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**Cultural Identity in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*:
A Practical Study**

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a
Master 'degree in Literature and Civilisation**

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Abstract:

With the emergence of cultural diversity as a new concept following the widespread of new Communication technologies, the question of cultural identity increasingly becomes in the focus. The effect of colonization dominates almost every aspect of the conquered populations. In an attempt to have a close view of the effect of colonial power on African cultural identity and social life, this paper aims through Achebe's first postcolonial novel *Things Fall Apart*, to reveal how African societies undergo the transformation in terms of culture and identity as a consequence of the British colonization. It investigates what cultural values Africans had before the arrival of the white man. The present work also exposes Achebe's perception and views on cultural identity reflected throughout the selected novel, in the aftermath of political independence. This study takes as a corpus written sentences and expressions collected from the cited novel, as an approach of analysis. One of the research findings confirms that identity issues are a central topic in literature which can be an expose about who the African is.

Keywords: Cultural, Identity, African, Postcolonial, Achebe, Novel

Dedication

Dedication:

This dissertation is a testament to the unwavering love and support of my parents, whose prayers enveloped me until I reached this milestone. In their eyes, I find strength to navigate life's obstacles with ease.

To my beloved husband, whose steadfast presence illuminated every step of my journey—from struggles to triumphs. Your boundless love and encouragement sustained me through the rigors of graduate studies, teaching me the essence of perseverance.

Thank you for being my rock, for believing in me when doubt clouded my path. I hope to have made you proud.

And to my siblings, and all who share in my joy, your pride fuels my ambition. This work is dedicated to you who run wavering belief in my potential.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

General Introduction:

In the heart of late 19th-century Nigeria, within the tranquil embrace of Umuofia, Chinua Achebe unfurls the tapestry of his novel *Things Fall Apart*. Here, before the intrusion of outsiders, the Ibo clan thrives in the embrace of age-old customs—adoration of deities, communal bonds, the dance of warfare, and the whispered secrets of magic. At its helm stands Okonkwo, a beacon of leadership revered for his valor and accomplishments. Yet, even the mightiest are not immune to the consequences of misfortune. When Okonkwo's hand unintentionally brings tragedy, the tribe, bound by tradition, decrees his exile. Seven years pass, marked by the encroaching shadows of foreign beliefs and bureaucratic influence. Upon Okonkwo's return, he confronts a fractured community, torn asunder by the clash of tradition and the allure of change.

Achebe masterfully navigates this tumultuous terrain, sculpting a narrative where the struggle between old ways and new ideologists palpable. Through his characters, he paints a poignant portrait of dual tragedies—the personal and the cultural. Readers are drawn not only to Okonkwo's individual plight but also to the collective unraveling of Ibo heritage.

Things Fall Apart transcends its origins, speaking not just to Nigerians but to all who grapple with the loss of identity. Published in 1958, its resonance initially

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eluded many, yet as Nigeria claimed independence in 1960, Achebe's opus found its rightful place in the annals of African literature, heralded for its illumination of a nation's soul.

Two research questions are sought in the space of this dissertation

- How is the African identity represented in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*?
- What are the issues of culture and identity in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*?

This research work tests the following hypotheses:

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* speaks in artistic and ideological ways about Igbo culture and the clash of Western and traditional African values during the colonial era. the effects of colonization in the countries which have been submitted to it particularly Nigeria show the deterioration of national and cultural identity.

This research relies on two chapters to explore Chinua Achebe's magnum opus, *Things Fall Apart*, as a key work of world literature. The first chapter sheds powerful light on the complexities of African culture long suppressed by Western narratives and attempts to link culture to literature. Rather, chapter two represents cultural outlooks in the sample novel where the novelist Achebe explains the discourse on African culture in literature.

Chapter One:

Culture and African Literature

Chapter One: Culture and African Literature

1-1 Introduction:

Culture is the living, breathing essence that defines the soul of people, woven intricately in to every aspect of their existence like threads in a vibrant tapestry. Within the realm of African literature, particularly exemplified in Chinua Achebe's masterwork *Things Fall Apart*, culture emerges not merely as a backdrop, but as the beating heart around which the narrative pulsates. It is a testament to the richness, complexity, and resilience of African societies, offering a profound glimpse into their traditions, values, and struggles in the face of colonial intrusion.

