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Identity Crisis In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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ABSTRACT

The current Nigerian author Chinua Achebe is regarded as one of the key characters in the continent's Anti-Colonial literature. His unique approach to colonial challenges in Africa and use of creative language set his writings apart from other writers. *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe's debut work, is the clearest example of this trait in him. This is a notable work of Postcolonial literature that explores what happens to a powerful Nigerian during colonialism, providing hitherto unseen insight into African culture. In *Things*, Chinua Achebe in order to inspire confidence, *Fall Apart* symbolizes the Igbo's cultural origins. And the many themes his works cover are culture and colonialism, politics, tradition and history. Tradition is significant in *Things Fall Apart* because the book serves as an example of how traditions of a civilization should be upheld. When people from other cultures start to invade a society and put the native culture in jeopardy, it is more crucial than ever to preserve the traditions of such nations. *Things Fall Apart* deals with how the prospect and reality of change affect various characters. This paper assigns the concept of tradition in *Things Fall Apart*.

Keywords: Tradition, Colonialism, Culture and History.

Introduction

This paper's major goal is to show how the tradition can be applied to *Things Fall Apart*. Additionally, white people and Christianity might have an impact during the postcolonial era. And also the study demonstrates how Igbo tribes change of tradition in the 21st century. So, simply, let's examine the idea behind Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*.

Post Colonialism

Post Colonialism is the period of time after the colonialism in which the British Empire dominated in many countries. Post colonialism is also a set of theories regarding art and culture dealing colonialism problem. The Post-Colonial age refers to the period since 1945 and it can involve a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects.

Social Novel-Things Fall Apart

Things Fall Apart, a significant piece of postcolonial literature, provides previously unrepresented insight into African culture by describing what happens to a powerful Nigerian during colonization. It is a powerful and complicated political statement about cross-cultural interactions as well as a tragic and moving story about a person set in the larger backdrop of the arrival of colonialism. The poem *The Second Coming* by W.B. Yeats serves as the inspiration for the title *Things Fall Apart*. Nigeria was the setting for the Igbo tribe's way of life when the tide of colonization swept across Africa. The story of Okonkwo, the son of a failure, who is resolved to succeed and uphold tradition rather than become a failure like his father, is told throughout the book. But as implied by the title, things go wrong in his life. To understand the crux of the novel and to judge the writings of Achebe this statement would be helpful, "There is no story that is not true, [...] The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others." (Achebe 63)

Roles of Tradition

Tradition refers to the transmission of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes from one generation to the next generation. A given ethnic group's customs, rituals, beliefs, folklore, and habits are collectively referred to as its tradition. Because the idea of the social experiences that come from a community is universal, tradition is still the common key concept when we talk about culture. A historic method of communication

used to convey a specific message about a human action rooted in culture is the use of distinctive language to communicate with the social group in both oral and written form.

The Concept of Tradition in *Things Fall Apart*

The novel focus on tradition and the simple life of Igbo society. It is all about human conditions in different socio-historical states and in the series of events in a universal novel (Kadhem 83). Author Chinua Achebe from Nigeria wrote the *Things Fall Apart* novel, which was published in 1958. It makes use of the idea of tradition. Conflicts over individual practices and beliefs, as well as battles over religion, culture, and family, are experienced by the individuals in the narrative. The protagonist Okonkwo's terrible downfall and the Igbo culture are both told in the novel. Okonkwo is a strong and well-respected chieftain in the Nigerian Ibo tribe. After defeating Amalinze in a duel, Okonkwo gained respect from the audience. His controlling and insensitive temperament, though, makes him a domineering husband and father to his wives and kids. Later, he develops great violence and starts acting independently. When personal conflicts and beliefs clash with the traditions of the white missionaries, everything starts to fall apart. In his novel *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe explored a number of concepts, such as the conflict between tradition and change, the repercussions of colonialism, masculinity, social decay, ambition, and a sense of justice.

Identity Crisis of Igbo tribes

Identity Crisis over the years was not given a lot of importance. But during the Post-World War period the concepts like Alienation, marginalization, paranoid and identity crisis were given a lot of importance. Since the world has changed mentally and physically mankind were in need of such aspects to uplift the lives. During this time a renowned psychologist Erik Erikson created a hypothesis regarding identity crisis as a psychosocial phase that adolescent people go through as they mature. He thought that going through an identity crisis as an adolescent is normal and even desirable, and that it leads to a greater level of maturity. As his words put-forth "In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity." (MSed)

Beginning of the novel, The way that Chinua Achebe depicts the changes that the white colonial government imposed to the social, political, and religious institutions affects the indigenous Ibo people's traditional ways of life. The author describes a complex Nigerian society with a government, a judiciary

system, a financial system, and a religion. The novel's chapters contain numerous instances of various traditional structures. For instance, chapter five depicts the Igbo community's typical traditional family structure, whereas chapter ten depicts a number of religious celebrations and manifestations. Religious beliefs and practices have a significant influence on the political and moral actions of those in positions of power.

The moral principles and worldviews that specify how humanity should relate to the physical forces of the earth have an impact on the characters in *Things Fall Apart*. Also, the Igbo community believes that there is a supernatural force that created everything on the universe. God also known as Chukwu to the Igbo people is the supernatural force. Agents of the species known as diviners and oracles convey the messages of the gods to the populace. The author claims that because some worshippers may sacrifice their sons, the Ibo people had a deep believe in the mystique of the gods.

Today many are well educated and work as civil servants and in business. Over a period of many years, over 1 million Igbo have migrated to other parts of Nigeria. There were many significant changes that the Igbo endured during colonization. With colonization came the introduction of Christianity. After Christianity was introduced the Igbo tribe experienced many changes, such as changes to weddings, jobs, and school systems. Odinani, the ancient religion of the Igbo, is being followed today. Christianity and traditional Igbo spirituality are both present in many Igbo people's religious activities.

Conclusion

There was a slight contrast between the post-colonial era and the current 21st Century, where most people may follow Christianity and westernizations (modern) while other individuals still adhered to Igbo custom. With colonialism and the Westernization of Igbo culture, Western styled clothes such as shirts and trousers over took traditional clothing. The negative impact of this change is becoming worrisome as it has seriously done much havoc not only to the Igbo culture but on the language as well. Therefore, compared to post-colonialism, it can bring about a lot of changes in the current century.

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