeling from its delicate equilibrium. Right from the tribes' first encounter with the whites, it is being unchangeably altered.

It is the coming of the missionaries, which brings the disruption. After thousands of years of unviolated and untouched tribal existence, Okonkwo returns after just seven years of exile to find his village almost unrecognizable. Similarly, his fellow clan members seem unwilling to recognize him. Instead, "the new religion and government and trading stores were very much in the people's eyes and minds ... they talked and thought about little else, and certainly not about Okonkwo's return" (149). The Europeans have been active in Nigeria for just seven years and already the pre-colonial Nigeria has been lost. This presents a clear picture of the sheer rapidity of the colonial project. It seems inevitable that much indigenous tradition and heritage will be swept away, resulting in feelings of profound cultural dislocation, and loss of

identity.

Though colonizers are highly benefited from the colonies, the capitalist economy did not favour the labour. The ancestral God and Goddess of the natives and their traditional social customs are destroyed. The colonizers' religious mission is quite successful, since the "Converts were already sending evangelist to the surrounding towns" (124). The title holder men of the society refuse to accept the unknown religion. The person who could not hold the status in society easily accepts Christianity. The mission follows different ideas to attract towards Christianity. The interpreter translates Mr. Brown's ideas in the novel, "I shall bring many iron horses when we have settled down among them. Some of them will even ride the iron horse themselves" (126). Physical facilities are planned to be provided for the natives. They have tried to arouse negative attitudes toward the ancestral religion, "All the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows... there is only one true God and He has the earth, the sky, you and me all of us"(126-27).

The colonizer came in Umuofia with strong power "he was riding an iron horse" (120). The word "Iron" symbolizes strong and defensive source of energy: "They were locust, it said, and that first man was their harbinger sent to explore the terrain... And so they killed him" (120). The natives of Umuofia killed a white man so that the violent situation will be created. Furthermore, the word 'Iron' justifies power which is tied to the 'sacred silk cotton tree' which refers to the purity of Igbo clan which is bounded by unprecedented power. The colonizers began to show their power to indigenous people, "Their clan is now completely empty. Even the sacred fish in their mysterious lake have fled and the lake has turned the color of the blood" (121).The disorder and chaos thus, hovers around the Igbo society.

All these circumstances lead the action of the novel towards a clash between two religions: "A sudden fury rose within him and he felt a strong desire to take up his machete, go to the church and wipe out the entire vile and inscrant gang"(149). In this way, the xenophobic situation is created among the Igbo; "Three converters had gone into the village and boasted openly that all the gods were dead and impotent and they were prepared to defy them by burning all their shrine" (135). The religion and the new government were wreaking havoc on the harmony of Igbo life. Social instability and threat of violence have arrived in full force and armed resistance is impossible. Religion is in threat - "The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store and for the first time palm oil and kernel became things of great price and much money flowed into Umuofia" (135). The ultimate target of the mission was fulfilled. The British followed a policy in their colonizing efforts of designating local "leaders" to administer the lower levels of their empire. Thus the new power structures meshed badly with the old. Similarly the missionaries have designated as their contact man an individual who lacks the status to make him respected by his people. Edward Said argues in *Orientalism*:

The result is usually to polarize the distinction, the oriental becomes more oriental, the westerners more westerner and limit the human encounter between different cultures tradition and societies' binary opposition . . . when at the end of the historical part of his argument he is brought face to face with the contemporary world, he divides it accordingly into two halves, the developed and developing countries. Prophetic, accuracy, internal, empirical reality and order are scattered throughout his description and they characterize either attractive, familiar, desirable, virtues, or menacing, peculiar disorderly defect. (45)

Edward Said's argument justifies that the world becomes 'polarize' on the basis of geography, culture, politics, military power, racial prejudice etc. The physical disparity leads the natives to fight for their rights in their own land. Chaotic situation emerges amid suffering natives and into their nation. The peace loving Igbo people are distorted and disorder occurred with in the society.

The peaceful society is really changed into distortion. Apart from these circumstances, Okonkwo is 'also a victim of chance. But the beginning of Okwonko's tragedy is a complete accident. It is a moment of blind chance that drives Okwonko from his homeland. The narrator interprets the event of funeral ceremony where co-incidentally Okwonko's gun had exploded:

The drums and the dancing began again and reached fever-heat.

