

# Cataclysmic change: A study of Chinua Achebe's novel "Things Fall Apart"

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## Abstract:

Societal change refers to the gradual evolution of human connections, behavior patterns, and cultural norms. Cultural and social institutions, beliefs, and regulations all progressively evolve, with far-reaching societal repercussions. These changes are not necessarily helpful, but they are important. A change in society can take years, if not centuries, of work. Change is inescapable in life. Man has been concerned by the process of change since time immemorial. Slavery and colonialism are stumbling blocks that everyone will encounter at some point in their lives. As a result, studying them becomes more engaging. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, social upheavals are a constant and engrossing theme. Through the characters, conflicts, and plots of Chinua Achebe, this essay analyses these winds of change historically, religiously, socially, culturally, and politically. This study tries to uncover these inconsistencies, flaws in current social and political systems, within the post-colonial interpretations that have come to dominate Chinua Achebe's tales. Achebe examines several categories in order to resolve these fundamental societal problems that are requirements for peace, including the relationship between the onset of conflict, crime, theft, damage, violence, and conflict situations. He acknowledges that societal disputes will continue to exist unless fundamental social processes are addressed.

**Keywords:** Change, Conflict, Violence, African culture, Struggle.

Chinua Achebe is considered as father of modern African literature. He is being credited as the key progenitor of African literary tradition since the publication of "Things Fall Apart" in 1958. He investigates these community issues critically and methodically, illuminating the many components of social development as well as the purposes and concerns of civil society. Art and literature are the most profound expressions of existence. They are critical terms in any culture, and art and literature have always had an impact on society, assisting in the shaping of its ever-changing culture. Capturing change and conducting study on social transitions has become an area of focus in recent years. Chinua Achebe's novel "Things Fall Apart" was chosen for study because it attempts to depict the changing lives of societies in transition. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a recurrent and absorbing read. This paper discusses the different perspectives on The European economy of form is abandoned in favor of an aesthetic that is more in tune with the rhythms of indigenous tribal life in Nigeria. Achebe castigates the European view that "art should be accountable to no one and justify itself to no one" in one of his collection of essays, "Morning still on Creation Day," instead embracing the African oral tradition's central idea that "art is and always has been at the service of man." "For the sake of humanity, our forebears created myths and narrated stories." Achebe was born in Igbo town of ogidi in south-eastern Nigeria to Christian parents. Achebe got engrossed by traditional African rituals and world religions as a university student and began creating stories. After graduation, he started working for the Nigerian broadcasting service and migrated to the Lagos shortly thereafter. Achebe pen down in English and has forefend the use of English in African literature as a "colonizers' language." In 1975, his novel "Darkness" instigated anger because it depicted Joseph Conrad as a "bloody racist." Achebe's debut novel is well acclaimed . "Things Fall Apart" is widely read novel in contemporary African literature. "The white man is quite intelligent; he arrived with his religion softly and peacefully. We found his stupidity amusing and allowed him

to remain. Our clan can no longer act like everyone else now that he has won our brothers. He has slashed the bonds that held us together, and we have disintegrated." *Things Fall Apart* is a novel about the impact of Western culture on African civilization. It was published in 1928. In a straightforward and engrossing novel, Chinua Achebe emphasizes the impositions of western society on indigenous people. The indigenous African is compared to the western way of life here. Achebe's goal while writing this novel was to unravel not only the African community's social and economic and social life, but also people of Africa are treated by supremacists. (Another illustration is Western thought.) Postmodern philosopher and thinker Roger Richard Rorty refers to these communities as "interpretative communities." Immediately apparent are the following questions: how does this other perceive the indigenous community to whom he or she previously had no access? How does the other perceive the indigenous community's belief system, knowledge base, and social structures? Is it possible to objectively interpret something? And what does this and other people's interpretation of indigenous societies imply? Chinua Achebe examines the aforementioned issues in relation to the community he depicts in his work "*Things Fall Apart*" with a critical analytical eye. Chinua Achebe's (*Things Fall Apart*) analysis of the evolving social structure appears to have a literary kinship. The change process is directly influenced by social and political institutions. Social structure and organizations have a significant influence on individual and society behavior. These structural alterations isolate individuals in a particular social position, resulting in imbalance of power and denial of fundamental human rights.

