

**T.C.**  
**ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**IDENTITY CRISIS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Lowra DZEEKEM**

**Department of English Language and Literature**  
**English Language and Literature Program**

**OCTOBER, 2020**



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**OCTOBER, 2020**

# **APPROVAL FORM**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “Identity Crisis In Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the Bibliography.

Lowra DZEKEM

## FOREWORD

I want to start by thanking my family for all their emotional support and love. Thank you for believing in me, respecting and tolerating my dreams, decisions and life choices and always having to pay the price of missing me. I know I was not there where you were most of the time, but you were always with me.

I am also greatly indebted to the numerous people who have accompanied and guided me throughout my research journey. My supervisor at Istanbul Aydin University, DR SANAZ ALIZADEH TABRIZI, who guided my Thesis research so expertly; I owe my warmest gratitude for her valuable feedback, comments and suggestions that have shaped my research and study and made it possible to develop into a complete thesis. Her constant presence – at the University and at a distance – her patience, support, stimulating contributions and her trust in me went beyond anything I could have possibly wished for. Through her supervision, she exposed me more to the richness of cultural conflict, postcolonial studies, identity and cultural hegemony and instilled in me an appreciation for interdisciplinary perspectives. I will always be inspired by her example of engagement with the subject matter, the breadth of her knowledge and scholarship, the quality of her research and above all her modesty and integrity. I shall forever be indebted to her.

I have been extremely fortunate that many friends and colleagues shared my agonies, stimulated my thinking, inspired my writing and above all provided continuous support and generous assistance. This is a group of people from several countries whose contributions to this thesis has been fundamental.

October 2021

Lowra DZEKEM

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## ABBREVIATIONS

**Fall Apart** : *Things Fall Apart*



# **IDENTITY CRISIS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART**

## **ABSTRACT**

Chinua Achebe's work articulates a new understanding of the African world, giving a different comprehension to another sense of its experiences that is more penetrating than what the West defines. The novel testifies to a style of communicating that serves to give life and substance to the narrative content and thus to enforce the initial gesture within the novel of cultural protection and reclamation. The novel explores how things fall apart because the protagonist at the end of the novel commits suicide marking an end to a once respected culture. The coming of the Western culture destroys the cultural fabric of the Igbor community bringing in the binaries of the 'self' and 'other', superior and inferior. This community witnesses a replacement of their cultural values with a new religion, trading system, educational and judiciary system. This study explores on how the West penetrates these communities by not using military or political forces. The novel also tries to present a corner of human endeavor that is marked by the web of contradictions within which these individuals and their collective destinies have everywhere and has suddenly been entangled because of Western colonisation. This novel also shows how colonisation and its ideology has been a major catalyst that affects the identity crisis of Okonkwo and his people. The study is based on qualitative research method and within the framework of identity crisis caused by colonialism, hence, postcolonial theory exhibits better understanding of the novel.

**Keywords:** Culture, Colonialism, Postcolonial, Identity, Ideology

## CHINUA ACHEBE'DE KIMLIK KRIZI

### ÖZET

Chinua Achebe'nin çalıřmaları, Afrika dünyasının yeni bir anlayıřını ifade ediyor ve batının hazinelerinden daha nüfuz edici olduđu deneyimlerinin başka bir duygusuna farklı bir anlayıř hissi veriyor. Roman, anlatı içeriđine hayat ve madde vermeye ve böylece kültürel koruma ve ıslah romanı içindeki ilk jesti zorlamaya yarayan bir iletiřim tarzına tanıklık eder. Roman, romanın sonundaki kahramanın daha önce saygı duyulan bir kültürün sonunu iřaret ederek intihar etmesi nedeniyle iřlerin nasıl dađıldığını arařtırıyor. Batı kültürünün geliři, Igbor topluluđunun 'benlik' ve 'diđer', üstün ve ařađı ikililerini getiren kültürel dokusunu yok eder. Bu toplum tanıkları kültürel deđerlerinin yerini yeni bir din, ticaret sistemi, eđitim ve yargı sistemi alıyor. Bu çalıřma, Batı'nın askeri veya siyasi güçleri kullanmayarak bu topluluklara nasıl nüfuz ettiđi üzerine arařtırma yapmaktadır. Roman aynı zamanda, bu bireylerin ve kolektif kaderlerinin her yerde bulunduđu çeliřkiler ađıyla iřaretlenen ve Batı sömürgeciliđi nedeniyle aniden dolanık olan bir insan çabası köřesi sunmaya çalıřıyor. Bu roman aynı zamanda sömürgecilik ve ideolojisinin Okonkwo ve halkının kimlik krizini etkileyen büyük bir katalizör olduđunu da göstermektedir. Çalıřma nitel arařtırma yöntemine dayanmaktadır ve sömürgeciliđin neden olduđu kimlik krizi çerçevesinde, bu nedenle postkolonyal teori romanın daha iyi anlaşılmasını sergiler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültür, Sömürgecilik, Postkolonyal, Kimlik, İdeoloji

## I. INTRODUCTION

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1995) is a work that can be included in the contemporary modern canon of post-colonial identity. This work owes this distinction to the innovative significance that is manifested in many respects within this study. To begin with, *Things Falls Apart* provides an image of a unique society, reconstituted as a living entity and in its historical context: an image of a consistent social structure forming the institutional fabric of a universe of meanings and values.

This work also carries a considerable ideological weight within the specific context of the work's writing and reception. It is with no doubt that the comprehensive scope of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* depiction of a particularised imagined communities engage in its own social processes, that is, the infiltrated cultures conflicting with their ideal identities, thereby challenging the simplified representation that the Western identity is of more value than the African culture. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* articulates colonialism and post-colonialism identity in the Igbo community, giving an expression to a different sense of the African experiences that is more penetrating within the definition of western culture. The novel testifies to a style of communicating that serves to give life and substance to the narrative content and thus to enforce the initial gesture within the works of cultural protection and reclamation. The manner of presentation in *Things Falls Apart*, therefore, becomes integral to the narrative development to a degree that is considered unusual in the normal run of art.

*Things Fall Apart* presents rather a corner of human endeavor that is marked by the web of contradictions within which the protagonist and his destiny has everywhere and at all times been entangled first, in the precolonial time and during. The profoundly reflective engagement with the particular order of life that provides a reference for the narrative scheme and creation is a critical factor in reading Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In this regard, there is a thematic undercurrent in the text under study that creates a disjunction between its overt ideological declaration and, its contradiction of colonial ideology discourse on the one hand, and its dispassionate and

even uncompromising emphasis on African cultures in its moment of historical crisis on the other.

Hence, the complex nature of the relationship between past and present self of Okonkwo is acknowledged within the process of colonialism amidst a familiar cultural identity. Here the mechanisms colonialism, cultural identity and ideology are deployed in the construction of a much more transitional sense of being than that which common sense might demand. The paradox here is that Okonkwo, whose identity and sense of life-continuity has been deeply disrupted by colonialism, might be in need of the cultural reconstruction of the kind of 'wholeness' which Homi K. Bhaba, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak call into question. The struggle of identity within colonialism, shows the need from the protagonist to regain his cultural authenticity.

What is illustrated by theorists in this study is an analogy of what colonialism has done to the cultural practitioners of Umuofia village. Okonkwo believes that what Umuofia culture was before colonialism, is worth protecting, meaning there is a possibility to rediscover their experiences by time's attrition.

This study attempts to explore articulations of colonialism and its effect to cultural identity and authentic histories. The effects on Okonkwo shows a nostalgic urge for the past. Nostalgia in this context expresses itself not only as a mode of remembering the past as lost, but also the pain in the struggle of a distorted identity caused by colonialism and change in cultural values.

The tracing of family values seems to be a vital way of establishing a history and finding a point of cultural origin. Thus, *Things Fall Apart* demonstrates Okonkwo's complex process of negotiation, identification and resistance. The novel analysed underline the ways in which colonialism is rooted in narrative, and the kind of cultural identity the protagonist wants to relate to, construct and is constructed by the double process of remembering and representing. In the text understudy, Okonkwo's identity is in large part constituted by his memory of an ideal cultural group. This identity, however, is shown to be fragmented based on Western colonisation and as a result, makes it hard for the protagonist to feel his 'pure' state especially as he knows it to be.

In *Things Fall Apart*, the distorted cultural identity by western colonisation that Okonkwo is concerned about, shows that memory of the past is continuously modified by the experiences of the present and the 'self', that is, the protagonist doing the remembering.

*Things Fall Apart* overtly depicts colonialism while highlighting themes of cultural conflict, tradition, and ideology. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo attempts to trace the trajectory of cultural change through a broadly chronological description of the cultural development presented in the course of colonial narrative.

The migration of people has been the highest form of cultural transmission; therefore, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* characterises a cultural shift from local culture to a British culture encounter. The migration of the missionaries, district commissioner and other British people to Umuofia, Mbanta and other neighbouring villages marked a cultural shift. This study scrutinises the Okonkwo's characteristics in the light of concepts of colonialism as a major catalyst that shapes his identity development and his frustration in the process.

The proposed thesis is a theoretical study based on qualitative research method and within the framework of colonialism, cultural conflict and identity crisis; hence, Postcolonial theory by Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak will be employed in order to access a thorough comprehension of colonialism and identity crisis in *Things Fall Apart*.

Chapter One, revolves around identity crisis and colonialism. It expatiates Homi K. Bhabha's Post-colonial thoughts that the existence of communities is marked by survival. He explains that this is because of the shiftiness from colonialism that has affected the cultural representation of the people whereby they describe their communities using the prefix 'post'. He also talks about 'third space' concept where he believes that cultural hybridity takes place. In Stuart Hall's essay 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', he argues that cultural identity is not only a matter of 'being' but of 'becoming', 'belonging as much to the future as it does to the past' (Hall, 1996). From Hall's (1996) stance, identities are constantly transformed in time and space. He explains how cultural encounter affects existing cultural identities thereby stirring a cultural conflict. This chapter, therefore, cross-examines why Okonkwo fights to resist

colonialism that has altered the cultural existence of Umuofia village and its environs and how he battles to protect his cultural identity.

Chapter two centres around postcolonial ideology, especially its hegemonic role in Umuofia, Mbanta and its surrounding villages. This chapter talks about Edward Said's notion of Orientalism and Spivak's overthrow of the colonial binaries. This chapter explores the aforementioned points to shed light on identity crisis in *Things Fall Apart*.

## II. COLONIALISM AND IDENTITY CRISIS

*Things Fall Apart* (1995) was originally published in 1958. Since its publication it has gotten a lot of critical analysis. For example, Diana Akers Rhoads (1993) claims that the judiciary system of the precolonial Igbo in the novel, was abolished and destroyed with the colonisation of the land. This is especially the killing of the twins and Osu (meaning an outcast). She did not use the post colonial approach in her analysis. The later critics took different approaches in the analysis of the novel.

Linda Strong-Leek (2001) on the other hand becomes one of the first critics to connect criticism with the novel. She highlights the fact that elders in the community respect the 'Earth goddess' who is supposedly a woman but disrespect their wives. For example, when Okonkwo beats his younger wife because she did not prepare food and went out to plait her hair, especially during the week of peace. This article's limitation ends with feminism. In the same light, Syed Fagruheen (2014) summarises the position or place of women through out the novel. She explains that women are seen more of reproductive tools than companions. They are compliments for men's social statuses as they marry as many wives as possible to get their social status respected. She highlights how 'weak' men are called women (p.24).