Darkness was around the corner, and the burial was near. Guns fired the last salute and the cannon rent the sky. And then from the center of the delirious fury came a cry of agony and shouts of horror. It was as if a spell had been cast. All was silent. In the center of the crowd a boy lay in a pool of blood. It was the dead man's sixteen year old, who with his brothers and half brothers had been dancing the traditional farewell to their father. Okonkwo's gun had exploded and piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart. (109)

Things begin to fall apart after this event. Okonkwo's exile in Mbanta is not only a personal disaster, but it removes him from his home village at a crucial time so that he returns to a changed world, which can no longer adapt him. Okonkwo was the victim of chance, " They set fire to his houses, demolished his red wails, killed his animals and destroyed his barn" (110). The greatest loss is more than material; Okwonko's faith in the power of hard work is shaken. His will and strong arm are unable to

prevent this disaster. This event justifies the growing situation of disorder in peaceful society.

'Chi', symbolized as an individual's God, is discussed at various points throughout the novel and is important for the understanding of Okonkwo, the protagonist as a tragic hero. The individual's good fortune or lack determines 'Chi's' merit thereof. Okonkwo's tragic fate is as the result of the problematic Chi- a thought that occurs to Okonkwo at several points in the novel. Igbo believes "a man could not rise beyond the destiny of Chi" (14). According to the understanding, individuals will make their own destinies. Okonkwo himself shifts between these poles. When things are going well for him, he perceives himself as master and maker of his own destinies, when things go badly, however, he automatically disavows responsibilities and asks why he should be so ill fated.

The missionary Mr Brown and Akunna, one of the tribal elders, often spend long hours in discussion, and although "neither of them succeeded in converting the other ... they learnt more about their different beliefs" (147). This demonstrates a mutual relationship, in which both parties are equally eager to learn when approached on equal terms. But however, it is not Achebe's intention to demonstrate the superiority of an idealistic pre-colonial Nigerian existence over Europe. What he seeks to achieve is an illumination of the complicated truth of African existence and a concrete insight into the reality of their existence.

Similarly, he does not try to force Nigerian culture upon a European audience. This is exactly what he objects to in the colonial project -- the forcing of European culture on an unwilling Nigerian clan. The missionaries simply walk into the midst of the tribe with, their interpreters, and told them that, "They worship false gods, gods of wood and stone ... After thousands of years of worshipping unchanged deities, the

white man virtually commands them to leave your wicked ways and false gods" (120).

Upon first contact, the natives are instantly and ignorantly labelled as "false" and "wicked". It is easy to understand how Achebe repeatedly views colonial relationships as "master and slave" relationships. In his rejection to this approach to missionary work, and the colonial project in general, Achebe not only makes them seem "mad" (121) and a reason for much laughing and joking, but he also hints at darker and more sinister aspects of them. The missionaries were injected into Africa with the expressed desire to completely change all aspects of African life, and convert it into something much more European. They pride themselves on their indifference to all the ceremonies, which bind and express the life of the tribe. By extension, they can be assumed to have entertained a great of indifference within the tribe also. Basically, these individuals were statistics of converted and unconverted natives.

The missionaries were ruthless in pursuit of new converts - domestic support for the missions depended in large measure upon the tangible success of their preaching, "success" being reflected in the numbers of conversions. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe even hints at their use of bribery and blackmail in their endeavors. He tells us, "the white missionary had set up a school to teach young Christians to read and write" (126).

Achebe mentions the divide and rule policy of colonizer in the novel. Okonkwo's own son refuses to talk to his father because he is not a Christian, "I don't know. He is not my father", said Nwoye unhappily (123). The Christians arrive and bring division to the Igbo. One of their first victims is Okwonko's family. The new faith divides father from son, and the Christians seek to attack the very heart of Igbo belief; such an attack also attacks the core of Igbo culture, as the tribe's religious

beliefs are absolutely integral to all other aspects of life. Not coincidentally, the first converts are people who stand to profit from a change in the social order. In their desire for quick converts, the missionaries allowed into their ranks outcasts and "afulefu, worthless, empty men" (119). In the ideology of the missions, this was portrayed as display of the truly egalitarian nature of European Christianity, so different to the harshness experienced in tribal living.

To further enhance the negative aspects of the missions, Achebe suggests that even the converts never really accept the religion they are being offered. The reader is led to believe that each convert has their own self-centered ulterior motives for going into the "evil forest" with the missionaries. Two examples of such behavior are given. Nwoye in *Things Fall Apart*, is more attracted by the "rollicking tunes of evangelism" (121) than by the doctrines of Christianity, and he doesn't really fit in within the tribe anyway. Nneka also has her own reasons for conversion. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe never accepts that Christianity has been fully recognized, even by the converts.