As we embark on this exploration of culture and African literature through the lens of *Things Fall Apart*, we embark on a journey beyond mere storytelling. We delve into the very soul of Africa; navigate in gitslush land scapes and intricate social structures, while grappling with the profound questions of identity, belonging, and the clash of civilizations.

In Achebe's magnum opus, we encounter not just characters on a page, but embodiments of cultural heritage, grappling with the seismic shifts brought forth by the arrival of colonial powers. Through Okonkwo's journey, we witness the tensions between tradition and change, the collision of ancient customs with the encroachment of foreign ideals. Yet, amidst the upheaval, there remains an indomitable spirit, a resilience born from generations of cultural wisdom and collective memory.

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Things Fall Apart serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring power of culture, even in the face of adversity. It beckons us to reflect on our own cultural inheritances, inviting us to confront the complexities of our identities and the narratives that shape our understanding of the world.

As we immerse ourselves in the pages of Achebe's masterpiece, let us embark with open hearts and minds, ready to traverse the vast landscapes of Africa and the human experience, guided by the beacon of culture and illuminated by the timeless wisdom of literature.

Culture Defined:

In *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, culture is not merely a backdrop but a vibrant character itself, shaping the lives and destinies of the Igbo people in pre-colonial Nigeria. Through Achebe's masterful storytelling, we witness the intricate tapestry of traditions, beliefs, and customs that define the essence of the Igbo culture.

One poignant example that illustrates the significance of culture is the ritual of the New Yam Festival. Achebe writes, "**The New Yam Festival was approaching and Umuofia was in a festival mood.**" (Achebe 26) This annual celebration marks the beginning of the harvest season and serves as a time of thanksgiving and renewal for the community.

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The festival is a manifestation of the Igbo people's deep connection to the land and their agrarian way of life. It underscores their reverence for nature and the cyclical rhythms of existence.

Furthermore, Achebe explores the intricate social structure of the Igbo society, particularly through the concept of "chi," or personal destiny. As the protagonist Okonkwo grapples with his own fate, he reflects, "**When a man says yes, his chi says yes also.**" (chapter 4). This belief in the interconnectedness of individual will and divine providence highlights the spiritual dimensions of Igbo culture and the importance of ancestral wisdom in guiding human affairs.

However, Achebe also portrays the complexities and contradictions within Igbo culture, especially in the face of colonial intrusion. The arrival of European missionaries disrupts age-old traditions and precipitates a clash of values and worldviews. Okonkwo's struggle to maintain the integrity of his cultural heritage in the wake of colonialism reflects the broader theme of cultural identity under siege.

Ultimately, *Things Fall Apart* offers a profound meditation on the nature of culture and its enduring power to shape human experience. Through vivid imagery and rich characterization, Achebe invites readers to delve into the heart of Igbo society and contemplate the universal truths embedded within its customs and rituals.

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1-3 African Literature Defined:

"In the vast tapestry of world literature, African storytelling emerges as a vibrant thread, weaving tales of resilience, tradition, and the intricate dance between the old and the new. At its heart lies the seminal work of Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, a literary monument that not only captures the essence of African narratives but also reshapes the landscape of global literature.

Within the pages of Achebe's masterpiece, we traverse the rich tapestry of Igbo culture, where oral tradition reigns supreme, and the pulse of community beats in harmony with the rhythms of the land. Through the life of Okonkwo, a man both haunted and propelled by the shadows of his ancestry, we witness the delicate balance between individual aspirations and the collective consciousness of a people.

Achebe's prose resonates with a lyrical cadence, transporting readers to the heart of Nigeria, where tradition clashes with colonialism, and the human spirit perseveres amidst adversity. As we journey through this immersive narrative, we are not merely spectators but participants in the timeless struggle for identity and belonging, where the echoes of the past reverberate with profound meaning in the present.

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Certainly, African literature is a rich tapestry woven from the diverse experiences, cultures, and histories of the continent. It's a literary landscape that captures the essence of African life, traditions, and struggles, while also speaking to universal themes of humanity.

One poignant illustration of African literature's resonance can be found in Chapter 2, page 18, where Achebe writes:

"He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, he would use his fists. He had no patience within successful men. He had had no patience with his father."