Alan R. Friesen (2006) on the other hand, explains that Okonkwo's suicide could be a reminder to Umuofia and its surrounding villages about their culture and values that have been slowly destroyed by colonialism. According to Friesen, Okonkwo's death is because of his lamentation on a destroyed cultural practice thus; identity crisis (p.6).

These critics in their analysis comment less on how European's claim on civilisation in Africa was a strategy to colonise the people through religion and their form of indirect rule. This study therefore shows in-depth colonialism and its effects in the novel *Things Fall Apart*.

Homi K. Bhabha (1994) argues that the emergence of new cultures is formed from multiculturalism; thus hybridisation. He argues that colonialism can not be a

separate history as its past constantly intrudes the present histories and cultures. Bhabha explains that the existence of communities is marked by survival. This is because of the shiftiness from colonialism that has affected the cultural representation of the people whereby they describe their communities using the prefix 'post': postmodernism, postcolonialism, postfeminism just to name a few. Bhabha contends that 'we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion, and exclusion. (p.1) This sentence states the binary representation brought by colonialism. As a result of colonisation, people find themselves caught inbetween places and spaces that leave in dilemma.

The coming of the missionaries, the District commissioner and other British people in Umuofia, Mbanta and its surrounding villages mark the start of survival. The settling of these colonisers in these communities mark a shift from cultural ownership to colonisation. The colonised space and the time the missionaries spend in these villages produce complex figures of difference and identity. Some villagers that were considered outcasts and weak become the most vulnerable, especially affected highly by colonisation. For example, Nwoye who is the protagonist's son become among the first to be converted into christianity. According to Bhabha it is important to concentrate on cultural differences that happens in the 'inbetween' (p.1). It is in these inbetweens that selfhood is made and especially 'initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself' (p.2). This 'inbetween' is what Bhabha refers to as the 'Third Space', a place and space that produces a cultural hybrid.

Bhabha questions how identities are negotiated or formed in the 'inbetweens' especially how the representation and empowerment strategies are formulated. He argues that the shared historical values of a discriminated community may not always be collaborative. What happens in *Things Fall Apart* is what Bhabha describes as a 'social articulation of difference' (p. 2) which affects the Igbo community as a minority group. The cultural resistance from the people especially Okonkwo shows an on-going identity negotiation that seeks to authorise hybridised identities as a result of historical transformation.

Simon During (1993) states that with the binaries of low and high cultures, it becomes difficult to separate the real from copy or the natural from the artificial



especially when these cultures are transmitted by the media. During identifies different characteristics of a contemporary identity crisis in a colonial environment. It sets the background for the analysis of identity and self reconstruction in *Things Fall Apart*. The novel expresses the shift on cultural experiences and the reality of a ‘new’ culture that has penetrated Okonkwo’s village in *Things Fall Apart*. The coming of colonialism (christian culture, trading and judiciary systems) in *Things Fall Apart* is the new culture. The new culture becomes a point of cultural conflict in novel and the cause of identity crisis.

During’s point underlines external factors like technologies that also transmit cultures as one of the features that make cultural differences more visible. Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* highlights postcolonial studies within the text. This book shows generational conflicts, differences in culture and identity crisis among many other unelicited themes. *Things Fall Apart* shows how existence and beliefs are inherited in most human cultures from their different cultural environments. Colonisation, identity, cultural inequality, social injustice and ethnicity in this novel helps to show the struggle of the protagonist in self reconstruction in protecting his identity. However, the key propounders of post-colonial theory expantiate on colonialism, identity and postcolonial ideology from different perspectives.

Postcolonial theory has the contention that signification is a meeting point where cultural difference coexist. This coexistence harbors differentiation in culture, discrimination and an authorisation in the production of fields of force, capacity, reference and applicability. It states that diversity in culture recognises the cultural contents and customs, which gives a time frame of relativism to liberal notion of multiculturalism, cultural exchange or the culture of humanity (Bhabha, 1994: 50).

Furthermore, he argues that culture’s problem emerges when there is loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of life’s daily experiences especially between classes, gender, races and nations. Bhabha (1994) explains that cultures do not always have a single form in themselves neither dualistic of Self to Other (p. 52). He contends that it is not because of the human nature believed that everyone is under one human race before the existence of different cultures. He argues that people’s cultural positions make them to be judgemental to other cultures (p. 52). Bhabha quotes Fanon stating that people who revolt against cultural change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity. That they are caught between the discontinuous time

of translation and negotiation which is a space that carries the burden of cultural meaning. The Igbo community in *Things Fall Apart* after the occupation of the land by missionaries, the District Commissioner and other British occupants become that space that is caught between the discontinuous time of translation and negotiation. The cultural practitioners of Umuofia like Okonkwo are caught in a space that carries burden of cultural meaning. The new system of government introduced by the colonisers has slowly sideline the cultural values of this community while abolishing some rules, like the killing of twins, their judiciary system and the abandonment of outcasts in the evil forest.

Bhabha(1994) talks about Third Space which is a place of hybridisation. This is a place where cultures meet and mix. In Bhabha's (1994) text he argues that the Third Space is a place to celebrate the dynamic spaces of cultural change as a result of shifting identities. Bhabha describes this third space as a failed attempt by the colonisers to assimilate the colonised ending up producing something new which is the hybrid culture. This new created space is an unfamiliar place to the Igbo community, while some people are adjusting to that, some are not recognising it as a familiar identity ground. For example, the protagonist commits suicide at the end of the novel because he realises that he is standing alone and does not want to take on with the new space and identity. His son on the other hand, becomes one of the first people to quickly embrace this space and identity and converts his mother and sisters to this new identity. This space liberates Nwoye, Okonkwo's son and gives him the ability to retaliate his father whom he had a long hidden resentment for.

Bhabha quotes Frantz Fanon (1952) famous text that informed the post-colonial studies stating that in a colonised environment, the urge of identification is trapped in the tension of desire and demand. This is because of the fear of cultural split,

the exchange of looks between native and settler that structures their psychic relation in the paranoid fantasy of boundless possession and its familiar language of reversal: 'When their glances meet he [the settler] ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, "They want to take our place."' (Bhabha, 1994: 63)

In *Things Fall Apart*, this kind of tension is seen between Okonkwo and the Messenger who is sent by the missionaries to interrupt the clan's meeting. Okonkwo

as angry as he is because of the missionaries' intrusion, kills the Messenger. This act by Okonkwo affirms Bhabha's phrase of the coloniser considering the colonised land theirs. Bhabha (1994) argues that the identity problem that is discussed in postcolonial texts sprout from the continuous questioning of their colonised representation space seeing the colonisers as the 'other.' The presence of the colonisers in Umuofia village and its environs threaten the cultural preservation of the people. Okonkwo and other elders in the village feel that their space of identification is tampered with. Bhabha (1994) argues that 'in the moment of colonial identification is the splitting of the subject in its historical place of utterance' (p. 66). The splitting of the subjects are within the families, Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, is one of the first convert to christianity that takes the name Isaac. The most vulnerable villagers are the first colonised in Umuofia and its environs.

Colonisation condemns the cultural practices of the Igbo people and Okonkwo is not pleased with this. They considered some of these practices as a taboo. For example in the novel, the Earth goddess decreed that the birth of twins was a sacrilege committed in the land and their presence could destroy the land. As a result, the earth goddess demands that they should be killed in the evil forest. If the clan failed to execute this order, the earth goddess' wrath is promised to get lose on everyone in the land, not only the offender. This was the pre-colonial Igbo society with its own cultural practice. It is this practice that Diana Akers Rhoads (1993) argues that the killing of the twins in this community was a their religious practice that was ruined by colonisation.

Furthermore, Frantz Fanon's (1952) contends that the colonised adopts the language spoken by the colonisers to feel less inferior. He explains this as mimicry. According to him they become mimic men. In *Things Falls Apart*, the construction of schools by the missionaries become a system through which the colonisers adopt their language. Nwoye, disrespects his father in Mbanta village while they are on exile and informs him of leaving for Umuofia village to get registered in the school. Before colonisation, the Igbo community had a rich language that has been a great carrier of their culture and identity for years. An example can be seen in the different cultural names that the characters have. Names like Okonkwo, Nwoye, Ikemefuna, Obierika, Nwakibie, among many other names mentioned are cultural identifiers. These names carry cultural meanings. With the colonisation, the colonisers start by renaming the

people, for example giving names like Isaac (Nwoye, Okonkwo's son). They also have richness in language with their proverbs, folklore stories, songs and dances. These suggest that they are not primitive but practicing orature.

Anthonia C. Kalu (2008) adds that orature is the backbone of African ancestral and at the same time the contemporary aspects of African life. This African life is made up of music and dance, sculpture, poetry, riddles, proverbs and cultural festival. Chinua Achebe uses these mentioned orature traits in *Things Fall Apart*. For example in the novel, it is mentioned that "among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (Achebe, 1995: 2). This quote from the novel lays emphasis on the importance of Igbo language and their cultural value. This is because of the richness in proverbs that they used often in the language. In the novel, Okonkwo's looks are described using proverbs; 'a bushfire in the harmattan' (p.1) this is because he is tall, huge and has bushy eyebrows. The richness in Igbo culture is seen in the use of words like 'efulefu' (p. 47), 'Osu' (p. 51), 'ogbanje' (p. 25), 'agbala' (p. 15) and 'iba' (p. 25). The arrival of the missionaries marks the end to these values.

Frantz Fanon (1961) argues that the only way for the colonised to be decolonised is to fight back for their lands even with violence. Okonkwo demonstrates this act when he sees that the colonisers are taking over their land thereby destroying their custom and tradition. This becomes worse when his son turns against him and embraces Christianity with the name Isaac. When he burns down one of the churches he is summoned by the missionaries for trial but he is not backed by any of his clan members because of the fear instilled in them. He chooses to commit suicide rather than face them. He refuses to be a mimic man in front of the colonisers.

However, the colonisers did not stop with their tricks of colonising the people. For example in the novel 'Mr. Brown . . . encouraged them with gifts of singlets and towels' (Achebe, 1995: 59). This method attracted many villagers to attend their churches and schools. The colonisers are not only succeeding in converting the weak but also title holders. Ogbuefi Ugonna is one of the title holders that is convinced by the new Christian culture. He cuts off all his anklets that symbolise his titles to join Christianity. The missionaries welcome him by organising a feast where they eat and celebrate with him. This is one of the aspects in the novel that demonstrates colonisation and also the colonised ripped off their identity without consent. They use

their God against the Igbo gods. They claim that they have been sent by their own God to liberate them from their false gods and their wickedness to worship their own God. They explain further that this is the only way they can be saved. The 'white man' (p. 47) clears that 'all the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children. There is only one true God and He has the earth, the sky, you and me and all of us' (p. 47). This leaves the people in disbelief because the 'god' the White man talks of, is not any thing they have known before. The gods they know are, 'earth goddess', 'Ani', 'Amadiora', 'Idemili' and 'Ogwugwu'.

