

Post Colonial Analysis of Chinua Achebe's Trilogy

*Project submitted to the University of Calicut
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

Bachelor of Arts

In

English and History

by

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Declaration

I, **Romini S Vadakkan**, hereby declare that this project entitled **Post Colonial Analysis of Chinua Achebe's Trilogy** submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature, is a research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of **Miss Lis Merin Peter**, Assistant Professor, Department of English & History, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda.

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Certificate

This is to certify that this project entitled **Post Colonial Analysis of Chinua Achebe's Trilogy** is a record of research work carried out by **Miss. Romini S Vadakkan** under my supervision and guidance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature submitted to the University of Calicut.

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Introduction

Literature broadly is any collection of written work, but it is also used more for writings specifically considered to be an art form, especially prose fiction, drama, and poetry. In recent centuries, the definition has expanded to include oral literature, much of which has been transcribed. Literature is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment. Literature, as an art form, can also include works in various non-fiction genres, such as autobiography, diaries, memoir, letters, and the essay. Within its broad definition, literature includes non-fictional books, articles or other printed information on a particular subject.

African literature is the body of traditional, oral and written literatures in Afro-Asiatic and African languages together with works written by Africans in European languages. Traditional written literature, which is limited to a smaller geographic area than is oral literature, is most characteristic of sub-Saharan cultures that have participated in the cultures of the Mediterranean. Literature can be classified into three categories - traditional oral literature of Africa, literature written in indigenous African language and literature written in European languages. One of the striking features of African novels is that "it is a genre developed as a particular body of imaginative discourse primarily occupied with the modes of resisting the roles of western cultural hegemony in determining African state of consciousness". Some of the first African writings to gain attention in the west were the poignant slave narratives, such as *The Interesting Narrative of Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789), which described vividly the horrors of slavery and slave trade.

Post Colonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. It is a critical theory analysis of the history, culture, literature, and discourse of imperial power. Post Colonialism examines the social and political power relationships that sustain colonialism including the social, political, and cultural narratives surrounding the colonizer and the colonized. Post Colonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. It is a critical theory analysis of the history, culture, literature, and discourse of imperial power.

The field of Post Colonialism addresses the matters that constitute the post colonial identity of decolonized people. Post Colonialism is the colonizer's generation of a cultural knowledge about the colonized people and how that western cultural knowledge was applied to subjugate Non European people into colony of the European mother country, after the initial invasion, was affected by the means of cultural identities of "colonizer" and "colonized". Post colonial theory establishes intellectual spaces for subaltern people to speak for themselves, in their own voices and produce cultural discourse of philosophy, language, society, and economy balancing the binary power-relationship between the colonist and the colonial subjects.

Colonialism was presented as "the extension of civilization, "which ideologically justified the self-ascribed racial and cultural superiority of the western world over the non-western world. This concept was espoused by Joseph Ernest Renan. As a literary theory, post colonialism deals with the literature produced by the people who once were

colonized by the European imperial powers and the literature of the decolonized countries engaged in contemporary, post colonial assessments. Postcolonial literary criticism comprehends the literature written by the colonizer and the colonized, wherein the subject matter includes portraits of the colonized people and their lives as imperial subjects.

Chinua Achebe was a Nigerian novelist, poet, professor, and a critic. He was born on 16 November 1930 at Ogidi in British Nigeria. Achebe has been called “the father of modern African writing and Africa’s greatest storyteller, and many books and essays has been written about his works. He gained worldwide attention for his novel “*Things fall apart*”. His other works include *No longer at ease*, *Arrow of God*, *A man of people*, *Anthills of the savannah* etc. In 1992 he became the first living writer to be represented in the Everyman’s Library collection published by Alfred A Knopf. His 60th birthday was celebrated at the University of Nigeria by “an international who’s who in African Literature. Achebe was the recipient of over 30 honorary degrees from universities in England, Scotland, Canada, South Africa, Nigeria, and the United States.

Poet Maya Angelo lauded “*Things fall apart* “as a book wherein “all readers meet their brothers, sisters, parents and friends and themselves among Nigerian Roads. In 1983, he published *The Trouble with Nigeria*, a critique of corrupt politicians in his country. Achebe has also published two collections of short stories and three collections of essays. His writings have introduced readers throughout the world to creative uses of language and forms .Not only through his literary contributions but also through his championing of bold objectives for Nigeria and Africa, Achebe has helped reshape the perception of African history, culture, and place in the world affairs.

