

# Social Issues and Unexpected Changes between the British and Igbo People Which Reflects in the Novels of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*

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**Abstract:-** In Chinua Achebe's magnum opus *Things Fall Apart* we see an authentic and civilized human society with strong bond within the Igbo society. Chinua Achebe's novels *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow Of God* to show how the European colonial power and traditional Igbo culture, background, and dealing with problem of socio-culture issue during the British European interference in the African country. This present research shows the reflection of two novels of Chinua Achebe's, social issue and changes during the Post colonization.

**Keywords:-** Igbo religion, Social issues, British company, *Things Fall Apart*, and *Arrow of God*.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The dominant theme of the major African writers has been an assessment of the impact of Africa's contact with the West. Both the social and cultural implications of this contact remained the major concern of most African writers (Chinua Achebe, 1989). Characteristically this meeting of Africa and Europe has been presented as a conflict. As we see in the works of Chinua Achebe, one of the Africa's leading novelists. He has earned multiple prestigious awards from around the world, including over twenty honorary doctorates from British universities, American, Canadian and Nigerian universities. In the year 1959, He was awarded the Margaret Wong Memorial Prize for his contribution to African writing, the Jack Campbell-New Statesman honour, Nigeria's highest intellectual achievement honour, and other honours. According to C.L Innes, he believes that Achebe's influence is especially visible on younger Igbo writers such as Chukwuemeke Ike, Flora Nwapa, Nkem Nwankwo, and John Munonye. These writers follow Achebe in "choosing for their settings traditional or changing rural communities, exploring the theme of the conflict between old and new values" (Chinua Achebe, 19).

Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* brought to light the different Igbo cultural values. While the novel was mainly about cultural contact and conflict between Igbo Africa and European whites, amongst the other values of Igbo culture, the theme of gender is obviously highlighted (*The Black Writer's Burden*, 1966). Gender roles have been vehemently grasped and presented in history in a way that

ought to be critically considered. In fact, the concept of masculinity and femininity has been made clear that individual tasks, agricultural crops and social crimes still differ in terms of qualities and gender classifications. For example, cultivation of crops that demand more energy, such as yam tubers, and activities such as firewood splitting were kept for men. Achebe's portrayal of the feminine gender has remained popular due to their widely viewed undignified roles in traditional Igbo society. There is a need for the discussion of Igbo culture and conflicts between the European culture, in the Novels of Chinua Achebe's.

## II. METHODS AND MATERIALS

### ➤ *African language and its Literature*

The Igbo community from African country, in which most of the people widely spoken language is African lingua francas. It is widely spoken in Nigeria (both pre and post colonisation), with an estimated eighteen to twenty-five million speakers, and is one of the few major languages in the Benue-Congo language family (Colonialist Criticism, 1999). Igbo, often spelt Ibo, is a Nigerian national language that is commonly used for business, inter-tribal communication, and politics (Insuwan, C. 2014). During the British colonial expansion, Igbo first gained international recognition. At first, Igbo members welcomed the British because the Europeans brought good trading business. However, in 1900, Britain deemed Igbo country to be a province of Europe and hence subject to colonisation. The meek Igbo people began to detest European dominance. Writer Don Ohadike says that "many Western Igbo towns had suffered economic, military, and political decline as a result of the combined activities of British traders, imperial agents, and Christian missionaries. This could explain why the earliest and greatest military engagements occurred in Western Igbo country" (253). When the missionaries and European explorer came to African continent, the social, cultural and language dynamics began to change in the society in two ways: linguistically first, and then through postcolonial literature second (Ukken, N. R. (2017). Reverend Smith's inability to comprehend and respect traditional Igbo culture generates a significant deal of friction between the church and the clan (Chi in Igbo Cosmology, 2014). Mr. Brown, on the other hand, is significantly more tolerant of the converts' retaining of parts of their previous ideas and does not make such a sharp

distinction between the converts and the Igbo community. Smith, on the other hand, insists that the converts' previous religious ideas be completely rejected. He "sees things as black and white," as the phrase goes. While this phrase alluded to an inability to comprehend the nuances in a given situation, it also alluded to race relations and colonial power.

Africa in the time of British imperialism exemplifies a land of convoluted language systems. Salikoko Mufwene explains that "languages are complex adaptive systems" (*Ecology* 156). The responsibility for a language's life, death, and strength will always lay with its speakers' judgements. Because of the multiplicity of languages and dialects, African translators frequently relied on Lingua Franca and a blend of regional languages to connect with the general people (Evanston, 1973). This postcolonial environment quickly influenced the production of literature. As trade flourished and Europeans began to live freely in Africa, the world began to shrink, but language use merely got more adaptive and, in some circumstances, more divided (Heinemann, 1985). One of the key drivers of mid-century disputes about language attitudes was the shifting tide of language dynamics. The nation was reorganised as a result of colonialism.