The colonisation has corrupted the judiciary system of the people. Before the coming of the colonisers, the Umuofia village and the neighboring villagers had a democratic system of judgement. For example, when an Umuofia woman is accidentally killed in Mbiano during their market day, all the villagers of Umuofia are summoned in front of the elders to judge the case. This is opposed to the coloniser's system of judgement as they judge and trial the people without witnesses. When Okonkwo is asked to kill Ikemefuna by the earth goddess, he respects that though he is troubled after that, as he could not sleep or eat for days according to the novel. When he beats his wife during the week of peace, judgement is passed on him to go on exile. As strong and powerful as he is in Umuofia land, Okonkwo understands that the law is applicable to all. He does not fight this judgement back but respects it and goes to Mbanta. This is a pre-colonial system in the Igbo land destroyed by colonisation. The missionaries build prison cells and write laws that they use in judging the people. For example in chapter twenty three the district commissioner judges the case of how the 'Enoch murdered an egwugwu' (p. 63). It becomes their law against the Igbo laws. They protect the Enoch despite him committing an abomination in the land by unmasking the egwugwu in public. The district commissioner states that the system of governance they have brought is for the peace and happiness of the people of Umuofia and its surrounding villages. When he states that 'we have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice just as it is done in my own country under the great queen' (p. 63), it marks colonialism. The Igbo community also have a queen mother, whom they call the goddess of the earth and they respect her judgement. The colonisers do not respect this queen but rather they warn the people that in England, "our queen,

the most powerful ruler in the world” (p. 63). With this statement, the colonisers overrule the laws of the land while implementing theirs.

The colonial intrusion destroys the communal existence among these villagers. For example, Okonkwo is given seeds of yam by Nwakibie to pay back after his harvest despite the fact that his father died being a debtor and hated for being lazy. Okonkwo is welcomed by his maternal uncle without judgement in Mbanta and he is provided with a home to live in with his family. His friend helps him to transfer his belongings during his exile before his hut is burnt down to ashes.

The missionaries keep introducing the people to a different way of life. They had brought the trading system in the community. For the first in Umuofia, Mbanta and the surrounding villages, their food crops were given a different price tag. For example in the novel, ‘the white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion . . . built a trading store and for the first time palm-oil and kernel became things of great price’ (p. 58). This quote shows more on how colonisation is glaring in the novel. The colonisers sell things they do not own. They do not own lands or farms but they have forcefully taken it from the people and tricked them by selling their own crops to them who cultivated it themselves. Instead the colonised should have owned these shops and be the ones selling them to the colonisers.

The District Commissioner decides to write the history of the people. He is dedicated to write this history and at the same time he believes that ‘one must be firm in cutting out details’ (p. 68), of the Igbo culture. He promises not to write a chapter about Okonkwo, the protagonist but a paragraph. He does not remember his name but describes him of the last thing he knows about him. He calls Okonkwo the man who killed the Messenger and hanged himself. The title of this proposed book continues to show the colonisation tendencies. The District Commissioner names it ‘Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger’ (p. 68). They choose to call the Igbo people primitive and at the same time insinuating the superiority of their culture. They came with their cultural standard hoping to assimilate the people thereby distorting their cultural identity.

Chinua Achebe’s multicultural sensibilities are written from a backdrop of cultural conflicts, acknowledging the period of “change and development” in a socio-cultural environment. Hall describes “the black person’s burden” (p. 278) which is of great concern to him. Postcolonial studies is not a field with a single discourse but a

field that has “multiple discourses” with its own moments and histories from the past. Hall’s ideas within post colonial field becomes a “global field” that accommodate the ideas of Achebe whose multicultural sensibilities bring out a multicultural setting counter to what the infiltrating culture stands on. From this perspective, it reiterates the politics of identity which is between infiltrating culture and the views of the text under study. The politics of culture is seen in Okonkwo’s effort to fight the christian culture that has infiltrated his community and has gained grounds; thus, pushing his own culture at the edge.

According to Hall (1992), “positionalities” (p. 279) are never absolute. Positionalities imply the social context in *Things Fall Apart* that creates Okonkwo’s identity in terms of his race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status. Positionalities also describe how Okonkwo’s identity influences, and potentially biases, his understanding of and outlook on his environment.

As mentioned earlier, postcolonial studies has many legacies. According to Stuart Hall (1992) thoughts, postcolonial studies discusses culture, ideology, language and symbolic as its major concern. John Hartley contend that postcolonial studies has been able to grant a scientific space for the neglected cultural groups. Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon (1994) posit that this field depend on cultural practices and how they are related to power. Their objective have been to give an exposure to power relations and check how these relationships affect cultural practices. This critical tool ties a knot with the views of the focus of this study. The protagonist does not only try to expose the power relationships and its influence, but he tries to paint a picture of an affected cultural practices. Chris Barker (2011) talks of the importance of power stating that other critics acknowledge power as a core tenet in the discipline. They believe that power penetrates every social relationships. They agree that power glues social relationships even the subordinated groups. Power has been able to show specific concern with subverted groups especially focusing on age groups, nations, genders and races.

Power is manifested in the protagonist as he uses that for a quest to self protection and cultural identification. The subordination is seen as the conflict caused by the protagonist in his community for fear of losing authentic identity especially when it is threatened by colonialism. What actually unites this critical tool and this study is not just their concerns with different cultures and the community of the

protagonist, nor the different, existent perspectives and opinions, but the manner of maintained reflection it gives to a common reality of the impact of culture on historic transformations of the past. The communicative structure of the work under study, therefore, licence a re-enactment of the protagonist's pursuits for a kind of self protection and whose cultural reality should be respected and accepted amidst colonialism.

The product of postcolonial studies, identity and self affected by colonialism, play a vital role in this study in probing the views of the protagonist and its coherence with the critical tool. This means that if characteristics of the protagonist are examined, it is done in order to discover what system of rules - what themes - is being used to determine meaning of what the plot envisaged. According to Chris Barker (2011), representation is concerned with meaningful ways that social groups in the world are constructed and represented by people. This, therefore, implies that the meaningful ways are how identity and self reconstruction is decided upon. The protagonist is in a community where colonialism distorts his cultural identity and a need for for its protection. On the other hand, "articulation" suggests both expressing/representing and a 'putting-together'. This means how Okonkwo chooses to express and want his cultural identification amidst the colonialism. According to Barker (2011) power is an important aspect in postcolonial studies that holds social relationships together even subordinated groups. "Identity", on the other hand, is also a central issue in postcolonial studies. Critics of this field are concerned with how identities are represented in within communities. This is because of the presence of colonialism that threatens the cultural identity of the colonised. They try to understand the new space which Bhabha (1994) describes as the Third Space. This is a place or/and space where hybridisation takes place.

Philip Smith and Alexander Riley (2008) stipulate that "divergent traditions have understood culture as values, codes, narratives, ideologies, pathologies, discourses and common sense" (p. 399). Therefore social structure and social life are highly influenced by models of cultural exerts. The models of culture, which help to provide opportunity, stability and solidarity, give an idea of why some cultures fight to contain their cultures. This explains why in inter-cultural experiences there is an encounter of conflict, power and inequality. Smith and Riley (2008) highlight an important aspect to consider in cultural experience. They argue that, the individual and



culture are at risk within postcolonial studies. This is seen through Okonkwo and the other characters in the novel under study because they represent the pivot of the conflict. Smith and Riley (2008) believe that “some thinkers stress the constraining nature of culture, while others point to its ability to enable action” (p. 400).

Hence, colonialism, identity, motivation and cultural construction of the self stir the focal point of argument in this chapter. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo’s motivation to protect himself is because of his father’s dishonored legacy and colonisation. His father is not a hardworking man and he is in debts. Okonkwo decides to be hardworking and also become hard on his son whom he believes is lazy. He also upholds his culture in high esteem as he respects rules. He does not resist when he is banished from the village because of the beating he gave his second wife during the week of peace. He accepts his punishment and moves with his family to his motherland.

Tim Edwards (2007) explores the structures within which a person and groups create, negotiate, and defend their identity, especially understanding themselves, the topic of identity is essential. Postcolonial studies is strongly influenced by analysing the issue of colonialism, its effects on identity and how that challenges it. Orthodoxy assumes that the self is a self-contained entity. Postcolonial studies builds on theories that assert that colonialism affects identity which reacts to something outside of oneself. Emile Durkheim raised a radical challenge to liberal individualism in the late nineteenth century (Durkheim, 1984). The liberal assumed that the citizen was supreme, and the communities were made up of different people from different social groups and individuals. Durkheim, on the other hand, assumed that a person was made out of the society and not that the society was made from people. His argument is that a modern conception of identity is a result of that culture. With little to no economic specialisation, all representatives of pre-industrial societies will have identical behaviors, beliefs, and norms. The only thing that kept those communities united is their homogeneity. Individualism exists in modern culture, which has a high degree of specialisation, since individuals live unique lives and have unique experiences. Consequently, their values and attitudes can diverge. The homogeneity familiar to Okonkwo as part of the igbo community is suddenly affected by colonialism. The precolonial period in Umuofia, Mbanta and other neighbouring villages have experienced unique lives and unique experiences. Unfortunately, their values and

attitudes diverge when the missionaries invade their communities and starts with annexation.

According to Durkheim (1984), human identity is secondary to economic organisation. The self-analysis of George Herbert Mead raises a different collection of issues for the concept of an autonomous ego. Mead (1934) asserts that the self is created by one's relationships with others. Instead of the colonisers understanding the Igbo community and their culture, they create a binary position where the people become the 'other' and they become the important 'self' that are redefining the community through their new system of governance. They do this through building churches, opening schools, setting a new judiciary system and offering gifts to new converts.

Homi K. Bhabha (1994) discusses the role of psychology in postcolonial field quoting Freud. He states that identity, according to Freud, is based on a child's assimilation of external people. The self is structured by the relationship between the id, ego and superego. Although the id is part of the self, and the superego, importantly, is the constraining internalised conscious moral during psychological development, the ego may be thought of as a mixture of the superego and the id, or they can be considered separated from each other. In the present sense, the above concept could be more intriguing, as it implies that the ego is not identical to itself. For Erik Erikson, identity is a mechanism that occurs between the individual's identity and the communal culture's identity.

In the 1940s, Erikson in 1940s is considered to have come up with the term "identity crisis." Erikson (1968) used the word to describe those who could no longer identify themselves with their histories especially who they have always been. As a consequence, the person is cut off from the community that can offer them a sense of self coherence and self-awareness, that is, who they think they are. This identity crisis reflects more on Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*. He believes that the missionaries are changing their cultural practices, thus changing their identity. He resolves his on identity crisis by committing suicide at the end of the novel. He did not like what the new culture would do to his 'self'. Self coherence and self-awareness later came to describe youth as a stage in a person's psychological development. Lacan's reinterpretes the problematic identity of one's self from Freud's perspective. Only at the mirror level at the interval of six to eighteen months, according to Lacan, does self-

consciousness emerge. In this case, the child recognises itself in its reflection. In the face of the separation that happens when the infant is removed from the mother, the self emerges as a pledge of power. The child learns vocabulary through the father's imposition of the law, which includes the word "no," which forbids incest with the mother. In order to reclaim a primitive unity, the child desires the mother. This is an urge to break the father's law, but it must be suppressed. Lacan argues that the unconscious is constructed similarly to language. In essence, this argues that language positions the self (or, more precisely, the subject), implying that it is often repressing its own lack of unity.

The centrality of the issue of identity in postcolonial studies as an effect of colonialism can also be used to understand Foucault's work. Foucault (1971) explains how the idea of madness is interpreted differently in different epochs. He explains further that social practices influence the social construct of madness. In his later writings, Foucault gives an insight on how the sexuality of the self is constructed within discourses. He suggests that the way a text is written anticipates, and thus situates, a particular self as reader.