In addition to his writing career, Achebe maintained an active teaching career. Achebe received many awards from academic and cultural institutions around the world. In 1959, he won the Margaret Wong Memorial Prize for *Things Fall Apart*. The following year, *No longer at ease*, awarded the Nigerian National Trophy for literature. His book of poetry, *Christmas in Biafra*, won the first commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1972. More than 20 universities in Great Britain, Canada, Nigeria, and the United States have awarded Achebe honorary degrees. Achebe died on March 21, 2013 at the age of 82. In the year 1958 to 1964 Chinua Achebe published three novels in which he traced the history of Nigeria from pre-colonial to postcolonial times, focusing on the fate of Igbo people in his trilogy, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No longer at ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964). Especially the first one won him international claim. The African trilogy captures a society caught between its traditional roots and demands of a rapidly changing world.

Chinua Achebe details the experience of Post Colonialism in his works *Things Fall Apart*. Oral literature, including stories, dramas, riddles, histories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other expressions is frequently employed to educate and entertain children. Oral histories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other expressions, is frequently employed to educate and entertain children. Oral histories, myths, and proverbs serve to remind whole communities of their ancestors' heroic deeds, their past, and the precedents for their customs and traditions.

African became literate in their own languages; they often reacted against the colonial repression in their writings. Achebe's novels *Things Fall Apart*, *No longer at*

ease, and *Arrow of God* is a trilogy. A trilogy is a set of three works of art that are connected and can be seen either as a single work or as three individual works. They are commonly found in literature, film, and videogames and less common in other art forms. These works with similar themes formed by involving a creator may later come to be known as a trilogy. Most trilogies are works of fiction involving the same character or setting. The trilogy pictures about the traditional culture of Igbo people. The Igbo people are native to present day south –central and southeastern Nigeria and also Equatorial Guinea. The Igbo homeland is divided into two unequal sections by the Niger-River an eastern and a western section.

The Igbo people are one among the largest ethnic groups in Africa. The Igbo language is a part of the Niger-Congo family. It is divided into regional dialect with larger “Igboïd cluster.” Igbo people work mostly as craftsmen, farmers, and traders. The most important crop of Igbo people is yam. Other crops include cassava and taro. Before British colonial rule, Igbo people were politically fragmented group with number of chiefdoms such as Nri, Confederacy, Agbor and Ontisha. Larger Igbo population is found in Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea as well as outside Africa. In the opinion of Chinua Achebe Igbo people should be placed somewhere between a “tribe” and a “nation”. Since the defeat of the Republic of Biafra in 1970, Igbo people are classified as “stateless nation”.

Achebe’s most famous novel introduces us to Okonkwo, an important member of the Igbo people, who fails to adjust as his village is colonized by the British. *Things Fall Apart* deals with the vindication of tribal life in Africa and the rise in power and authority of Okonkwo. The middle part begins with Okonkwo’s exile to his motherland for seven years and also depicts the entry of African people. The third part deals with the

Okonkwo's return to his village but the village has "fallen apart" with the entry of white men who brought a lot of changes in the village. In the end, Okonkwo is compelled to take his own life.

No longer at ease is the story of a Igbo man, Obi Okonkwo who leaves his village for an education in Britain and then a job in the Nigeria Colonial Civil Service but conflicted between his African culture and western lifestyle and ends up taking a bribe. *Arrow of God* published in 1964, is the third novel by Chinua Achebe. Along with *Things Fall Apart* and *No longer at ease*, *Arrow of God* is considered as the part of African trilogy, sharing similar settings and theme of the novel centers on Ezeulu, the chief priest of several Igbo villages in colonial Nigeria, who confronts colonial power and Christian missionaries in the 1920s.

A prevalent theme in Achebe's novels is the intersection of African tradition that is Igbo varieties and modernity especially as embodied by the European colonialism. From the pen of Chinua Achebe, the Igbo cultural complexity has come into being a theme that opens up a historical account of the clashes of two cultures. Chinua Achebe's trilogy discusses about how post colonialism affects the Igbo people. African trilogy captures a society caught between its traditional roots and demands of a rapidly changing society.

The project is presented in five parts including introduction and conclusion. The introduction includes the aim, overview of the project and the importance of the study. In the first chapter readers finds the relevance and importance of Post Colonialism. The second chapter of the project confers about the loss of Igbo culture and traditions in Achebe's trilogy. The third chapter of the project discusses about the character analysis of Chinua Achebe's trilogy.

Chapter 1

Post Colonialism

Post Colonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of the colonized people and their lands. It is a critical-theory analysis of the history, culture and of the imperial power. Colonial life is based on the assumption that the colonial rulers are unreliable narrators from the point of the colonized people. Post Colonialism examines the social and political power relationships that sustain colonialism and neocolonialism, including the social, political, and cultural narratives surrounding the colonizer and colonized. Sub-disciplines of post colonial studies examine the effects of colonial rule of feminism, anarchism, literature and Christian thought.

Post colonialism is a postmodern intellectual discourse that consists of relations and analysis of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism. Post Colonialism is defined in anthropology as the relation between European nation and areas they colonized and ruled. