



Post-Colonial Aspects and Representation of Post-Colonial Sensibility in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Dr. Prashantha Mandre

HOD & Assistant Professor

Department of English

LB & SBS College, Sagar

Email: prashanthamandre@gmail.com

Abstract

The phrase "post-colonial" refers to all cultures impacted by the imperial process, from the colonization movement to the present. Moreover, there is a deliberate departure from the established system, post-colonial criticism and theory examine the relationship between culture and imperialism. Post-colonial literature incorporates the cultural product as emerging from the experiences of colonization while jumping expressing or building a new identity. It is focused on regaining lost cultural understanding and raising awareness for the downtrodden. In the Indian context, post-colonialism also describes a variety of true genius communities that are representative of numerous ethnic groups. Through their publications, European authors destroyed the original perception of the colonists. They developed a discourse to examine the colonized people that went on to become the dominant and master discourse worldwide. In addition to using physical force and intimidation, the Europeans also used their "intellect" to subjugate the colonists. European authors questioned the identity of the conquered people while defending colonialism. Without even the slightest regard for their desires and emotions, they independently documented them in their books. the perception of the citizens of these nations.

They fabricated stereotypes about the inhabitants of Asia, Africa, and many other nations in order to bolster their authority under the pretext of civilization, culture, and education. By categorizing the colonized as barbaric, unethical, uncivilized, and so forth, they created a picture of them that suited their preferences. Achebe also attempts to address the colonial rhetoric in *Things Fall Apart* by portraying his birthplace, people, and culture as they truly are. It is evident from reading the book that Achebe believes it is his moral duty to reaffirm and renew Africa's illustrious heritage.

Key Words : Things fall Apart, Colonial, post-colonial, identity, Okanko, Imperialism & Chinua Achebe

Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe was born in Ogidi, Nigeria, on November 16, 1930, and passed away in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 21, 2013. He was well-known for his objective portrayals of the psychological and social confusion that results from imposing Western norms and values on traditional African society. His novels include a wide range of topics, from the first encounter of an African hamlet with a white man to the educated African's endeavor to establish a solid moral order out of the shifting ideals in a big metropolis. His special concern was emergent Africa throughout its times of crisis.

In Nigeria, Achebe was raised in the Igbo (Ibo) community of Ogidi. Following his studies in English and literature at University College (now the University of Ibadan), Achebe briefly worked as a teacher before joining the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation's staff in Lagos, where he held the position of director of external

broadcasting from 1961 to 1966. He and poet Christopher Okigbo cofounded a publishing house in Enugu in 1967. Okigbo died soon after in the Nigerian civil war for Biafran independence, which Achebe publicly backed. Along with fellow authors Gabriel Okara and Cyprian Ekwensi, Achebe gave lectures at universities throughout the United States in 1969.

After returning to Nigeria, he was hired as a research fellow at the University of Nigeria, where he taught English from 1976 until 1981 (he became a professor emeritus in 1985). He served as director of Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. and Nwankwo-Ifejika Ltd., two Nigerian publishers, starting in 1970. He relocated to the United States and taught at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, following a car accident in Nigeria in 1990 that left him largely paraplegic. Achebe left Bard in 2009 to become a professor at Providence, Rhode Island's Brown University. Colonialists denigrate and demean individuals by calling them savage and illogical. In many post-colonial histories, indigenous people are entirely disregarded. They attempt to defend their invasion and conquest of indigenous peoples' nations by denouncing and condemning their customs. Achebe's debut book, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), is about traditional Igbo life in his native country during the arrival of missionaries and colonial rule. Even if the previous order has already fallen, his main character is unable to

accept the new one

Discourse, a key perspective in post-colonial theory that tackles the relationship between power and knowledge, is credited to renowned post-structuralist author Michael Foucault. He thought that "all speech, whether it be written or spoken, is discourse and the foundation of the establishment of authority" (1138). Discourse-produced knowledge affects power.