The acknowledgement that identity is not simply created, but is dependent on something else creates theoretical space for the marginalised to question and reassess the identities imposed on them during the dominance phase. Racial, gay, bisexual, and gender identities are therefore embroiled in a political transformation. Charles Lindholm (2007) asserts that recognising identity is based on anything other than one's own creation which provides theoretical room for the marginalised to challenge and reassess the identities that were placed on them throughout the dominance process. As a result, racial identities, homosexual and bisexual identities, and gender identities are all undergoing political change.

Yet, since we must describe ourselves regardless of our cultural commonalities or shared background, the affirmation of personal individuality poses some self-concept issues. Therefore, we are occasionally perplexed about who we are and how we relate to our cultural background and social circumstances. Our daily language approves the case. The majority of us are familiar with the word "identity crisis" and can quickly discuss the benefits of "finding ourselves," "being in contact with our emotions," and "self-expression." We casually state that we are "not ourselves today" and that we are working to "bring ourselves together." It seems that being ourselves is

a matter of personal effort as opposed to collective demands. We despise people who play parts; those who are mocked as phonies, while those we admire are lauded as genuine. The mechanism by which a person absorbs at least a portion of another's identity into their own. Identification may mean the extension of one's identity into another; (ii) the borrowing of one's identity from another; or (iii) the confusion of one's identity with that of another, according to Rycroft (1968:139). This association may be with a supernatural figure created by imagination, media images, or firsthand knowledge of others in groups. Within socialisation, primary and secondary identity have been extensively discussed: in the former, there is little distinction that exist between the external objects and the self, while in the latter, the individual perceives himself as distinct from other objects – but can relate with one of them. Self-criticism contributes to adoption of another's persona, which seems capable of dealing with such a challenge. We can often aspire to be like, or even make, a form of hero/heroine who succeeds in overcoming major life challenges.

### **A. Things Fall Apart**

Chinua Achebe is influential African writer whose form and style of writing has enriched the contemporary African literature, its culture, religion and history. Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian writer, is regarded as one of Africa's most prominent cultural figures. His novels are among the first published English works to convey an intimate and authentic analysis of the customs and tradition of African culture.

In the text, Christianity is an important part of identity. Christianity is a new culture brought by the missionaries in Umuofia and its surrounding villages. Also, the main aspects of Achebe's story relate to the text's overarching theme of colonialism, identity and an attempt to self reconstruction. The novel's temporal axis indicates on one hand, Okonkwo and Unoka's relationship that helps in their identity and self construct, and Okonkwo and Nwoye's relationship which have the same effect. This dialectic of identity and self construct are fundamentally linked to the framework of the text's images and moral propositions.

Unoka serves a dual purpose in this story: his fate and its effect on his son provide insight into the latter's psyche and he also represents the countervalues that oppose the tribe's rigid social ideal. Unoka, in a way, can be considered a rebel against tribal society's rigidities. His unconventional way of life is a deliberate ruin of a manly

ideal, (of which he rejects the ideals of art), as well as a lively irony and an undisciplined that correlates to his laid-back attitude toward life. Obviously, his irresponsibility makes him a target of public scorn, and he meets an especially unpleasant end that appears to vindicate the tribe's harsh reprobation at first glance.

However, even his death in the Evil Forest should be considered a victory, a kind of resistance that the narrator emphasises with this main detail, "When they carried him away, he took his flute with him" (*Fall Apart*, 5). His flute is what he played all the time and it gave him joy. Being buried with it symbolises his source of happiness following him. Initially, Unoka's failure to adhere to the tribe's dominant culture is viewed negatively. More importantly, its subversive meaning is vehemently rejected by Okonkwo his son, who decides into being the polar opposite of all Unoka represents, assuming what can only be described as a terrifying appearance. Okonkwo was a war hero and a man of action. He, unlike his father, could tolerate the sight of blood. He was the first to carry a human head home from Umuofia's battle. That was his fifth head, and he was not even close to being old. Okonkwo was so proud of himself that in every elder's meeting he drank his palm wine from the human head he won in his first battle. Okonkwo's self-realisation gives his turbulent relationship with his father, who casts a long shadow over his existence. *Things Fall Apart* is largely the story of Okonkwo's transformation into the opposite of his father through the process of self-fashioning and his confrontation with the coming of the Missionaries.

However, the emotional state in which he finds himself as a result is not completely examined, and we are not taken into Okonkwo's mind to see fully who he truly is. Except when he is in the midst of mental anguish (immediately after killing Ikemefuna), we are given very little insight into what is going on within his troubled mind. Okonkwo's power of attraction comes not from the psychological complexity of his depiction, but from his very physical appearance, which is projected outward: "he was tall and huge" (*Fall Apart*, 1) as the narrator informs the readers, in such a way as to make him the embodiment of what his society knows as an ideal man. Okonkwo's overbearing masculinity is based on this ideal, which he manifests in his attitude and demeanor.

In the development of the plot, the protagonist's cultural identity is seen to be authentic and unique with the way he takes pride in it. The identity is noted in the way they openly celebrate their customs and traditions. For example, Umuofia holds a

public ritual meeting to solve some problems because they believe that one of the clan's spirit (egwugwu) is walking among the people, but they are essentially Igbo clan members wearing masks.

During the egwugwu ceremony, the wives of Okonkwo are conscious that he is the one wearing a mask and impersonates one of the clan's ancestral spirits, but they keep it to themselves out of respect for their religious practices and rituals. This is an authentic cultural example that later on is distorted. In the novel, Okonkwo is introduced as a character who, without question, blindly obeys the orders of his clan's council of elders. When they order him to bring Ikemefuna and the virgin from the neighbouring village to cleanse the Umuofia land from the grief caused by the murdered wife in that village, he does that without questions nor hesitations. This boy is given to Okonkwo and after three years of living with him, it was time for the boy to be sacrificed to the gods. Okonkwo did not hesitate to honour the words of the Oracle of the land. Obierika warned Okonkwo from partaking in the killing of the boy but he did not listen. Obierika while warning Okonkwo had remembered his wife's twins that were killed because having twins is a forbidden act in Umuofia, and he wondered what crime these children had committed.

In addition to this, Nwoye, Okonkwo's lazy son, who weeps over Ikemefuna's death, asks why his father disowned him; thus, finally converts to Christianity. Nwoye's change to christianity, flaws his father's attempt to nurture him as an Umuofia man who is a great warrior and a hard working farmer with many wives. However, another incident that flaws Okonkwo's identity is when he beats his wife during the keeping of peace week, the council makes him pay a fine, claiming that they must live in peace before planting crops so as not to offend the goddess of the earth. After Okonkwo accidentally shoots a child, the elders exile him from his own clan for seven years in order to avoid potential retaliation from the bereaved. A true Umuofia person does not identify with these kind of practices yet Okonkwo goes against it but respects the judgement passed on him. Even though he commits these crimes Okonkwo eventually abandons his traditional beliefs and customs by committing suicide, which is considered an offence against the Earth in Igbo culture. Obierika, a close friend to Okonkwo, is not happy about the death of his friend. He believes that the death is caused by colonisation of the land because they converted most of their people to christianity. Obierika, therefore, wants the District Commissioner and

everyone he represents to take responsibility for Okonkwo's self-destruction, as he claims 'that man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself and now he will be buried like a dog...' (*Fall Apart*, 68).

However, Okonkwo's concern to maintain who he is and his identity protection from the colonised, is because of how his manliness (that defines his identity) has been dismantled or deconstructed. His every attempt to protect his identity and restore the precolonial cultural practice of his people, is sabotaged by the circumstances around him, especially when his son joins the new culture he is fighting against. Who his son has become, reflects very much on his identity.

Instead, Nwoye's decision to change his name to Isaac, which has the connotation of rebirth, solidifies his commitment to the new faith. But the name he chooses has significance beyond its immediate sense of individual redemption, for it recalls when Abraham was given an animal in exchange for his son, Isaac, intended for sacrifice. This Act was a start of a new beginning in the sacrifice culture to please a vexed God. Nwoye's choice to change his name to Isaac enacts a symbolic correction of Ikemefuna's killing, and gives complete meaning to his conversion as primarily a sign of his escape from the ancestral universe' constraints. Nwoye's story with his father shows a family background that revolves around strained father-son relationships. This complete act by Nwoye down plays Okonkwo's identity who has toiled so hard into transferring the qualities of an ideal Umuofia man into his son. Just like he did not accept to be a sacrifice by his father's laziness and weaknesses, so too has his son who decides to break away from everything that reminds him of his father. This also includes him defying the very custom and traditions that 'nurtured' him by accepting the culture of colonisers in Umuofia village. However, Okonkwo, just like his son, questions his identity through his different reactions. According to Stuart Hall identity is the ground in which action happens. The self starts from one's psychology to the point they are able to physically express and accept who they are. If identity is the ground of action, it explains Okonkwo's actions, especially fighting not to be anything closer to his father and fighting for his son to be more like him and at the same time fighting the infiltrated culture. To Hall, there is a constant search for self-hood.

Okonkwo's self search is much seen in his obsession of maintaining Umuofia's customs and traditions which means passing it on to the next generation. His suicide

at the end of the text justifies that he never got to that place that one will know when they get there. Hence getting there helps one understand who they are. The protagonist like other characters process their identity. Okonkwo seems to have lost touch with himself. On the other hand, his son, Nwoye gains his self-awareness. He accepts colonisation by taking a new name Isaac, which means accepting a culture that defies his father. A better understanding of this scenario is achieved when considering Stuart's view on identity. His definition of identity is a central point in some conceptual, theoretical and political debates. He is interested in it as a kind of existential reality because he thinks the logic of identity is crucial to our own self-concepts. It holds the idea of the true self, some genuine self hidden beneath the pretentious falsehood of selves people present to the rest of the world. It is a kind of assurance of genuineness. He explains that they will not know what we are "really saying" until they go deep inside and listen to what their true selves have to say. Okonkwo's true self is lost when he is exiled and also lost when his son converts to another culture. But looking around him, it is well-organised in terms of space. Much of the discussion of the inside and outside, of the self and other, of the individual and society, of the protagonist, Okonkwo and his son, Nwoye, is based on this identity logic of what they feel inside and what the environment represents.

However, Stuart Hall (2019) takes a step on a deeper discussion that resonates with Okonkwo's identity. He posits that it is impossible to adhere to Marx's logic of identity because, while Marx does speak of men and women breaking records, he does so under circumstances that are not of their choosing. He does not speak of history made by women, but perhaps they were inserted in under some other masculine title, as the nineteenth century subverted women to masculinity. Hall explains that as individuals or as groups, cannot be, and never have been, the sole originators or writers of writing practices, because the identity of women were always represented not of their choosing. In terms of social practice, there is a significant historical decentering. The historical decentering appears to be Okonkwo's state of being towards the end of the text. The presence of the missionaries in Umuofia, a new culture, came as a sign of historical decentering. As if that was not enough, Hall asserts that Freud's perspective on identity explains that the language of identity happens highly in human psyche and only few people understand that. According to Freud, identity can be understood first psychologically before physical manifestation. This means that the



unconscious translates clearly identity language rather than what the conscious interprets.

Furthermore, Hall believes that group identities rise and fall, and it is nearly impossible to tell if this inconsistency is dangerous. The people of Umuofia have a collective social identity which historically they have maintained. Yet, their fall steps in when the missionaries take over the land and start forcing them to denounce some of their cultural values, thereby defying their cultural identity, for example, someone like Okonkwo feels lost. He tries to rise back by fighting against these missionaries denouncing the church, the school and the court house they built.