The people of Umuofia find it difficult to arrive at a firm conclusion as to their opinion of the whites. To the end they remain ambiguous, for example, they like the wealth and new found value that white trade brings a strong reminder of the missionaries' role to find a substitute for slaves. The narrator explains:

...White man had not only brought a religion but also a government. It was said that they had built a place of judgment in Umuofia to protect the followers of their religion. It was even said that they had hanged one man who killed a missionary (150).

Yet they cannot reconcile themselves with white intrusion and indirect rule through a district officer. Perhaps the reason for this ambiguity and uncertainty lies in the

difficulty in finding a language or a voice for expressing and describing white intervention. Such was the clash of cultures involved in the colonization of Nigeria that even the language had to alter to accommodate it. In many cases, this alteration brought about a silencing of native dialects and a loss of indigenous voice. This is potently reflected towards the close of the novel with Achebe's assertion in *Things Fall Apart* that "even now they have not found the mouth with which to tell of their suffering" (145). It is a disintegration of an African culture as a result of European intervention.

Achebe conveys his point of view on the interview taken by Katie Bacon for the magazine *Atlantic Unbound* as, "The narrator in *Things Fall Apart* remarks that the white man has put a knife on the things that held us together, and we have fallen apart. Are those things still severed, or have the wounds begun to heal?" Achebe answered:

What I was referring to there, or what the speaker in the novel was thinking about, was the upsetting of a society, the disturbing of a social order. The society of Umuofia, the village in *Things Fall Apart*, was totally disrupted by the coming of the European government, missionary Christianity, and so on. That was not a temporary disturbance; it was a once and for all alteration of their society. The Igbo people had organized themselves in small units, in small towns and villages, each self-governed. With the coming of the British, Igbo land as a whole was incorporated into a totally different polity, to be called Nigeria, with a whole lot of other people with whom the Igbo people had not had direct contact before. The result of that was not something from which you could recover, really. You had to learn a

totally new reality, and accommodate yourself to the demands of this new reality, which is the state, called Nigeria. Various nationalities, each of which had its own independent life, were forced by the British to live with people of different customs and habits and priorities and religions. (2)

The missionaries and churches replaced the traditional rituals. Achebe has been a significant and binding source for an engaging understanding of African pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history and realities. We believe that such insight has made him a favorite scholar and regular folk searching for a better, realistic understanding of Africa, and for this, utilizing his rich and dynamic Igbo ancestry, in southeastern Nigeria. Missionary group specifically came to Africa to completely change the lives of the natives. This, they argued, was the whole point of conversion-everything had to change.

Indigenous Myth, Oral Tradition and *Things Fall Apart*

Achebe an Igbo person believes in community, Story telling, ancestral feast, different kinds of ceremonies and makes an extensive use of those cultural traits in most of his narratives.

Throughout the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe has attempted to describe the intricacies of the lifestyle of the Igbo, a thriving culture living in Nigeria. The novel produces impressive and beautiful artifacts in music, dance and above all, in conversation, "Proverbs are the palm-oil with which the words are eaten" (11). Many interesting and meaningful proverbs have been injected into the narrative of the novel. For example "The sun will shine on those who stand, before it shines on those who kneel under them" (26), and "A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing" (45), "Eneke says that since men have learnt to fly without perching" (56), and

"The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did" (74) and many more. A religion that is both mysterious and homely is revealed. Its vitality calls upon the sincerity of its followers who support it with a lot of conviction. At the same time, Achebe also informs the reader about life in the tribe, its customs, manners, its government and its administration of justice, its religious rites and beliefs, etc. A town crier always announces a meeting of the tribe where important decisions are made. Men and women with loathsome diseases are abandoned in the Evil Forest. Unoka, Okonkwo's own father, suffers this fate. The reader is also informed about the agricultural pattern- the Week of Peace, the planting of the Yams, the New Yarn feast, followed by the dry season - The Harmattan - and the exquisite taste of locusts. Medical help, both herbal and psychological treatment, is made out for illnesses. Ezinma was believed to be out of danger when the medicine man found her iyi-uwa. However when she later falls sick, Okonkwo prescribes a herbal brew which relieves Ezinma's fever.

Many folk-tales are related in the novel, like the story of the tortoise, the tortoise and the cat, which reveal the strange nuances of their society and culture as well as the importance of stories and their pedagogical value. Morals and values are described through these seemingly simple tales of animals. Social customs such as marriage-ceremonies, funeral arrangements, and the gaining of titles are described in great detail to give the reader a glimpse of the way of life of Igbo, especially that of the clan members of Umuofia. Although many of these customs are similar throughout Igbo culture, it is important to remember that each village develops its own customs and rituals as well as dialects and that many villages were often at warfare with each other. These differences were exploited by the colonialists who often pitied clan against clan to gain control over their villages.

The entire way of life of a particular people, including its customs, religions, ideas, are based on the culture of particular community, Africans are inspired by what they do at the rituals, they also prefer to be tangible like invisible spirits of their culture. Because of this reason, they create a sculpture which serves as a medium giving access to the spirit world. The figures of ancestors and spirits, masks, and other cult objects are used for this purpose. Ancestors' figures symbolize tribal heroes. These figures are inspired with power, which provide the link between God and man. The inspired figure is supposed to mediate fertility, riches and the blessing of children, and makes its advice and will get known by the use of certain signs. Some tribes believe that the spirit of the ancestor is present in the image only during the ritual, while others believe the figure as being constantly indwelt by the soul of the tribe, as long as sacrifice and worship is offered at regular intervals.

Among the Igbos an excellent wrestler is one who wins not only in the human world but also in the world of spirits. Thus Okonkwo's ability at wrestling is aptly compared to that of "the founder of the town" who according to folktale, "engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights" (3). The didactic animal tale appears in almost all Achebe's novels. In *Things Fall Apart* the tales of the "wily tortoise" (38, 67) expose the wicked nature of beings, and the story of the "mother kite" shows the folly of the people of Abame (98). Such tales also point out the indifference and inconsiderateness of human beings. The story of the leopardess illustrates the "ill effects of greed" (53). Men's and women's stories illustrate male and female values. While Okonkwo's stories exemplify warfare and violence in order to inculcate courage in children, (37,53). Ekwefi's "stories of the mosquito" (53), Obiageli's "unending chain tale" are meant for entertainment (*Things* 65).

Legend is one of the many elements that occupies prominent place in *Things Fall Apart*. Several of them concern the origin of "Ulu" (157), the legend of "Idemili" (41), the legends of "Egwugwu" (63). These are a few of the many legends mentioned. Since market is important in the Ibo society, market legends are also mentioned. The popularity of the legends shows that the traditions of the clan are kept alive.

The elaborate description of various ceremonies gives us a chance to have a closer look at the well-developed symbolic view of religion in ancient societies. They also lend charm to the narrative as do the stars to the night sky. Some interesting ceremonies include the appearance and proceedings of the Egwugwu.

Igbo people are bounded with various cultures like naming ceremony, feasting, marriage etc. Those culture and ceremony are conscious and systematic. The narrator describes the Egwugwu ceremony:

Large crowds began to gather in the village as soon as they had worn off the sun's heat and it was no longer painful on the body. Most communal ceremonies took place at that time of the day ... crowd stood or sat...An iron sounded, setting up a wave of exception in the crowd ... a powerful flute blew a high-pitched blast. Then came the voices of the egwugwu, guttural dren ... The egwugwu house into which they emerged faced the forest, away from the crowd, who saw only its back with the many colored patterns and drawings done by specially chosen women at regular intervals...Aru oyim de de de dei! flew around the dark, closed hut like tongues of fire. The ancestral spirits of the clan were abroad... Each of the nine egwugwu represented a village of the clan. Their leader was called Evil Forest. (63)

Another element that contributes to the success of Achebe's fictional art *of God* is his subtle use of English to suit the African sensibility, Ezulu's speech to Oduche has a distinct African style:

I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying Had we known tomorrow. (45-46)

An example of Achebe's use of customs appears in the description of the treatment given to a guest. Upon entering a friend's, Obi, a guest is seated either on a goatskin mat or on an earthen stool. Then he is given a piece of chalk with which "he draws his emblem on the floor and paints his toe or face. The bond of goodwill is complete with the passing of the kola around, and sharing its content" (5).

The description of Okonkwo's obi and shrine Okonkwo's prosperity was visible in his household. He had a large compound enclosed by a thick wall of red earth. His own hut, or obi, stood immediately behind the only gate in the red walls. Each of his three wives had her own hut, which together formed a half moon behind the obi. The barn was built against one end of the red walls, and long stacks of yam stood out prosperously in it. At the opposite end of the compound was a shed for the goats, and "each wife built a small attachment to her hut for the hens ... the medicine house,--wooden symbol of his personal god and of his ancestral spirit. He worshipped them with sacrifice of Kola nut- food and palm-wine, and offered prayers to them on behalf of himself"(11). The use of idioms lends Achebe's language and style a native flavour and force, besides giving us a close and convincing picture of a

society in transition, this technique helps his characters sound natural while speaking an alien tongue. A few such idioms deserve our attention.

Frequent references to flora and fauna imply the proximity of the Igbos to nature. For examples "Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan" (3), and he "drank palm wine from morning till night and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor" (44); "He felt like a drunken giant walking with the limbs of a mosquito" (44); "Okonkwo felt as if he had been cast out of his clan like a fish onto a dry sandy beach, panting" (92), "Obierika's house is as busy as an ant hill, "The earth burned like hot coals" (17)etc.

Yam is also used as a metaphor for manliness, as in "Yam the king of crops was a man's crop" (16), and "yam stood for manliness, and he could feed his family on yams from one harvest to another was a very great man indeed" (23). "Ikemefuna grew rapidly like a yam tendril in the rainy season" (37). Similarly, kola symbolizes prosperity, "He who brings kola brings life" (5). Imagery of fire is used for a greater effect Okonkwo is called "Roaring Flame and a flaming fire" (108).

Africans feel that their life forces can be controlled through their good deeds. Their rituals and ceremonies enforce these beliefs. They feel that through sins the life force is taken away and misfortune is brought down. Sickness, fires, conflicts, and premature death are regarded as the consequences of evil actions. There is a magician or witch found in each tribe who has been designated the powers to remove evil spirits from the villagers. The witch or magician uses sinister activities to remove these evil spirits. The whole community becomes involved in an effort to restore sacred order as well as prosperity to their village. It is at this point that the Africans develop a devoted commitment to these figureheads - having made this commitment.

They feel that they are under the protection of the divine powers. According to the Africans' beliefs, even- new phase of human life is inaugurated by magical practices. These practices are very lengthy and quite detailed at the time of death, which is regarded as particularly dangerous and sinister. Africans are afraid of the souls of the dead, because they believe that the powers of the soul (if someone to whom injury was done during his life and those powers were not released in death are now intent on doing harm by using a revengeful force. Through the ritual of burial, they attempt to rid the soul of uncanny comings and goings of the ancestral spirits. It is during these ceremonies that they call on the souls who are favorably inclined towards them for counsel and help.

In some Umuofia there is a priest or medicine man who is believed to be able to create a force which causes the divine power to flow and control its people in a meaningful way. The medicine man undergoes a long period of training, studies practical means of healing, and tests the effectiveness of plants and minerals to be used as treatment of illnesses. He is regarded as a wise man who knows how to convince the use of his methods to heal his victim. He also has the ability to appear in a mysterious and uncanny form. He has a recipe for every circumstance of life, which is used effectively until new signs of danger call for more magic. Due to the fact that everyone who is having difficulties turns to the priest, he is the one person in a village who is aware of all the troubles of that village. Being in that position, this provides the priest with enough knowledge and power to give genuine advice, warning, and help. In many parts of Africa the priest is assisted by a secret society. The secret society is a social and religious organization, which provide most opportunities.

Achebe melds together elements of the tradition and Igbo oral culture. Kwame Anthony Appiah writes:

For in exploring the moment at which European culture and military power began to take over the world of his own ancestors- Achebe is examining a crucial moment in modern human history. a moment whose importance is particularly compelling for readers in the post-colonial worlds of Africa and Asia. Yet all of us, wherever we live can share the fascination of watching a culture very different from that of the modern West response in its local way to the global process through which all human cultures have story from different directions, depending on where we live. remember T.S. Eliot's wise words: although it is only too easy for a writer to be local without being universal. I doubt whether a poet or novelist can be universal without being local too'... Not only does Achebe draw a compelling picture of life in one part of Iboland before the arrival of Christianity and colonialism; he manages to convey to all of us, Igbo or not, both the tragedy of the loss of that world and the possibilities created by the new situation. (*Things* xii)

When the British arrived and pacified the region, they did so with a great deal of brutality and practice of communal punishment. For the Igbo, justice and fairness are matters of great importance. They have complex social institutions that administer justice in fair and rational ways, but the coming of the British upsets that balance. Although the British claim that local laws are barbaric, and use this claim as an excuse to impose their own laws- we soon see that British law is hypocritical and inhumane. The final events leading up to Okwonko's death concern the miscarriage of Justice under the British district Commissioner. The elegant Igbo culture is demolished with the death of the protagonist Okwonko.