The voice of voiceless, downtrodden, marginalized people who are willing to die for their cultural and social values which have been subjugated by the powerful ruling class is represented by post-colonial philosophy. Gayatri Spivak, a post-colonial theorist, asserts that underprivileged people may speak up and defend their rights if given the chance. However, like in *Things Fall Apart*, cultural hegemony and anti-colonial resistance are potent instruments of post-colonial thematic discourse that conjure the colonial experience of injustice and cruelty leading to the collapse of native norms and values. White people justify their animalistic nature by portraying Negroes in this way, which creates an antagonistic relationship between the ruling and the subjugated. In this regard, Frantz Fanon writes in *The Wretched of Earth*:

The violence with which the supremacy of White values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values are over the ways of life and of thought of the native mean that, in revenge, the native laughs in mockery when western values are mentioned in front of him. (35)

In revenge for the violence employed to maintain White dominance and the hostility that has permeated White values' triumph over Native American ways of life and thought, Native Americans laugh mockingly when Western standards are brought up in front of them. In short, culture is the collection of traditions, laws, and principles that shape our sense of self and location in the world. However, every human endeavor, from conception to death, is either entirely or partially focused on cultural legacy. Mathew Arnold views culture as "a way" of living, saying, "Culture is an essential element of the history of people." In the same way that a flower is a product of a plant, culture may be the result of this history (quoted in Ashcroft 160). From a political standpoint, culture as an artifact trumps other cultures by denying the validity of distinctions, so securing its status as the enduring culture in the eyes of the indigenous people.

The book offers a wealth of information about Igbo society and culture. It forecasts the consequences of colonialism as well as the destiny and future of Igbo culture and society. Achebe attempts to dispel Europeans' Eurocentric perception of those they deemed beneath them. They wanted the colonies to always remain subservient because they thought they were better than everyone else. Because the Orient was portrayed in such a dehumanizing manner, he or she would have thought that injustice, oppression, and inhumanity were all but normal and that they constantly had to deal with them.

In this regard, Edward Said says orient suddenly appeared lamentably under-humanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric, and so forth. A swing of the pendulum in one direction caused an equal and opposite swing back: the orient was undervalued. Orientalism as a profession grew out of these opposites, of compensation and corrections based on inequality, ideas nourished by and nourishing similar ideas in the culture at large. Indeed, the very project of restriction and restructuring besought scholarly, scientific treatment of the kind to be found in disciplines like philology, biology, history, anthropology, philosophy, or economics (Said 150).

Chinua Achebe's creativity is stimulated by his position between two distinct world orders and civilizations, one of which is his own and the other of which is completely alien and westernized. Achebe and his other writers of Africa developed a sense of belonging as a result of these factors. The African writers and the author themselves experienced an identity crisis as a result of the various cultures. In his heart, Achebe also desired to emphasize and depict his own culture rather than that of Europeans. Through this book, he tells the readers about his own culture and identity as well as how his people have adapted to it.

Among other concepts of post-colonial theory, such as culture, hybridity, subaltern, imitation, diaspora, displacement, and anti-colonial struggle, orientalism holds a major role. Orientalism is the projection of the relationship between Westerners and non-Westerners. It clearly reveals the colonists' obsession with local people, who were later perceived as oriental or foreign. Edward Said questions Westerners' views and prejudices with the release of *Orientalism* in 1978.

The Igbo people had their own legal system, which they inherited from their predecessors. The missionaries who were white attempted to replace the Igbo society's customary laws with their own when the villagers set fire to the church, the European or white missionaries' response was disgusting. They were attempting to impose their own culture and showed little regard for the rules and customs of the locals. These factors kept the two communities the locals and the colonists poles apart and caused a wide rift between them. The missionaries' claims to be a civilized and cultured people were contradicted by their behavior in the community of Umuofia. The inherent values and the culture embedded in them was shattered after being suddenly violated by the Europeans. Frantz Fanon says:

"To fight for national culture first of all means fighting for the liberation of the nation, the tangible matrix from which culture can grow. One cannot divorce the combat for culture from the people's struggle for liberation National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is alone capable of giving us an international dimension. This question of national consciousness and national culture takes on a specific dimension in Africa" (Fanon 168-179).

Things Fall Apart endorses the literary movement's pragmatic viewpoint, which sees writing as a reflection or mirror of society. The novel takes place on the periphery of social events and happenings that are motivated by cultural ideals and the decline of Igbo culture due to colonialism. The Umuofia Culture shapes the society in which the story is situated. Culture has a major role in Igbo civilization and directly influences the morality and discipline of society.

The narrator claims that physical strength, labor, and diligence are the foundations of societal prestige. Okonkwo, the protagonist of the book, wins wrestling bouts and receives honors. "Harmattan" refers to fighting and wrestling. On the other hand, Unoka, Okonkwo's father, seems to be the complete opposite—lazy, excessively indebted, and an ignored Igbo figure who passes away without a title.

"When Unoka died, he had taken no titles and was heavily in debt," the narrator describes Unoka's pitiful moment in the book. It makes sense that Okonkwo, his son, was embarrassed of him (50).

To Okonkwo, his son, he appears to be the opposite. Human sacrifice as retribution for punishment is the foundation of Umuofian society. Human sacrifice is therefore regarded as socially acceptable and ritually endorsed behavior. O'Reilly (2001) states that when a writer approaches a postcolonial text, they are aware of several important issues, such as "the use of indigenous cultural traditions, the appropriation of English, and the impact (whether cultural, psychological or political) of colonialism and its aftermath" (p. 61). Achebe carefully and effectively addresses these three main concerns in *Things Fall Apart*. The "cultural traditions" of the native Igbo people are depicted in this book. It illustrates how colonialism affected Igbo culture, psychology, and politics. Thus, the novel "presents one of the most powerful nationalist cultural projects which affirms the integrity of indigenous culture and provides a rationale for its beliefs that is understandable from both the perspective of an inhabitant of Umuofia and that of metropolitan student of literature in modern-day London" (Msiska 174). The suicide of Okonkwo conveys his steadfastness or the finale of his pride which destroys him. Through this episode, Achebe conveys us the continuous conflict and confrontation between two different cultures and civilizations and the exploitation of one at the cost of another.

The syntactic and grammatical rules of the language used to construct a discourse are without a doubt its most noticeable aspect, whether it is written or spoken. Sequentially, it is impossible to dispute language's crucial role

in the creation of a national literature and identity. Because African oral literature had historically moved in a very different direction from what was thought to be the mainstream of modern literature in Europe, the issue of a proper African written language gained double significance in the 1950s and 1960s, when the African movements for independence were reaching their climax. This gap was caused by a lack of written literature or literary history. In actuality, the need came up as a result of non-African.

Criterion of criticism on Africa's oral history by people who didn't fully comprehend the continent's pre-colonial literary history. Thus, it is easy to understand why Achebe's primary project was to demonstrate via his writings the importance of finding an appropriate vocabulary for African literature and criticism that might enlighten readers, writers, and critics of both African and non-African descent. Achebe's success in the case of a proper language stems from his clear understanding of the nature of African (Nigerian) oral traditions and their capacities, as well as the disjunction imposed by the clash between pre-colonial traditions and the modernity of the civilization promoted by the white newcomers, which had caused the Africans living in the areas that had previously been included in the mainstream of oral African literature to become somewhat forgotten.

One of *Things Fall Apart*'s most notable discursive elements stems from the creative application of Igbo proverbs through a literal translation that stays true to Standard English. In actuality, even non-Igbo English readers of the book who have little to no knowledge of Igbo culture and its linguistic characteristics can easily understand those proverbs despite their estrangement due to the careful syntactic modifications and vocabulary selection.

References

1. Abd-Rabbo M. Overlapping Character Variations in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. *Journal of Narrative Theory*. 2019;49(1):55-81.
2. Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. William Heinemann Ltd., 1958. English.
3. Alam M. Reading Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* from the Postcolonial Perspective. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2014.
4. Dingwaney, Anuradha. "Post-Colonialism: Decolonizing the African Mind in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*." *Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe* (2000).
5. Kenalemang LM. *Things fall apart: An analysis of pre and post-colonial Igbo society*.
6. Kosasih MM. A Stylistic Analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*. 2019 Sep 8;4(5).
7. Leach J. A Study of Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" in Mid-America. *The English Journal*. 1971 Nov 1;60(8):1052-6.
8. Salami, Ali. "Things Fall Apart and Chinua Achebe's Postcolonial Discourse." *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* (2018): 19 .