Understanding social groups relationships in Umuofia is structured by class, which is the main locator of social position. Through the economy possessions, it connects them to material life. Having the highest barn of yams in Umuofia, made anyone identified himself with the upper class of Umuofia men that were respected based on their possessions. This is a very important cultural trait in Umuofia. This economic possessions, supplies the code that allowed them to communicate with one another. According to Hall, supplied codes allow people to communicate in each other's languages, that is, language of power, identity and class.

However, Okonkwo's identity crisis and an attempt to protect his selfhood is entangled in the fact he is distinguishing between what one is and what the other is. He sees clearly the 'other' in his father (Unoka), his son (Nwoye) and the missionaries. This 'other' is the misrepresentation of what their culture is not. For example, his father died with no titles, not a warrior, had no barn of yams and only one wife. The missionaries are converting the people of Umuofia and its neighbouring villages to embrace a new culture that will cause them to abandon their old cultural practices. His son converts to a christian, with the name Isaac. Relationships of love and desire often complicate the attempt to expel the other person to the other side of the unknown. Which is what happens with Okonkwo and his relationships, with his son, father, and his village, Umuofia. This 'Other' that is shown around Okonkwo has a place in one's heart. This is the Other, which can only be understood from the vantage point from which one stands. This is the self as seen through the eyes of the Other. That the unspoken silence that exists between what can be said is the only way to achieve the entirety of history. There is no other way to record history than to include the absences and silences alongside what can be said (Stuart Hall, 2019).

Hall in giving more insights to some critics' point of views shows a clearer picture on what identity and selfhood are. According to Hall (2019) the idea that identity can hold two histories but each not coexisting when interpreted from one's psyche to the physical terrain seems not feasible in the globalised world. Hall explains how frustrating it is not being understood for who one is. Being able to be recognised properly in a community where one is almost feeling lost is important. Unlike the 'black' who knew who they were after a long struggling of undefined identity, it is different for Okonkwo to maintain his long known identity. Unlike the above example, Okonkwo has lived in Umuofia with no clear doubt of any glaring 'other'.

With the coming of the missionaries, it is safe to say that the identity known to Umuofia people has gradually turned into two histories, that is, what they use to know and what is known now. Hall believes that it is unacceptable to believe that identity is defined by people who look alike, feel alike, and refer to themselves as such. He explains that it is always told from the perspective of the 'Other', whether as a process, a narrative, or a discourse, yet, it is still within the realm of possibility. He postulates that identity is not something we create outside of ourselves and then tell stories about. It is what is told in one's own words. These are crucial ways of attempting to think an identity that is not a closed or sealed totality. This immediately shows the reaction of the protagonist, Okonkwo, towards his son. He believes that identity is a sealed or closed in totality which means practicing what is known and accepted already by the Umuofia people instead of compromising it with the new christian culture in their community. His years in exile at his mother's village still showed him to be a rigid person not accepting change. He believes that what Umuofia practices is an ideal cultural identity that deserve to be preserved especially passing it on to the right generation for continuity.

However, a shift in consciousness, self-recognition, a new method of identification, and the emergence into prominence of a new subject are all part of that struggle that is seen between Okonkwo and his son and also between him and his father. This known cultural identification by Okonkwo is a new topic that has always existed in Umuofia village but has become more obscure in their cultural history. Culture, defined as the means by which people and communities make sense of themselves and symbolically reflect their real-life circumstances to themselves, cannot exist without reference to history. Cultures change over time, both internally and

externally (Stuart Hall, 2019). Okonkwo reflects Umuofia community in his obsession to train his child, Nwoye to be a man and his constant struggle not to be like his 'lazy' father. When he returns back from Mbanta village after serving his exile term, he discovers that Umuofia has changed over time both internally and externally. His son has picked up a new name (Isaac) given by the new culture. Okonkwo has shown several times to be adamant to change which explains why he commits suicide at the end of the story because he can not stand to accept colonisation that has affected the cultural identity of his people neither does he want to reconstruct himself with the new christian culture.

However, in the process of cultural pride, Okonkwo loses his ideal identity. It is seen that at the end Okonkwo does not finally reconstruct himself nor restore his culture in an expected way like his son. His son, being unhappy under his father's hegemony, finally finds peace in a new self as a result of a shift in culture. He gains a new culture that he expresses and finds his freedom with. On the other hand, Okonkwo in the course of the novel has shown to be adamant. He neither relates nor accepts Umuofia's new cultural norms. He rejects his father, looks down on his maternal cultural practices for the seek of the ideal cultural identity he knows and rejects the infiltrated culture. In his struggle to maintain this and not look weak, he lost his life while being unable to reconstruct himself. Life gave Okonkwo chances that he deprived his son from. When he is on exile to Mbanta village, his maternal village, his uncle, Uchendu, welcomed him nicely and the whole village happy to have him. He still chooses not to see himself as part of that community, the fear of losing his Umuofia cultural identity in Mbanta. He is not too bothered because he knows he will go back to Umuofia. While on exile they had a son. The name he gives his new son is Nwofia which means "Begotten in the Wilderness" (*Fall Apart*, 54). In returning to where he felt was home, Okonkwo met a changed community. The missionaries had converted almost everybody in the Umuofia to christianity and his son was one of them.

### III. POSTCOLONIAL IDEOLOGY AND HEGEMONY

This chapter centers around postcolonial notion which explains that ideology sustains cultural institutions such as school, church, trading and judiciary system. It explores the aforementioned institutions to shed light on the protagonist's identity in *Things Fall Apart*. Ideological practices constitute the human subject, and his identity within his community; and it is what allows him to function. The aim is to scrutinise Okonkwo's ideological standpoints to observe how the postcolonial ideology drives him to relate with real life. Therefore, the contribution of free will to his identity is also considered.

Postcolonial critics like Frantz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak among its critics outline important ideological points that are of great concern within this field and worth mentioning in this study. Fanon (1952) paved a way for postcolonial studies. He raised major concerns on the key ideologies within this field. This book talks about colonial domination on human psyche. This is done especially through schools. This is one of the social institutions discussed in this chapter. A medium through which colonisers use to spread their cultural ideology. He highlights how the identity of a black man is distorted with the western ideology of what an ideal cultural identity looks like. He dwells more on how they do this assimilation through the psyche. The first thing the missionaries do when they arrive the Igbo community is, they build school first and churches. They do not take time to understand the culture of the people.

Homi K. Bhabha (1994) on the other hand, talks about cultural hybridity and the Third Space. He explains in this text that cultural hybridity takes in what he calls the Third Space. He argues that when other cultures come into contact with other cultures what happen is, they become cultural hybrid. He insinuates that cultural resistance does not dismiss this reality. This point is seen in the colonial ideology present in the text. Okonkwo resists the colonial ideology of education and Christianity that is spread through the churches constructed by colonisers across the communities.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2010) contributes to postcolonial studies as she draws concerns on how the Eurocentric subject disavow the problem of representation. She overthrows the binary position of centre and margin, subject and object, self and other, and the occident and orient. These binary positions are identifiable in *Things Fall Apart*. The missionaries become the centre, subject, self and occident while the locals become the margin, object, other and orient. She speaks against these binaries. The cultural hegemony shifts with the presence of the colonisers as they become the cultural determinants of the people. Among these mentioned postcolonial critics are other critics that have contributed greatly to the field.

Bill Ashcroft et al. (2002) talk about the ideology of place and displacement. This is because the cultural identity of a person is greatly affected in the process. There seems to be a problem with the recovery of the self and place. This is seen in *Things Fall Apart* as Okonkwo is finding it hard to reconcile with a shift in a place he has once identified himself with. The colonisers have changed this place with their Christian, trading, educational and judiciary system ideologies. Okonkwo's attempt to resist these ideologies at the same time projects his alienation vision and the crisis with his self-image produced by displacement and place. When he comes back from his exile from Mbanta village, he no longer recognises his place (Umuofia) because of the presence of the missionaries and their newly introduced culture. The rulers' (missionaries) ideologies open a cultural gap between the place (Umuofia) and the language that describes the form as that of identity crisis. Someone like Okonkwo finds himself in this cultural gap because his cultural language seems inadequate to describe this new place of cultural displacement or what Homi K. Bhabha (1994) describes as the Third Space. This third space is where cultural hybridisation take place. Okonkwo's inability to recognise this third space or cultural gap can be because of cultural enslavement. The systemically presence of this colonial ideology in *Things Fall Apart* shows an inevitable condition of alienation that the colonising language has slowly replaced with the existing cultural ideologies of the locals of Umuofia and other villages. The colonisers' ideology of education especially building many schools show hegemony through language and subversion.

Mohammed Ilyas (2020) contends that hegemony in another sense means domination of consent. He explains that this is when the ruling class especially the colonisers make it known to the colonised that the colonisers have come to work for

their interest. This aspect can be seen in *Things Fall Apart* when missionaries remind the people that the only great and respectable queen is the queen of England. They claim that they are in Umuofia, Mbanta and neighbouring villages working for their good. They convince them to attend the schools they have built to become more civilise. ‘‘Gradually, they dominated not by making use of political or military force, but by a morally subtle and inclusive power over their minds’’ (Ilyas, 2020: 77). Gradually the missionaries dominated the locals as they slowly judged and explained to them what they felt right and wrong, using their own cultural ideas. They conscientised the people avoiding to, use force and at the same time not being political. They gave the impression that the people were choosing by their own free will. Their tricks showed how they have a morally subtle and inclusive power over their minds. They gave gifts to those who converted to Christianity and at the same threw parties for the same purpose. They celebrated the weaknesses of the weak in Umuofia, Mbanta and the neighbouring villages. The presence of the missionaries in this community is also seen how they dominate their cultural values and beliefs. This is achieved through the spread of their cultural ideologies.

According to Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick (2008), traditional approach has the term "ideology" which refers to abstracted and entirely artificial forms of thought that serve to naturalise, and such to legitimise capitalism's dominant social order. The ideological main structure of ideas that serve to legitimise capitalist power is an articulation of the ruling class's priorities. And the foundation of material relations of production is directly mirrored in the ideological and structural system of ideas that serve to legitimise capitalist power.

Edgar and Sedgwick (2008) argue that although the philosophy of ideology gives an account of how ideas are structured that naturalises the rule of the privileged majority, it does not properly address how capitalism simultaneously attempt to replicate the states of production necessary for its continued survival. They both acclaim that ideology works through apparatuses to create individual subjectivity and assign them specific positions within the capitalist system of production. For example, Althusser posits that, the educational system serves to meet the capitalist demand for people to fill a variety of positions in society. The educational system is one of the major things that the colonised establishes in Umuofia and the surrounding villages.

The missionaries show the capitalist tendencies with their educational system in these villages.

Edgar and Sedgwick (2008) explain that the majority of children abandon school at a young age, equipped with the basic skills needed for a future laborers interested in shop-floor cleaning; a smaller number stay in school for longer periods of time, gaining additional skills that enable them to fill the roles required for effective labor management. Fewer students are released from the educational system late in their careers to take over as senior state officials. In Umuofia it does not seem to be the case as the missionaries' target are not to make the locals senior state officials. Edgar and Sedgwick (2008) put forward that the term ideology was introduced by a French philosopher Destutt de Tracy referring to science of ideas. It was based on human perception and became the sub-discipline of biology. Edgar and Sedgwick are simply analysing the fact that Marx is the first to introduce ideology as a critical concept. Also, the famous observation by Marx that the ruling class's ideas are the ruling ideas in any society can be used to introduce Marx's approach to ideology. They imply that political interests shape the perceptions and knowledge of the world. The missionaries in Umuofia, Mbanta and in the neighbouring villages, show their political interests through the activities that they introduce in these lands. Certain beliefs and ways of looking at the world will serve the interests of the ruling class. These classes can be seen in *Things Fall Apart*. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo strives to be of the ruling class in Umuofia village, but this is only possible in the precolonial time before the coming of the missionaries. The colonisers becoming the ruling class determines the activities of the people.