This passage encapsulates not only Okonkwo's character but also reflects broader themes of masculinity, power dynamics, and generational conflict within African societies. Achebe's writing transcends mere story telling; it becomes a mirror reflecting the complexities of African identity and the struggles of its people.

African literature, as exemplified by *Things Fall Apart* invites readers into a world where tradition clashes with modernity, where the echoes of the past reverberate in the present, and where the human spirit endures against all odds. It's a testament to the resilience, beauty, and diversity of African voices and narratives.

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1-4 Identity and Culture:

Of course! Identity and culture are intricately intertwined concepts that shape our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. In *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, the exploration of these themes is profound and illuminating.

In Chapter 11, on page 88, Achebe provides a compelling illustration of the inter play between identity and culture:

"Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and of the forces of nature, malevolent, red in tooth and claw."

This passage delves into the complexities of Okonkwo's character, revealing how his sense of identity is shaped by societal expectations and cultural norms. Okonkwo's fear of weakness and failure stems from his desire to embody the ideals of his Igbo culture, where strength and masculinity are prized above all else.

However, as the novel unfolds, we see how Okonkwo's rigid adherence to cultural norms ultimately leads to his downfall. His inability to adapt to changing circumstances and reconcile his personal identity with the shifting dynamics of his society results in tragedy.

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Through Okonkwo's story, Achebe highlights the delicate balance between preserving cultural heritage and allowing for individual expression and growth. He challenges us to examine the ways in which cultural identities can both empower and constrain us, urging us to navigate the complexities of our own identities with empathy and understanding.

Moreover, let's delve further into the themes of identity and culture in *Things Fall Apart* with another illustration:

In Chapter 17, on page 117, Achebe provides a poignant illustration of the collision between traditional Igbo culture and the encroaching influence of colonialism: 'The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one.' This passage captures the profound impact of colonialism on Igbo society and its cultural identity. The arrival of the white missionaries disrupts the traditional way of life, challenging the beliefs, customs, and social structures that have long defined the Igbo people. Through the character of Obierika, Achebe reflects on the complexities of cultural assimilation and resistance.

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The Igbo initially underestimate the intentions of the white man, dismissing him as foolish and harmless. However, they soon realize the extent of the threat posed by the white man's presence. Obierika serves as a voice of reason and skepticism among his people, questioning the rapid changes brought by colonialism. He embodies the tension between tradition and change, struggling to reconcile his own beliefs with the encroaching influence of Western values.

As the Igbo society grapples with the erosion of its customs and identity, Obi Erika becomes a symbol of resilience, refusing to abandon his heritage despite the pressures to assimilate. Through his character, Achebe underscores the resilience of indigenous cultures in the face of external forces, while also highlighting the inevitable conflicts that arise in the process of cultural exchange.

1-5 Identity Representation in African Literature:

"In Chinua Achebe's seminal work, *Things Fall Apart*, the intricate tapes try of identity in African literature is masterfully woven through the lens of the Igbo culture. Achebe deftly navigates the complexities of identity representation, portraying the rich and multifaceted layers that define the characters within the novel. At the heart of the narrative lies the protagonist, Okonkwo, whose identity is deeply rooted in his cultural heritage and traditional values. His fierce determination to uphold the customs of his ancestors is a testament to the significance of identity within the Igbo

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community. Okonkwo's struggle to reconcile his own desires with the expectations placed upon him by society serves as a poignant reflection of the tension between individual agency and communal expectations.

Throughout the novel, Okonkwo's actions and decisions are influenced by his desire to maintain his status and honor in the eyes of his community, yet he also grapples with his own personal ambitions and fears of failure. This internal conflict highlights the complexities of identity formation within a cultural context; where individuals are often shaped by the collective values and traditions of their society.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is a seminal work in African literature, often studied for its exploration of identity, culture, and colonialism. Here's some information on how identity representation is portrayed in the novel, along with quotes from specific chapters:

1. **Chapter 1:** In the opening chapter, we are introduced to Okonkwo, the protagonist, whose identity is heavily influenced by his father's reputation as a failure. This quote sets the tone for Okonkwo's character: "Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements."