Without a doubt, the major theme of "*Things Fall Apart*" is change. This paradigm shift is investigated in terms of the effects on a society when presented with radical new ideas in law, politics, religion, economics, and social structure. These pressures find their occurrence frequently throughout history, not only when a relatively primitive society is invaded by forces of 'civilization,' but also when a country changes its political system (as in a revolution), or when, for example, an agriculture-based economy transforms into an industrialized economy. When significant changes occur in society, stress is generated, affecting every individual who lives there. Achebe has chosen to examine such changes through the lens of the society with which he is most familiar, that of his Ibo grandparents, and in doing so, he has painted a picture that has been replicated in dozens of countries (but perhaps most notably in Africa) over the last century, with minor variations. As a result, the reader's interest in his narrative is piqued beyond a cursory assessment of a small portion of West Africa. When such upheavals occur, violence is almost invariably one of the unavoidable consequences, whether little or major. Okonkwo's tragedy is one example of this heinousness. Though his tragedy will be remembered only as a footnote in history books by chance, we know that there must have been several comparable calamities that went unrecorded when similar intransigent individuals attempted to fight change. He was merely attempting to assist, describing what occurred factually and without assigning blame. As is amply established in the novel, Ibo traditional society was characterized by a high level of violence that was senseless except in the context of Ibo beliefs, and it is Nwoye's desire to see an end to this violence that motivates him to seek better things in the new order. The new order, however, is built and maintained by its own kind of violence, and Achebe makes no claim that this new form of violence is superior to the old: it is simply based on a different worldview. The Ibo law killed for religious reasons, at the direction of the God or Oracle, but the white man killed at the command of a man-made and man-made legal framework. While Achebe does not explicitly assert that the latter is preferable, he may suggest that it should be. The manifestations of each type and the resulting consequences are presented as facts, then re-created and brought to life through fiction. Achebe brings the two religions, Ibo and Christian, face to face through the debate between Mr Brown, the missionary, and Akunna. Akunna, with his strong common sense and Ibo theology, is more than a match for the Christian evangelist's book-learning, and he demonstrates in one of the novel's most sarcastic and cutting sections that there is actually very little difference between the two faiths. This depiction of the two religions exemplifies Achebe's balanced treatment of the novel's two radically different cultures.

We might suppose that, with a theme such as the cataclysmic transformation that occurred in traditional African society upon the entrance of the white man, Achebe would have addressed colonialism openly, particularly as the source of all of modern Africa's problems. He has proved through his books and seminars that he possesses a varied range of perspectives on the issue. On the other hand, he remains deafeningly silent in *Things Fall Apart*, preferring to describe the facts as they occurred, without choosing sides, and leaving his

readers to take their own judgments. It would take a pretty twisted reader to infer that everything that transpired in this novel was negative. It occurred, and it was inescapable. Some of it was excellent, but others were dreadful. Society as it had previously existed was bound to perish in Iboland. The impact it had on living, breathing human beings sparked Achebe's — and any true author's — curiosity. According to this article, inequities and defects in existing social and political structures combined into a powerful force within post-colonial interpretations. Achebe examines numerous categories, including the relationship between conflict beginning, crime, theft, destruction, violence, and conflict contexts, in order to address these critical societal issues that are necessary for peace. They acknowledge that social conflicts will persist unless these underlying social systems are addressed. This study highlights these community concerns and critically examines the different components of social development, as well as the objectives and concerns of civil society. Clearly, the mayor did not cause these harms, but rather police enforcement. It is obvious that if Sofia is at the helm of white society, violence is expected. (It's worth noting that Celie holds Harpo accountable for Sofia's arrest: "Had you not attempted to dominate over Sofia, the white folks would have never caught her" (200).) " Even whites who express a genuine concern for black people remain incapable of grasping the fundamental fact that black people are also human beings. Miss Millie, the mayor's wife, informs Sofia that she is prepared to spend Christmas with her family, but that her "treat" will be driving Miss Millie around and spending a few minutes with her children, owing to her poor driving abilities and racism toward black men (she refuses to let Jack, Odessa's husband, drive her home when her car becomes stuck). Eleanor Jane, Miss Millie's daughter, claims to have the greatest compassion for Sofia, but her primary objective appears to be to convince Sofia to venerate both her husband and her infant. Sofia must smack her across the face to convince her that Sofia's problems are not her concerns and that their relationship has always been one of compulsion rather than warmth. Eleanor Jane, on the other hand, undergoes a transformation and makes extraordinary attempts to aid Harpo, Henrietta and Sofia's youngest daughter, who is suffering from sickle-cell anaemia. Walker argues that, similar to gender divides, racial divides may be healed only when both parties see each other as equals.

## Conclusion

The widely held assumption that African culture is harsh and primitive is patently false. Expecting every other culture to flourish and evolve according to the Western model is a grave mistake. This may result in the erroneous belief that an unknown created world is composed of a single religion, culture, and language. This is not just an idiotic act, but it is also quite dangerous. African culture has never need a savior in the same way that the white man does. Already a developed democratic community with a strong indigenous culture, it has its own Igbo religion, an efficient pioneer-led administration, a money system, an artistic tradition, and legal institutions. It would have been left entirely alone and undisturbed, allowing it to mature, expand, and alter naturally in response to contemporary requirements.

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