IV. Conclusion

Origin and developments of culture in a community depends on the landscape, the natural phenomena where they have to live with, and the interaction with another community they are in occasional contact, and moreover on the festivals and observance of some religious activities under a particular culture. Culture, therefore, develops in accordance with what the community accepts as possible and what they believe to be the way, they think, is long lasting.

Now the question arises why people tend to give up the traditional way of life and adopt the one that they think is better than they have been following.

Intellectually, politically and economically developed community of people like to extend their boundary of the place they live in. In course of extending the boundary they like to impress the people they come in contact. They make them intoxicated by providing comforts and luxuries of life. Consequently the culture of the community of people witnesses the drastic change and sometimes, even the replacement of their traditional system of life.

Imperialistic attitude of British people brought about drastic changes in the cultures of the people they defeated. The Portuguese, French and many more countries had the same result in the places they went. So culture of a community of people does not remain the same as it was originally adopted. Culture changes or gets distorted if the people coming from another place have their control over the people they defeat, it is this distortion that brings about unruly system in the people. It takes time to make the distortion to congenial form. Distortion of culture brings about changes in many of the aspects of people's life.

Therefore, culture is a very important phenomenon to build up an ideal society. In *Things Fall Apart* Igbo community appears to be an ideal culture. But the

sudden emergence of white culture dismantles the harmony and leads to the conflict. In the novel Achebe projects imperialist brutality and condescension. The order of the society is disrupted with the appearance of imperialist Achebe shows Igbo society before and after the coming of the white man. He has idealized the past of Igbo where as the present is ugly and unsatisfactory because of the economic, political and social contradictions created by colonialism. African writers claim that trade and business policy of colonialism are directly benefited towards colonizers. Roads were built to make business possible and in such other activities any catering to African interests was purely accidental. The natives merely remained as worker. They have to suffer from western hypocrisy and commercial materialism so that the social structure of peaceful society is completely changed. Christianity, missionary education and colonial administrative system were imposed upon the natives. Religious missionary has tried to convert the people of lower level by sending evangelist. Slowly they have opened school and churches. Converters are only allowed to go to the school. The Igbo society is guided towards colonialism. Colonialism perpetuated cultural imperialism by setting up 'whiteness', and its values as a superior quality to be possessed by the natives.

In the novel, Okonkwo is a defiant figure who resists the attempts of the white colonizers to impose on his clan a new religion and social order. Okonkwo's defiance stems from his fear of the white men's destructive potential on the social hierarchy and religion of the clan. Okonkwo's fear is presented when he first encounters the missionaries of the new religion in the village of Mbanta. The interpreter of the white missionary was a man of commanding presence and the clan listened to him. The fact that the clansmen are listening to the interpreter makes Okonkwo fear that some villagers might believe what the missionary is saying.

This fear compels Okonkwo to stay, in the hope of chasing the missionaries out of the village. Okonkwo's fear does not subside until several clansmen laugh at the missionaries and he feels there is no danger of anyone being converted. Okonkwo violently resist the new religion because it has the potential of undermining the life long work of the clan trying to please the gods of its ancestors. One of Okonkwo's greatest fears about the new religion is that it could destroy the social hierarchy, of the clan because none of his converts was a man whose word was heeded in the assembly of the people. None of them was a man of title. They were mostly the kind of people called *efulefu*, worthless, empty men. By joining the new religion, these "worthless" men are dismissing the social order of the clan, and gaining respect and power in the new society. In this sense, the underclass of the tribe are having a revolution, where the elitist, title holders in the clan are no longer respected, and further, the members of the underclass who have converted are considered to be worthless men. If the social hierarchy of the clan no longer existed, Okonkwo would lose his status and respect among the clan. By the end of the novel, many of Okonkwo's fears have been realized, and the social order of the clan falls apart.

Imperialist culture operates and attempts at destroying the essential elements of the culture of the dominated people for its own security. Achebe shows that the culture of the colonized people is a culture of resistance and that it historically opposes the culture of the oppressor even through the counter-revolution and violence. In a way the natives and colonizers, both are inclined towards violence. The protagonist losing the power to hold on to the things in the war suffers from frustration and finally commits suicide.

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