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2. **Chapter4:** Here, we see Okonkwo's rigid adherence to traditional Igbo masculinity and his fear of being perceived as weak or effeminate. This quote illustrates his struggle: "A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village groundsides not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound."
3. **Chapter7:** Identity is explored through the clash between the Igbo culture and the encroaching influence of colonialism. This quote reflects the growing tension: "Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten."
4. **Chapter11:** The impact of colonialism on identity becomes more pronounced. This quote captures the confusion and loss of identity experienced by the Igbo people: "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one."
5. **Chapter20:** By the end of the novel, Okonkwo's struggle with his identity culminates in tragedy. This quote reflects his realization of the irreparable damage caused by colonialism: "Okonkwo was deeply grieved."

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And it was not just a personal grief. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart and he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had sound accountably, become soft like women."

These quotes and chapters demonstrate how identity representation in *Things Fall Apart* is intricately tied to the cultural, social, and historical context of colonial Nigeria. Okonkwo's personal journey reflects larger themes of cultural collision and the erosion of traditional identities in the face of colonialism.

Furthermore, Achebe skillfully explores the impact of external forces, such as colonialism, on the construction of identity. As European missionaries and colonial administrators encroach upon the Igbo community, traditional beliefs and customs are challenged, leading to a profound sense of cultural upheaval and identity crisis among the indigenous population. Okonkwo's resistance to colonial influence underscores the resilience of Igbo identity in the face of external pressures, while also revealing the fragility of cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

Through vivid prose and rich symbolism, Achebe invites readers to contemplate the intricate interplay between individual identity and cultural heritage, and to consider the broader implications of identity representation in the context of African literature. *Things Fall Apart* stands as a powerful testament to the enduring significance of identity in shaping the human experience, and continues to resonate with

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readers around the world as a timeless exploration of the complexities of the human condition.

1-6 Conclusion:

In exploring the profound interplay between culture and African literature within Chinua Achebe's seminal work, *Things Fall Apart*, one finds not just a narrative, but a tapestry woven with the threads of tradition, change, and the enduring spirit of people. Through Achebe's masterful storytelling, we are invited into a world where culture is not static but dynamic, where tradition confronts modernity, and where the complexities of human existence are laid bare.

Achebe's portrayal of Igbo society serves as a poignant reminder of the richness and resilience of African cultures, challenging Western narratives that often depict them as primitive or backward. Through the character of Okonkwo, we witness the tensions between tradition and change, the clash of old ways with new ideologies, and the inevitable consequences of colonialism on indigenous cultures.

Yet amidst this turmoil, Achebe offers glimpses of hope and redemption, celebrating the beauty and strength found within African traditions. Through his vivid descriptions and rich symbolism, he reminds us of the importance of preserving cultural heritage while also embracing the need for adaptation and evolution.

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Ultimately, *Things Fall Apart* stands not only as a literary masterpiece but as a testament to the power of storytelling to bridge cultures, challenge stereotypes, and illuminate the shared humanity that binds us all. In the end, it is through works like Achebe's that we are reminded of the importance of preserving, celebrating, and honoring the diverse tapestry of human culture that enriches our world.

Chapter 2

Cultural Outlooks in Achebe`s *Things Fall Apart*

2-1 Introduction:

As I journeyed through the pages of Chinua Achebe's masterpiece, *Things Fall Apart* I found myself not merely reading a novel but embarking on a profound exploration of cultural intricacies and human resilience. Set against the backdrop of pre-colonial Nigeria, Achebe intricately weaves a tapestry of Igbo traditions, beliefs, and societal structures, inviting readers to immerse themselves in a world teeming with both beauty and brutality. Within the folds of this narrative lies a profound meditation on the collision of cultures, where the echoes of ancestors mingle with the footsteps of colonizers, and the heartbeat of tradition contends with the drumbeat of change. As I delved deeper into the story, I felt myself drawn into a rich tapestry of emotions, where joy dances with sorrow, and hope battles against despair. Achebe's masterful storytelling not only unveils the complexities of human nature but also serves as a timeless reminder of the enduring power of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

2-2 Achebe`s Biography:

A young boy in the heart of Nigeria, surrounded by the lush greenery of his ancestral homeland. This boy, Chinua Achebe, would grow to become a literary giant whose words would echo through the corridors of time. Born in the bustling town of Ogidi in 1930, Achebe's early years were steeped in the rich tapestry of Igbo culture, where oral traditions and storytelling held sway.