### III. RESULT & DISCUSSION

While many Africans felt threatened by the presence of Europeans within their borders, Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe recognised the potential of English in his Nigerian civilization and chose to use it as the major language in his literature (Ali et al., 2016). When scorned by Wa Thiong'o and his compatriots, Achebe stoutly affirms: "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" ("The African Writer and the English Language" 30). Achebe in one of the most acclaimed African novels, *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe writes the story of Okonkwo and Okonkwo's Nigerian tribe primarily in the English language. The story of *Things Fall Apart* is one that has united African literature, arguably more than any other work of African fiction. The two African writer were discussed about the social issue and problems between the Igbo community and European people, which is influenced by the novels. Williams contrasts Achebe's personality and achievement with those of the more acerbic and caustic author, V.S. Naipaul. According to Williams, Naipaul fails where Achebe succeeds because Naipaul cannot let go of his resentment and recognise that colonialism has altered Africa. He writes to his society but is unable to transcend it. Achebe, on the other hand, recognised that colonial rule in Africa would be permanent.

Achebe chose to write to Africans in a historical gesture of prophetic humility, but he wrote in English so that the rest of the world may participate in the African story. Williams justifies this foreknowledge as an embrace of humility that Naipaul could not muster. Naipaul, in a consistently pessimistic mindset, "abolishes the novel as a

viable art form in the coming epoch" (19) and vows that the African author and reader will have no place in the twenty-first century. Chinua Achebe, on the other hand, looks to the union of African storytellers and African people's collaborative endeavours to build African literature (Niba, N. G. (2022). (Tejumola Olaniyan, 1993) takes a reader-centered approach to Achebe's success. He argues that Achebe's writing can be reworked for twenty-first-century readers and audiences (Owomoyela, Oyekan, 1993). For example, Olaniyan mentions an anti-religious and notably anti-Christian verse in Achebe's *Arrow of God* (Ashcroft et al., 2003). Olaniyan argues that "Christianity, unlike Igbo religions, is monotheistic and thus selfish, jealous, violent (its military arm is the colonial administration), absolutist, tyrannical, and univocal," (24). Olaniyan's scathing report is not only wildly subjective and bitterly constructed, but he also fails to provide backup for his claim and fails to mention Achebe's personal interactions with Christianity from his early years in a missionary school, an important fact that could undermine Olaniyan's carefully constructed attack (Sharma et al., 1993). He says that *Arrow of God* of the two main characters are "consumed by colonialism and its Christianity whose main distinguishing feature is systemic parochialism" (27). (Olaniyan et al., 2002) argues against the postcolonial state and mourns the extinction of authentic African literature. He hails Achebe as a "indefatigable and visionary" prophet (28), a literary sage who predicted the end of African life and writing and strove to warn his readers of the impending calamity. If a reader accepts Olaniyan's piece without more biographical or historical investigation, he or she will be surprised to realise that Achebe respected much of colonial effect and lauded the English language as a gift to African literature. (Williams and Olaniyan, 2001) share a passion for fiction as a portal via which readers can experience the world of obscure African literature. Although their methods to understanding Achebe (1969) and Achebe (1965) are fundamentally opposed, they regard Achebe as a colossal figure in the modern African literary field. Williams values the power of authorial intent and biographical influence over literature. His reading philosophy promotes readers to appreciate authorial structures, whereas Olaniyan argues for the reader as meaning interpreter. (Sullivan, 2001) says that a novel "that reflects or mirrors the unique characters and experiences of the nation would then represent an example of national literature," and that "national literature demonstrate what is unique and special about one nation to its own citizens and concomitantly to the outside world" (74). This is the heart of African literary potential. Achebe's accomplishments as a novelist and part of the fledgling African canon have earned him the titles "Father of African Literature" and "Pillar of World Literature."

### IV. CONCLUSION

*Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are the two novels through which Chinua Achebe portrays the beginnings of the colonial process, and details the cultural and social alienation. Chinua Achebe's work *Things Fall Apart* draw a vibrant image of a Nigerian people, the Igbo, during the end of the nineteenth century, when British

colonisation of Africa began. Chinua Achebe's main accomplishment in the novel is accurately portraying a complex picture of African cultural tradition and identity from within the tradition itself, that is, by telling a story of the Igbo people that speaks for itself and sees life from the perspective of the Nigerian people rather than from the outside. Both novels are tragic in the sense that the protagonists' downfall symbolizes the disintegration of traditional Africa and its spirit as the result of British colonial incursions. It is obvious that Achebe, without being critical of Christianity as a religion, Achebe clearly criticises the methods used by white colonisers to degrade African culture. The African people has a lack of understanding to the new religion, and depends on their own views of the world, a fact that shows the complete inadequacy of preaching it in the first place: "It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow" (Achebe, 137). The novel about Africa that the Commissioner hopes to publish includes a small paragraph about Okonkwo's life, which demonstrates white people's misunderstanding of the complicated African culture. Okonkwo's misery, as shown in Achebe's novel, is thus the tragedy of the Ibo civilization as a whole, which crumbles under the new dominating white wave. The novel's most crucial theme is unmistakably the slow annihilation of Igbo culture, traditions, rituals, and religion beneath the overwhelming flood of white European civilisation.

➤ *Conflicts of Interest*

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

➤ *Orchid*

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