Edgar and Sedgwick (2008) justify that the true social and collective nature of human life is thus obscured, and the prospects for successful proletarian resistance to capitalism are reduced. Because of its control over different forms of communication and education, the ruling class is able to spread its ideas across society (such as the church and schools). In *Things Fall Apart*, the church and school are those cultural institutions that spread the colonial ideas across the community. The coming of the church in Umuofia village and the construction of schools in that community become the sign of a colonial dominant class.

Edgar and Sedgwick (2008) holds the opinion that at one level, religion distorts the understanding of the social world among the lower classes, not least because it

promises heaven to those who endure the injustices of the world. Nonetheless, the allusion to opium is significant, not only because it dulls the perception of pain, but also because it induces dreams. Heaven is thus, a serious (though not literal) concept to be taken seriously because it contains a reflection of justice especially one that should be recognised in the present life and not afterlife. In *Things Fall Apart*, the ideology of farming is a bigger cultural trait to Umuofia culture. They have other cultural values that they identify with. Marrying many wives and being a great warrior are cultural traits that the colonial ideology defies. Both Edgar and Sedgwick assert that the task of the ideology critique is to recognise how ideology inverts the way someone understands real problems and being able to identify and address the real problem. According to them, in the twentieth century the Marxist account of ideology went through two major revisions. First, Gramsci's development of the theory of hegemony addressed the issue that ideology appeared as a theory to imply the possibility of passive ideas on the lower classes. They postulate that hegemony concept proposes negotiated ideologies in the face of conflicting evidence and personal experiences. The second edition as they assert, is based on the structuralist Althusser's work in France. It is not necessary for ideology to be about what people believe, but rather how they act their 'lived relations.' Their contention is that ideological practices are assumed to define the human subject and his or her identity within capitalism, enabling him or her to function. Anne Markus (1990) contends that Stuart Hall believes that ideology offers a method for analysing discourse in relation to social practices and systems that are systematic and detailed. However, Markus explains further that through practice, structure is actively replicated. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo is determined to resist the colonial invasion until he succeeds but unfortunately for him, he commits suicide rather than accept defeat. Practices do not happen in a vacuum; they are limited by structure. The structures Okonkwo functions on are family, farming and war. Structure is actively developed and replicated through practice in the reciprocal relationship between structure and practice, just as practice is constrained by structure. Certain meanings and practices are encouraged by the combination of structure and practice, while others are discouraged.

The structure and practice in *Things Fall Apart* is that of farming and family, these are encouraged. This is seen how a man is defined by how many farms he owns. The new structures by the colonisers stirs cultural conflict and identity crisis. The



construction of schools, churches and their judiciary system cause division in these communities. The structure and practice of the Christian religion ideology is seen as a cultural threat by the protagonist to Umuofia culture. Okonkwo discourages and resist the colonisers' practice and system of governance when he fights with the messenger that came to pass a message during their elder meeting.

However, the dominant ideologies of these structures somehow play greater roles on determining an ideal cultural practice for the communities in *Things fall Apart*. For example, Makus implies that a structured set of complicated procedures makes up society. So, classes are divided by their common interests and the social circumstances that shape them, but they are bound together by their authority as dominant forces in society. The dominant institutions in *Things Fall Apart* form a fractured alliance of dominance in these communities, winning the active consent of those who are subordinated to their power. The active consent of Nwoye is won in some of the structures (religion and school) as a cultural subordinate of this community. Thus, how Okonkwo chooses to identify himself within these colonial ideological structures is well beneath the scream of liberation from the grip of these establishments. Makus giving more insights to Stuart Hall's thoughts, explains that ideology's systemic and structural levels of operation contain identifiable different elements ideology.

Ideologies in linguistics determines their reality rather than implied meaning. They are set of rules that link social networks together. In the text under study, the different cultural elements within ideologies in this text identifies the structural levels of operation. Rather in Okonkwo's attempt to function as an individual entity, that is, in redefining the authentic cultural representation of Umuofia within given ideologies raise unsolvable tension. The set of rules within the cultural strata in this text strain Okonkwo's ability to fully revolt his attempt on colonial invasion. Okonkwo in *Things fall Apart* blame his father for breaking cultural rules of Umuofia village by being lazy. His father has been the opposite of what an ideal Umuofia man is, and the protagonist is not proud of that. The significance of this, is attested by Makus when he asserts that individual sign articulation has a far-reaching impact on a culture's understanding of a situation, as well as the range of meanings and possible actions that can be taken in the situation. Makus maintains that 'the articulation between ideology and social

forces . . . would investigate the ways in which non-necessary connections exist between ideological formulations and . . . social structures' (Makus, 1990: 505).

However, Jorge Larrain (1979) explains Marx's point of view on ideology when he posits that ruling class and ruling ideas are factors that help to define a cultural practice of a people. There are accepted cultural strata within communities. Therefore, dominant classes are just dominant ideologies accepted and practiced by the people. For example, in *Things Fall Apart*, there is a dominant ideology of school, judiciary system and religion. Thus, religion, judiciary system and school are cultural institutions within these communities brought by colonisers as a way of assimilating the people. This introduction strains the known cultural practices of the people and causes some of them to revolt especially Okonkwo.

At this juncture, it is important to bring a clear understanding of culture which is a backdrop on which the argument under this chapter sprouts from. Roger Griffin (2006) clarifies that there is no single "right" definition of culture. He explains that culture is something that is not "out there" waiting to be properly explained by theorists but rather culture, on the other hand, is a tool that is more or less useful to people as a life form. Griffin at the end insinuates that, culture's meanings and applications have evolved as thinkers have attempted to 'do' different things with it. Therefore, people should inquire not about what society is, but rather about how culture's language is used and for what purposes. He contends that within the increasingly strong field of 'cultural production,' which has formed around the concept of culture and ideology, has taken on a new meaning. Griffin believes that cultural systems are conditioned by past and future action, actions lie at the core of culture, which conjures up the term ideology. Ideology here is a system of collectively held normative and reputedly authentic ideas, beliefs, and attitudes supporting a particular pattern of social relations and structures, and this certainly applies to culture.

Griffin further posits that an initial objection might be that this approach limits ideology to a verbal realm, obviating consideration of its wider semiotic, ritual, artistic, technological, and material representation in external reality, which becomes the unique domain of 'culture' by default. He broadens the understanding of his point when he quotes Raymond Geuss as he outlines that ideology is made up of beliefs, ideas, rituals, attitudes because it treats the universal aspect of human society, especially social groups. In *Things Fall Apart*, the excerpt helps to explain the cultural

experiences of the novel. The protagonist struggles to protect the familiar cultural identity known to his people through colonial resistance. This implies that it becomes possible to see ideology as a hidden 'aspect' of all human cultural activity and its material products, one that only emerges when a specific heuristic perspective is applied to it.

Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* is determined to maintain the familiar domestic routine he understands in his community, Umuofia, and this means making sure he is a great mentor to his son and resisting colonialism. These individual ideologies command respect and defines an 'acceptable' identity. Only the people considered weak in Umuofia are quick to accept this new colonial identity. Griffin presupposes that when the notion of ideology's conscious or unconscious function replaces one of its constituents, the craggy contours of an ideal type of ideology as a cultural construct, one that gives it an elective affinity with culture. Griffin outlines the significance of ideology as an integral and fundamental part of all human culture, and it has the paradoxical quality of being either replicatory and repressive, or creative and emancipatory, depending on the context. This means that ideology both in the generation and implementation of revolutionary, future-oriented projects for the creation of fundamentally new circumstances, and in social conditioning, acculturation, and the perpetuation of the past through tradition, plays a key role.

Griffin throws more light by explaining that all human culture has an ideological component, but only when viewed through the lens of ideology, much like "everything is social" when viewed through the lens of social interactions. As a result, social activities and cultural artifacts can be considered ideological without being diminished to their function of deceiving, mystifying, and twisting 'reality' for the benefit of unseen interested parties or institutional forces.

Griffin summarises his argument by stating that ideology can thus, be seen as a cultural product as well as a producer. A cultural construct as well as a constitutive element in the formation of culture is a phenomenon who's most striking feature in the human context continuously reproduces itself without ever perfectly replicating itself. He expatiates that human culture is able to adapt, innovate, and evolve in a manner that mirrors the genetic processes at the heart of a natural selection-based evolutionary process because of this imperfect copying process. The coming of the 'new' culture in Umuofia village becomes adaptable to most of the people considered 'weak' by that

community. Nwoye is one of the weak people that changes his name to Isaac. They are the ones who make the culture of Umuofia innovated and evolved.

However, this example demonstrates that the relationship between ideology and culture thus confronts contemporary life and human scientists in their attempt to discover the genesis, evolutionary, and self-replicating processes that allow for both biological and social change.

### **A. Things Fall Apart**

Judiciary system, religion and schools are social institutions that are identifiable in *Things Fall Apart*. They become the core part of Umuofia community after the occupation of the land by colonisers. These structures definitely have a great influence on how Okonkwo and some other characters in the text behave. His status quo is built on the pre-existing social structures which implies why his identity is affected because these institutions are destroyed by colonialism. The ideology of these institutions brought by the colonised changes the lifestyle of Umuofia people and instigate revolt attitude in Okonkwo. It is also important to note that the functioning of these institutions in Umuofia is because its existence depends on individuals as well as groups of people. For example, the institution of family is what it is because of the ideology that it holds in this novel. Okonkwo like any other grown up man in his community has more than one wife. In Okonkwo's community a man is respected by the number of wives and children that you have and also being a great farmer. Okonkwo "had a large barn full of yams and he had three wives" (*Fall Apart*, 15). This is considered a great achievement because it is part of the cultural trait within Okonkwo's village that defines their cultural belonging and identity. Unfortunately, there existed different cultural institutions before the coming of the missionaries.

Every male individual in Umuofia community identifies with the family institution known to the community for the sake of generational survival. The family institution in Umuofia meets the needs of Okonkwo and his people by filling expected roles and behavior. Okonkwo's thoughts at the start of the novel exposed clearly on how he feels about his father and his role as a family head. He clashes with his father for setting a bad idea on an ideal Umuofia family man. For anyone to be culturally identified as a true clan of Umuofia it is important to be a great farmer. Unfortunately for Okonkwo, "Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbour some

money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts” (*Fall Apart*, 11). As a family head this was not a reputation to keep. The survival of a family is dependent on the reputation the family keeps. Okonkwo feels disappointed with his father for keeping a weak reputation. He swore by his acts not to be anything like his father. This is because his father ‘was such a man that he always succeeded in borrowing more and piling up his debts’ (*Fall Apart*, 13). Okonkwo does not want to pass this kind of laziness to his son. For example, Okonkwo’s father died without any titles and left his family with debts. Okonkwo feared for being judged but luckily for him in Umuofia village, a man is not judged by the worth of his father but by his own worth. He becomes hard on Nwoye because he is afraid, he might end up like his father. Okonkwo was a hard worker as “he was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams and had just married his third wife. To crown it all he had taken two titles and had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars” (*Fall Apart*, 17). Being a wealthy farmer, Okonkwo is considered to have taken his place in the community as a great family man with these achievements.

In Umuofia the idea of having a male child is very important in every family. It is an ideology that the people identify with. As a patriarchal community, this factor is very important. The expectations of male children in Umuofia culture is to take over their father’s farm and to an extent takes care of their family like Okonkwo did. Okonkwo excels as a child when he discovers that his father is not hard working and does not want to be anything like his father, he works extremely hard. For this reason, Okonkwo decides to be very hard with his son, Nwoye. He looked at other friends’ children and kept thinking about Nwoye. Okonkwo knew that a respected man in Umuofia owned barns of yams, especially a man that could feed his large family all round season, that is, the planting season and the harvesting season. This was an important cultural standard in Umuofia. An Umuofia man below this standard cannot be among the elders. Taking care of a family in Umuofia village with yams from one harvest is a very important cultural trait because it shows the greatness of the person. Okonkwo showed that he was not going to let his family be anything like what his father had. So, he became very hard on Nwoye and restrained him from staying with his mother in her hut all the time. Nwoye did not enjoy staying around his father and was always happy each time his mother calls for him or any of his father’s wives.

Male children are not expected to spend more time with their mothers than their fathers. Being around their fathers, entail being masculine which is what defines them. The identification of any male in Umuofia is being masculine. Another instance on the significance of male child is shown when Okonkwo wants Nwoye to be his successor when he dies. He wants him to be a successful man, that is, a great farmer with many barns of yams able to feed even the ancestors. So, each time Nwoye grumbled about women, Okonkwo was always proud of him. Okonkwo reveals that in Umuofia respect is gained from what kind of family you represent. He wants his son to be very tough and also to be a young capable man who can rule his father's household when he finally dies. He also wants his son to be a successful man, that is, being a great farmer. This can only be achieved if he stops hanging around women (his mother especially). In as much as Okonkwo wants his son to be successful, he is aware of putting more pressure. For Okonkwo to achieve this, he

encouraged the boys to sit with him in his obi, and he told them stories of the land--masculine stories of violence and bloodshed. "Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent (Achebe, 1995: 88).

In Umuofia, masculinity in men is very important. As a need of being an important man in Umuofia, teaching violence and bloodshed are traits that make you culturally acceptable. As much as Nwoye loves and want to be with his mother all the time, he understood that his father was against that and he pretended that he longer cared about women stories because that gave his father a smile all the time.

Every culture gives values family status, because family forms and molds people into who they are. People are often affected by their family's acts. Each family member makes a unique contribution and has a unique influence on the family's outcome. Men and women in various cultures have a number of tasks assigned to them, that is, how they respond to the cultural traits. Women are significant in some cultures like co-parenting, but in Umuofia culture, they only play the role of a wife and child bearer. Nwoye does not see things in the same way as his parents because their family is different. He wants to spend time with his mother, but his father does not appreciate it. Another point to consider is Okonkwo's daughter's reputation who is considered as a cursed girl because she keeps dying and being reborn. Though a cursed child, Okonkwo still find his daughter stronger than his son.

The idea of submission in a family is also another cultural trait that adds to the masculinity of a man in Umuofia. In Umuofia community, a woman is not part of decision making. Okonkwo is not pleased with his son hanging around his mother frequently. He thinks that by that act, his son is lazy. This is something Okonkwo believes that any of his wives to understand and respect. The practice of the ideology of having many wives constitute the who a man is in Umuofia and his identity within this community. This is what helps them to function well. When Okonkwo is on exile in Mbanta, he does not feel that same ideology is what the people of Mbanta practice. He is disappointed on their cultural ideologies. He has a warm welcome from his uncle, his mother's brother yet he does not feel at home. He thinks that the men in that land are weak in the way they practice their culture. His uncle, Uchendu reminds Okonkwo the function of family unit. He explains to him that in the family unit a child is named Nneka which means that mother is supreme. He says that when a child is troubled, they find comfort in the mother's warmth. Certainly, the only part Okonkwo is aware of is the fact a man belongs to his fatherland and not to his motherland. Ironically it is the motherland that gives him a home when he is on exile. When Okonkwo is unable to answer his Uncle's question, he is reminded that he is still a child who of course have many wives and children more than his uncle and respected by his clan, he is still a child. The response of Uchendu about the functionality of a family explains a cultural practice of the Mbanta people that Okonkwo does want to relate to because a child seeks the mother's warmth when they are sad. This alludes to why Nwoye prefers his mother to Okonkwo, and this explains especially why he is continuously hard on him. He is always in his mother's hut listening to folktales that makes him happy. His father thinks that these stories are greatly contributing to his laziness as a man.

However, family is not the only cultural institution that sustains a certain kind of ideology in this text. The idea of church is another contributing factor that acts as an identification medium. The coming of the church in Umuofia village causes the downfall of Okonkwo. The missionaries had built a church in Umuofia and had started converting the villagers. The missionaries were sending evangelists out every day to look for new converts. This was a sorrowful moment for title holders in Umuofia village. They believed that their gods were going to strike them dead in a matter of no time. Most of the converts were the considered weak and lazy ones in the village. This was a new cultural ideology infiltrating the Umuofia village. The coming of the

missionaries was not a good sign for Okonkwo because it was going to distort the cultural practice of the Umuofia people thus, their identity. Their converts on the land was obviously the 'weak' ones.

The new institution in Umuofia serves as an anchor for the culturally rejected people of Umuofia. Nwoye, who is the protagonist's son is among the converts. It is not surprising to see Nwoye identify himself quickly with this ideology because his father, Okonkwo has proven not to be proud of who Nwoye is. Nwoye could be considered among the unsuccessful men in Umuofia. "None of them was a man of title. They were mostly the kind of people that were called efulefu, worthless, empty men" (*Fall Apart*, 233). These were the easily converts. "Okonkwo's cousin, Amikwu, was passing by the church on his way from the neighboring village, when he saw Nwoye among the Christians" (*Fall Apart*, 246). Okonkwo is highly disappointed when he hears it. The family ideologies in Umuofia village and especially in Okonkwo's household are very much different from the new ideologies that the church brings. It looks like the new culture in Umuofia does not discriminate by making some people feel weak and useless. In fact, it is quite the opposite as it appreciates the weak and give them a chance to find new cultural identities and not feeling worthless. Okonkwo is not happy about these recent changes. The presence of this religion threatens his identity. A community where its people are no longer threatened by the rules that governs them makes the privileged ones of that community look weak and powerless. For example, Okonkwo commits suicide at the end because he feels he has lost touch of himself and as a result his true identity. His position in the community no longer threatens people.

The missionaries also bring in education ideology in Umuofia as they start building schools. Education provides people with skills and knowledge. It broadens one's perspective and outlook on life. It improves people's abilities to combat inequality, crime, corruption, and a variety of other negative aspects of society. When Nwoye's father finds out he has converted to a Christian he confronts him, but he decides to leave his father. Nwoye goes to see Mr Kiaga in church and informs him that he wants to go back to Umuofia to attend the missionaries' school where people are taught on how to read and write. This was going to provide Nwoye with new knowledge, ability, technique and facts to recognise his rights and obligations towards his family and community in a different way from what his father expected. He had a



whole new plan different from what his father expected. 'He was happy to leave his father. He would return later to his mother and his brothers and sisters and convert them to the new faith' (*Fall Apart*, 248). From this, it can be seen that Nwoye did not include his father in his return probably because he understood already that his father was a staunch Umuofia man who can never change his ideology about Umuofia culture. Nwoye and many others (weak ones) embracing this new ideology quickly in one way shows how the colonisers' intrusion is more successful.

On the other hand, Okonkwo feels betrayed by his people especially his son for embracing this new ideology without questions on how that will change their culture. Okonkwo of course does not see any good that this culture could bring to Umuofia except to destroy their long existing customs and tradition. He was a man of rage and had always acted spontaneously on this feeling. Okonkwo unable to act as he feels shows a little sign of defeat as he can no longer control things like he used to. This new infiltrated culture becomes a new threat on the mother culture in these communities. The missionaries threatened that "if Umuofia failed to send her children to the schools they build, strangers would come from other places to rule them" (*Fall Apart*, 289). To Okonkwo, strangers were already ruling his once precious community.

Educating the people of Umuofia and Mbanta villages becomes an effective tool that alters these people's views how they are treated in their communities. A well-educated Umuofia person will know how to deal with a number of issues. The new Christian culture continuously makes the Umuofia culture to lose its value. Mbanta's Evil Forest, for example, turns out to be less dangerous than they thought; their gods spare the missionaries from retribution. The missionaries started giving room for the considered taboos in the community. In Umuofia, if a woman gives birth to twins, the twins are killed. The presence of Christian culture reverses this practice. The first female convert is protected by the missionaries when she gives birth to set of twins. They also protect the ones who are considered evil and are about to be sent to the evil forest. Mr Kiaga continued with his evangelism encouraging the villagers to come to church on Sunday for worship.

The missionaries obviously expect the new Christians in the group to adopt a new weekly calendar. The story suddenly refers to "Sunday" rather than the Igbo days of the week. Is it likely that the missionaries were aware of the Igbo four-day week? Did they tell the tale of the seven-day creation? Consider the effect on a group when

strangers enforce a new day-week schedule. 'Okonkwo's eyes were opened, and he saw the whole matter clearly. Living fire begets cold, impotent ash' (*Fall Apart*, 250). This statement shows how Okonkwo gives up at the end. At this point he understands that he can no longer hold on to what is broken already.

In a nutshell, John J. Macionis (2017) argues that 'ideology, cultural beliefs justify particular social arrangements, including patterns of inequality' (p. 215). This explains why the inequality in Umuofia village has caused social imbalance. The 'efulefu' as mentioned in the text are the weak ones or the outcasts (osu) are the culturally deprived. In fact, 'having been dedicated to a god, the osu was taboo and was not allowed to mix with the freeborn in any way' (*Fall Apart*, 335). This shows the inequality in this community that has been practiced by the people of Umuofia.

The infiltration of the new ideology in Umuofia, Mbanta and other neighboring villages in the text has been able to show that ideology sustains cultural institutions such as judiciary system, school, church, farming and family. These institutions have been able to shed light on Okonkwo, the protagonist's identity because through what he does not accept, his true self is shown and because he does not want to trade his identity, he commits suicide at the end. The new colonial ideological practices have shown to constitute the human subject, that is, both the Umuofia and the Mbanta people and their cultural identity within their communities; thus, leaving them with a new perspective on how to function. In the process of this analysis Okonkwo's standpoints has been scrutinised and observed that this new colonial ideology has driven him to relate with real life differently but in a way that he does not appreciate. In his attempt to continuously impose on how things are done and refusal to accept the cultural change, destroys his free will to his identity.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

To summarise, postcolonial critics refute colonial gaze and Chinua Achebe exhibits in *Things Fall Apart* false Eurocentric beliefs of the missionaries, the District Commissioner and the other British colonisers. In this text, Achebe successfully shows that the colonised are not primitive or savages from the western perspective. From the development of the plot one can see clearly the precolonial era and the colonial era. This illustration by Achebe clearly states how the colonised had a culture that they believed in and in it they existed in unity. This precolonial period also shows that the colonised had an identity thereby rebuking the idea that colonial gaze gives identity to Africans.

Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Spivak, Edward Said and many other postcolonial critics like Achebe admires the precolonial times. Achebe's hero refuses to accept colonisation thereby committing suicide at the end. The coloniser promises to write a book about the Igbo community but promises to write a small paragraph for Okonkwo. He clearly states that he will leave out some details. This part shows Achebe's reaction on the text *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. This novel depicts a western colonialism phenomenon that tarnishes the territory and the people it exploits. The dehumanisation of the colonised. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* partly reacts to this kind of representation, showing the richness in cultural values of Africans and rebuking the Western claim that they are primitive. From the District Commissioner's book title 'The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger' and his intention to leave out important details, showed Achebe's point that these people had values before their coming. The colonisers constantly referred to the custom and traditions of the Igbo community as primitive.

It is important to note that the cultural identity that Okonkwo protects, is from a place where his culture is derived first from his geographical reality that constitutes the continent of Africa as a unitary entity. On the other hand, it is from a place familiar to him that they are a majority, sharing similar identical cultures and traditions. He commits suicide at the end of novel showing his frustration and his identity crisis

within Bhabha's third space existence. He is the only one who does not find this place familiar but his son, some of his family members and the villagers embrace being hybridised.

This novel carried considerable ideological weight within the specific context of the novel's writing and reception. It was with no doubt that the comprehensive scope of Achebe's depiction of a particularised imagined communities engaged in its own social processes, that is, the infiltrated cultures conflicted with their ideal identities, thereby challenging the simplified representation that the Western identity was of more value than the African cultures. The novel testified to a style of communicating that enforced the initial gesture within the novel of cultural reclamation.

This novel presented a human's corner of endeavor that was marked by the web of contradictions within the protagonist and his common destinies had everywhere and at all times been entangled. The complexed nature of the relationship between past and present self of Okonkwo was reflected within the process of colonialism and cultural hegemony. Paradoxically, Okonkwo's identity and sense of life-continuity were deeply disrupted by colonialism, which he resisted and tried to reclaim his culture. The struggled with cultural protection in this text, questioned what the protagonist remembers.

What the postcolonial critics illustrated in this study was an analogy with the struggle of identity protection amidst colonialism, which Okonkwo assumed that the past still existed 'somewhere', waiting to be reclaimed from the ruins of colonialism. It was also a cultural struggle over self-search and meanings of memory within his culture, especially the ways in which Okonkwo constructed the very means and possibility of remembering. The presence of colonialism experienced by Okonkwo, maintain a victimised identity and asserted an exclusive possession which he fought to reclaim.

The major concern in this study has been to outline the ills of colonialism that affected the cultural identity of the people in Umuofia, Mbanta and its environs, especially Okonkwo who feels his identity is threatened and his culture defied. Okonkwo is able to express his pain through his reaction to the messenger from the District Commissioner. He beats the messenger and left the meeting. Along the line, the silence is created at some point in the novel the disjointed understanding states of consciousness. Silence is seen to be rhetorical strategy, instead of an emptiness created

by the experience of colonialism in the novel. Colonialism in this novel offers its own approach through how the protagonist view the self before and after its experience. This highlights the available culturally enlightened narrative structures for expressing his cultural experiences, instead of minimising the construction of identity or producing a binary mental philosophy to understand human behavior and emotions. The new structures were made approachable through society's values and cultural practices in the world of the novel.

When Okonkwo is exiled to Mbanta, he is unable to talk about how he feels to anyone. This stage in his life is a climax where his cultural identity starts being affected especially because he does not discuss his feelings for fear of appearing weak in front of his uncle, his family and the elders of Mbanta.

The novel indicates that colonisation disrupted the cultural reality of the protagonist. The inability for Okonkwo to perceive his external and internal reality, and his experiences and organisation of identity thus led to the popular proclamation that colonial experiences "shatter" identity and naturally pathologises the person. Yet, the presence of colonisation in the novel, demonstrates that the protagonist is forced to recognise perceptions of reality and explore how the colonial effects changed previous conceptions of self. Noticing these discrepancies in regard to the transformation of consciousness permits a perspective of colonialism Okonkwo experienced in the novel beyond a pathologic paradigm that insists on the fragmentation of this subject matter. This also promoted a discussion of the consequences of colonialism in order to prevent an understanding that goes beyond a narrow binary paradigm that produces an either/or description of colonial experience and memory in the protagonist's mind. The crisis of cultural identity in the novel experienced by Okonkwo has also shown that the reorganised self is relational and arises relative to a specific position that creates a specific articulation of a transformed personality, in contrast to the expression and consequent release of a previously repressed emotion of self as a fixed object that then fragments. The attempted self-expression by the protagonist is socially contingent and linked to a position of inhabitation and purpose, rather than being solely reliant on a linear re-enactment of a colonial experience.

As a consequence, the protagonist's subjectivity is represented as a fluid phenomenon that arises in reaction to new realities or information. Instead of

uniformly portraying colonisation as a timeless or repeated occurrence, or as an experience only understood by somatic symptoms, the colonial effects experienced by Okonkwo in the novel under study creates a complex variety of colonial imagery, implying the multiplicity of responses and modes of consciousness. Since Okonkwo's vision of reality is founded on specific moral truths established in the novel that are central to the creation of the self, their understanding became skewed after a colonial incident. The frequency of colonial experience by the protagonist remain in relation to a coherent sense of reality that needs to be reorganised as a result of the colonial painful reorientation process. Okonkwo portrays the expanded identification of self and the revision of his relationship with society as a result of colonial experience. The protagonist's attempted recovery in *Things Fall Apart* depended upon accepting his identity which contain stories of his role in the communities and imaginary reality. Significantly, the place of colonisation in the novel experienced by Okonkwo foregrounded the social dimensions of his individual experience, which shapes the meaning of his living and its narrative form.

As a consequence, one crucial difference between narrative representations of colonial experiences in the text under study that disorients the protagonist's consciousness and the argument that its effects shatter his identity is that the latter presupposes an absolute epistemological and ontological split, which leads to an awareness vacuum or erasure. This is because in the process of self-reconstruction he cannot reconnect with the culture that gives him meaning to his existence. Okonkwo's colonial experiences interrupted prior perceptions of self and environment, but in many situations as seen in the text, it is the result of an adaptive reorganisation of thinking in response to a violent reality committed by his community. Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, shows the impact of colonialism from a cross-cultural perspective that combines an existing defined Umuofia culture and the invaded Western cultural views. He strives to recover from disruptive memories only by viewing colonial invasion as a cultural mob that threatens his cultural existence and that of his people. Okonkwo, the protagonist, experiences the crisis of death and commits suicide at the end of the novel as a result of refusing to give in to colonial culture. Okonkwo is reputable figure because he is a great warrior recognised by his community. Okonkwo is constantly in a thinking position on how to maintain his cultural status quo.

Therefore, the effort to grapple with the protagonist's struggle for a recognised identity in his community, was an ambitious effort to examine a determining act of counteracting unfamiliar cultures. In the novel, the precolonial times expressed culture differently. When Okonkwo is exiled, he goes to his motherland, Mbanta. His uncle reminds him of the power of motherhood when he asks him why children are often given the name 'Nneka' which means mother is supreme. Okonkwo's motherland is known to respect the position of motherhood in his community. Okonkwo's mother's role is not questioned in her contribution to his son's life. This is one of the precolonial cultural value that existed before colonisation.

However, the development of Okonkwo's identity has been threatened directly by the influence of western culture. This is because in the analysis of the novel, the protagonist is in constant conflict with his cultural intruders.

The dominant ideology of patriarchy strained the development of the main character in the text. In Umuofia women are spectators to cultural events. This also showed how women get the same treatment at home from their husbands. Okonkwo warns his son, Nwoye, for being around his mother a lot. He blames his son's laziness on his mother's mentorship. He preferred Nwoye to hang around with him in his hut so as to listen to stories about wars rather than listening to his mother's stories. That act in itself explained the divided parenting in this community thus, contributing to the reason of self-conflict and confusion. Okonkwo ignored his father and his son tried to ignore him because he preferred his mother. Nwoye sought his mother's peace through her beautiful stories and Okonkwo was given a second chance to experience peace in his mother's land, Mbanta. His mother's brother welcomed him and the elders of Mbanta. His uncle reminded him that he should not feel sad because when a child is in trouble they run to their mother.

The analysis of the protagonist's identity crisis showed the lack of love relationships he experienced with mother. The reason is because the protagonist faced the consequences of living within a patriarchal environment where mothers are treated same, like their children. One of the sentimental problems that Okonkwo faced result from lack of co-parenting in both families. The customs and traditions in the Igbo Community sidelined women and treated them like children.

This study also examined how the protagonist took a journey of self- protection as a result of cultural intrusion. The center of this study has been identity crisis.

Throughout *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo battles with his self-image. The inner crisis within him has been because he is worried about how the people identify him. He breaks the grounds by being the opposite of his father. He considers his father a failed man. His father dies as a lazy man and with a lot of debts. A typical Umuofia man was not his father's kind. As a result, the early part of his life becomes more of him working on himself to have a good image. Luckily, for Okonkwo in Umuofia a man was never defined or respected by who his father was, but who he is. This was a second chance for Okonkwo. He worked hard to become a man of valor within his community. He was a wealthy farmer who owned a barn of yam and had three wives. He was also a great warrior. Okonkwo knew that this was what it could take for him to be a man of worth. With these achievements he was still hard on himself and his son, Nwoye. He saw his father in his son and that was his greatest nightmare. He is able to maintain this status quo until his culture is invaded with a strange culture of the whites, that is, colonialism. The missionaries came and start converting people into their culture thereby defying the Umuofia identity. This contributed to the consciousness of identity crisis by Okonkwo and his struggle in self-protection. In the end, Okonkwo could not take it anymore and as a result commits suicide. Okonkwo's suicide could be a message to his people to go back to their roots. He did not want to stand the shame of accepting a culture he knew deep inside that will ruin his own true identity.

Mothers are confronted with a plethora of cultural and social expectations, all of which have the potential to elicit mixed emotions. While modern mothers are expected to dedicate a significant amount of time and energy to their children, there is also an expectation that they maintain their own identities and interests.

In the analysis of the character, Okonkwo, it is seen that his geographical location defined cultural identity that he needed to protect from cultural intruders. He faced identity crisis whereby he attempted to protect himself and his people in different ways. While Okonkwo struggled to retain a familiar cultural identity against all odds, other people in the community kept embracing this new culture especially his son. In the text he kept struggling to denounce the adopted identity brought by the colonisers. His style of revolt seemed too disrespectful to the colonisers who felt that Okonkwo was breaking the law.

Finally, this study explored colonial institutions such as school, church, and judiciary system and the role they played in the development of the protagonist's



character. This was also based on the fact that ideological practices constitute the human subject and its identity within a community; thus, allowing a person to function in a comfortable way. After scrutinising Okonkwo's ideological standpoints, this study observed how his own knowledge of cultural ideology drove him to relate with real life and attempted on new ways to protect his known culture from colonisation. In Umuofia the idea of having a male child is seen as a very important factor in every family. This study showed Okonkwo's community to be upholder of cultural values. The obsession of inheritance and the gender that takes it, is an ideological practice respected by the people of Umuofia. This study also came to a conclusion that Okonkwo's frustration and his suicide resulted from an inability to accept the new cultural ideology that distorted familiar meaning. When his son at the end of the novel retaliates him by converting into a Christian and taking the name Isaac, this act dishonors Okonkwo and his culture.

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## **APPENDICES**



## RESUME

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