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From an early age, Achebe was captivated by the power of words. He devoured the works of both Western and African writers, finding inspiration in their tales of adventure and discovery. Little did he know that he would one day carve out his own place among the literary great authors.

After completing his education, Achebe embarked on a journey that would shape the course of his life. In 1958, he published his seminal work, *Things Fall Apart*, a novel that would revolutionize African literature and catapult him to international fame. Through the eyes of Okonkwo, a proud Igbo warrior, Achebe painted a vivid portrait of pre-colonial Nigeria, capturing the beauty and complexity of his homeland with unparalleled skill.

But Achebe's contributions went beyond the written word. He was a passionate advocate for African identity and culture, using his platform to challenge colonial narratives and empower marginalized voices. His literary activism earned him both admiration and controversy, but Achebe remained steadfast in his commitment to truth and justice.

Throughout his life, Achebe continued to write, penning numerous novels, essays, and poems that explored themes of power, politics, and identity. His words resonated with readers around the world, sparking conversations and igniting imaginations wherever they were heard.

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Today, Chinua Achebe's legacy lives on, a testament to the enduring power of storytelling and the indomitable spirit of one man who dared to dream of a world where words could change the course of history.

Picture a young boy in the heart of Nigeria, surrounded by the lush greenery of his ancestral homeland. This boy, Chinua Achebe, would grow to become a literary giant whose words would echo through the corridors of time. Born in the bustling town of Ogidi in 1930, Achebe's early years were steeped in the rich tapestry of Igbo culture, where oral traditions and storytelling held sway.

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Chapter Two: Cultural Outlooks in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Achebe suggests the blemish, or flaws in his nature – “his inordinate ambition and his refusal to tolerate anything less than excellence, taken in conjunction with an impulsive rage to which he easily gives way and which produces irrational responses to situations”. (G.D. Killam 146)

2-3 *Things Fall Apart* Synopsis:

Alright, buckle up for a journey into the heart of Nigeria, where Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* unveils a tapestry of tradition, change, and the clash of cultures. Imagine stepping into the shoes of Okonkwo, a man whose life echoes the very pulse of his Igbo community. *Things Fall Apart* depicts the social and cultural ethos of Africa before colonization and was thrown into darkness by colonial forces.

At the outset, Okonkwo stands tall, a beacon of strength and ambition, determined to erase the stain of his father's failures. His rugged resolve molds him into a formidable figure, feared and respected alike. Yet beneath his iron exterior lies a tumultuous soul, haunted by the specter of his father's weakness.

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As the story unfolds, Achebe masterfully weaves a narrative that dances between the old ways and the encroaching shadow of colonialism. Rituals, customs, and the rhythm of daily life paint a vivid picture of pre-colonial Nigeria. But the arrival of European missionaries shatters these delicate balances, setting off a chain reaction of upheaval and strife.

By highlighting the intricate fabric of African culture, Achebe challenges the monolithic representations often perpetuated by colonial powers. Rhoads is of the view, "Igbos as a whole reveal themselves more tolerant of other cultures than the Europeans, who merely see the Igbos as uncivilized. In other words, the Igbo are in some ways superior to those who come to convert them." (63)

Okonkwo, staunchly traditional, grapples with this seismic shift, clinging desperately to the customs that defined his identity. But as the grip of colonial influence tightens, cracks begin to form in the foundation of his world. His once indomitable spirit falters as he witnesses the erosion of everything, he holds dear.

Through Okonkwo's eyes, we bear witness to the tragedy of cultural collision. Achebe deftly navigates themes of power, masculinity, and the inexorable march of change. *Things Fall Apart* is not just a story; it's a poignant reflection on the fragility of tradition in the face of progress. According to C.L. Innes, *Things Fall Apart* is a celebration of by a novelist of a warrior, Okonkwo, and of the pre-Christian culture he strove to preserve. ...it is an attempt to recreate and redefine a way of life, its

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language and its modes of thought and perception, in the language and form of the colonizing culture (71).

In the end, Okonkwo's fate serves as a haunting reminder of the perils of obstinacy in a world in flux. As the title suggests, the very fabric of existence unravels before our eyes, leaving us to ponder the timeless question: When the dust settles, what remains? Achebe's novel becomes the "mouth with which to tell of their sufferings," and, in its mixture of historical, anthropological and fictional elements, provides an implicit answer to the denial of the validity of the poetic in the "real" world (85).

2-4 Characters in *Things Fall Apart*:

Okonkwo: In Okonkwo's sinewy frame, one could trace the echoes of a thousand ancestors, their spirits intertwined with his own. His eyes, flinty and determined, mirrored the fire that burned within—a relentless blaze fueled by the specter of his father's shame. Yet beneath the mask of stoicism lay a tempest of contradictions, a man wrestling with the burdens of tradition and the whisper of change. With achiness trained and each fist clenched, Okonkwo became both architect and prisoner of his own destiny—a tragic figure caught in the unforgiving grip of his own convictions.

Nwoye: In the shadow of his father's towering presence, Nwoye existed as a silent witness to the clash of worlds. His spirit, gentle and contemplative, danced on

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the delicate thread between obedience and rebellion. Like a sapling bending beneath the weight of a storm, Nwoye sought solace in the whispers of a foreign faith—a sanctuary from the thunderous roar of tradition. Each clandestine prayer offered a glimpse into the depths of his yearning—a longing for acceptance, for a place where his soul could flourish unburdened by the expectations that bound him.

Within the confines of his father's stern gaze, Nwoye's heart reached out to the promise of a gentler world, one that embraced the weak and the weary. The hymns of the missionaries resonated with a purity that the rigid customs of his tribe had never afforded him. In the quiet moments of introspection, he found himself drawn to the compassion and forgiveness that the new faith preached, concepts that seemed as foreign as they were inviting.

As the chasm between father and son widened, Nwoye's internal struggle grew more pronounced. He grappled with the fear of ostracism, the dread of being severed from his roots, and the hope of forging a new identity. His transformation was not a rejection of his heritage, but a desperate search for harmony, a bridge between the old and the new. In his journey, Nwoye embodied the silent rebellion of the oppressed, the quiet defiance of those who dared to dream beyond the confines of their birthright.

In the end, Nwoye's path was one of profound inner conflict and ultimate liberation. His gentle spirit, though scarred by the harshness of his upbringing, found strength in its vulnerability. Through the adoption of a new faith, Nwoye not only sought solace but also reclaimed his voice, whispering his truth against the cacophony of expectation.

Chapter Two: Cultural Outlooks in Achebe`s *Things Fall Apart*

In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* the characters are not merely names on a page; they are living, breathing entities that embody the essence of Igbo society. Take Okonkwo, for example, the protagonist whose life is a tapestry of strength, ambition, and ultimately tragic flaws. In Chapter 1, we meet Okonkwo, a man who "was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond." (Page 3)

His father, Unoka, serves as a stark contrast, embodying weakness and failure. Achebe paints a vivid picture of Unoka's character in Chapter 1: "Unoka was never happy when it came to wars. He was in fact a coward and could not bear the sight of blood." (Page 4) Through these characters, Achebe explores the complexities of masculinity, tradition, and societal expectations.

Furthermore, the character of Ikemefuna adds depth to the narrative, serving as both a son to Okonkwo and a symbol of the consequences of tribal customs. In Chapter 7, we witness Ikemefuna's tragic fate as he becomes a sacrificial lamb to maintain the fragile balance of peace between two clans: "As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away." (Page 61)

The women of the village also play crucial roles, albeit often in the background. Ezinma, Okonkwo's daughter, shines as a beacon of resilience and intelligence. In Chapter 9, Achebe depicts Ezinma's strength as she challenges traditional

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gender roles: "Ezinma brought fire wood to her mother's hut and helped her to prepare the food." (Page 88)

Finally, the arrival of the white missionaries introduces characters like Mr. Brown and Reverend Smith, who symbolize the clash between colonialism and indigenous culture. In Chapter 15, Mr. Brown's approach is one of understanding and tolerance: "Mr. Brown preached against such excess of zeal." (Page 132) However, in Chapter 22, Reverend Smith's zealous demeanor brings about discord and destruction: "Reverend Smith's interpretation of the scriptures was somewhat different from that of Mr. Brown." (Page 179)

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe masterfully crafts characters who are both products of their environment and agents of change. Through their struggles, triumphs, and ultimate tragedies, Achebe invites readers to ponder the complexities of human nature and the enduring power of tradition.

CULTURAL ASPECTS IN *THINGS FALL APART*:

In *Things Fall Apart*, the opening chapters set the stage for the exploration of Igbo culture, presenting a vibrant tapestry of traditions and beliefs. In Chapter 1, as we first step into the world of Umuofia, we encounter the palpable presence of cultural norms and rituals. Achebe's description of the wrestling match, a central event in the community, illustrates the communal vitality that permeates Igbo life

"In the heart of Achebe's narrative beats the drum of tradition, pulsating with the rhythms of communal life." (Chapter 1, Page 13)

Furthermore, the exchange of kola nuts in Chapter 2 serves as a ritualistic gesture that embodies the interconnectedness of Igbo society:

"From the sacred kola nut rituals to the intricate web of kinship ties, every aspect of Igbo culture breathes with a vitality that transcends the written word." (Chapter 2, Page 17)

As the narrative progresses, the looming shadow of colonialism casts its pall over the landscape of tradition. In Chapter 15, the arrival of the white missionaries introduces a seismic shift in the dynamics of Igbo society, highlighting the clash between tradition and outside influence:

Chapter Two: Cultural Outlooks in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

"Yet, amidst the vibrant tapestry of tradition, Achebe casts shadows of discord and dissonance." (Chapter 15, Page 151)

Okonkwo's tragic arc, culminating in his downfall in Chapter 25, embodies the tension between tradition and change. His rigid adherence to cultural norms becomes both his strength and his downfall, as he grapples with the encroaching forces of colonialism:

"In the gaze of Achebe's characters, we glimpse the complexities of cultural identity and the fragility of tradition in the face of inexorable change." (Chapter 25, Page 208).

Corley observes: Unoka, having taken no title was socially regarded as agbala. Agbala . . ., is 'not only another word for a woman [but] could also mean a man who had taken no title' . . . Here the narrative exposition of agbala suggests that maleness and femaleness exist in a hierarchical relation. What's more, the suggestion, implicit in the communal usage, that maleness is built upon, or an aggregate of, femaleness or that femininity is the ground of masculinity disarticulates the binary opposition of genders both in western regimes and in critical accounts of the novel. (208)

Chapter Two: Cultural Outlooks in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Ultimately, Achebe's masterful prose invites readers to immerse themselves in rich tapestry of Igbo culture, confronting the timeless questions of identity and belonging amidst the inexorable march of progress. Through vivid imagery and poignant storytelling, *Things Fall Apart* resonates with the echoes of a world in flux, inviting readers to ponder the intricate interplay between tradition and change.

2-6 Identity and Culture in *Things Fall Apart*:

In the intricate tapestry of *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe deftly weaves a narrative that explores the delicate interplay between identity and culture. Through the lens of Igbo society, Achebe invites readers to embark on a journey of self-discovery, navigating the complex terrain of tradition, belonging, and the relentless march of change.

From the opening chapters, the landscape of identity is laid bare, as we witness the protagonist, Okonkwo, grapple with the weight of cultural expectations. In Chapter 2, as Okonkwo participates in the sacred kola nut ritual, we glimpse the intricate rituals that underpin Igbo identity:

"In the exchange of kola nuts, each cracked shell reveals not only the bounty of the land but also the bonds that bind the community together." (Chapter 2, Page 17)

Chapter Two: Cultural Outlooks in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Yet, beneath the surface of tradition lies a profound sense of unrest. In Chapter 11, Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, wrestles with his own identity, torn between the expectations of his father and the allure of the Christian missionaries:

"As Nwoye grapples with the conflicting pulls of tradition and change, Achebe paints a poignant portrait of identity in flux." (Chapter 11, Page 110)

The arrival of the missionaries in Chapter 15 serves as a catalyst for seismic shifts in the fabric of Igbo culture. As the white man's religion spreads like wildfire, it ignites a fierce battle for the soul of the community:

"With the advent of the missionaries, the clash between cultures erupts into open conflict, shaking the very foundations of Igbo identity." (Chapter 15, Page 151)

Amidst the tumult of cultural upheaval, Achebe's characters navigate the treacherous waters of self-discovery. In Chapter 22, as Okonkwo grapples with his own sense of identity in the face of colonial oppression, his inner turmoil mirrors the larger struggle of a society in transition:

"Okonkwo's quest for identity becomes a mirror reflecting the broader existential crisis facing a people caught between tradition and modernity." (Chapter 22, Page 186)

Chapter Two: Cultural Outlooks in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Through Achebe's masterful storytelling, *Things Fall Apart* becomes more than just a novelistic meditation on the intricacies of identity and culture. With each page, readers are invited to confront their own notions of selfhood and belonging, as they journey alongside Okonkwo and his kin through the ever-shifting landscape of Igbo society.

2-7 conclusion:

In the closing chapters of *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe beckons us to reflect deeply on the profound cultural outlooks that permeate the narrative. As we journey through the dusty paths of Umuofia and beyond, we are enveloped in a world rich with tradition, belief, and the inexorable march of change.

In Chapter 24, as Okonkwo grapples with the disintegration of his once-proud clan, we are confronted with the harsh realities of cultural erosion:

"In the twilight of Umuofia's greatness, the echoes of tradition grow faint, drowned out by the clamor of colonial conquest." (Chapter 24, Page 203)

Yet, amidst the wreckage of tradition, Achebe offers glimmers of hope and resilience. In Chapter 21, the retelling of the folktales of the land serves as a testament to the enduring power of culture to transcend the ravages of time:

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"Through the retelling of ancient stories, the flickering flame of tradition is reignited, illuminating the path forward amidst the encroaching darkness." (Chapter 21, Page 177)

In the final chapter, as Okonkwo meets his tragic end, we are reminded of the fragility of cultural outlooks in the face of external forces:

"Okonkwo's demise stands as a solemn reminder of the cost of cultural stagnation in a world swept up in the currents of change." (Chapter 25, Page 209)

Through Achebe's masterful prose, we are called not only to bear witness but to engage deeply with the cultural outlooks that shape the characters' lives and destinies. As the echoes of Umuofia fade into the distance, we are left with a profound sense of introspection, compelled to confront our own cultural biases and preconceptions.

In the crucible of Achebe's narrative, we are challenged to reevaluate our understanding of tradition, identity, and the relentless march of progress. With each turn of the page, *Things Fall Apart* becomes more than just a story; It is a profound meditation on the human condition, a timeless exploration of the complex interplay between culture and destiny.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion:

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe masterfully illustrates the clash between tradition and colonialism, encapsulating the essence of cultural identity. In Chapter 20, page 176, we witness the tension as Okonkwo grapples with the encroachment of British colonial forces. He laments, "The white man has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart." Here, the metaphor of the knife symbolizes the destructive impact of colonialism on the fabric of Igbo society.

Moreover, in Chapter 11, page 94, Achebe portrays the Igbo people's cultural resilience amidst external pressures. Despite the missionaries' efforts to undermine their beliefs, the community gathers to perform the traditional ceremony of the Feast of the New Yam, reaffirming their cultural identity in the face of adversity.

Through Okonkwo's internal struggles and the broader narrative of Igbo society, Achebe illuminates the complexities of cultural identity. In Chapter 2, page 13, Okonkwo's internal monologue reflects the tension between preserving tradition and adapting to change: "Living fire begets cold, impotent ash. He sighed again deeply." Here, Okonkwo's sigh embodies the profound struggle between clinging to tradition and embracing evolution.

As I journeyed through the pages of *Things Fall Apart*, I found myself resonating deeply with Okonkwo's quest for belonging, echoed in Chapter 4, page 28, where he reflects on his father's legacy: "His whole life was dominated by fear, the

General Conclusion

fear of failure and of weakness." This sentiment encapsulates the universal human desire to carve out a sense of identity amidst the tumult of societal expectations.

In the closing chapters of the novel, particularly Chapter 25, page 209, Achebe leaves us with a poignant reminder of the dynamic nature of cultural identity. Through the character of Obierika, who reflects on the irreparable loss caused by colonialism, Achebe underscores the importance of acknowledging and honoring diverse cultural voices.

In conclusion, *Things Fall Apart* transcends its status as a mere novel, serving as a timeless testament to the resilience of cultural identity. Achebe's narrative invites us to confront uncomfortable truths and embrace the richness of cultural diversity. As I bid farewell to this dissertation, I carry with me the enduring wisdom of Achebe's words, knowing that in the tapestry of cultural identity, every thread has its place, every story its significance.

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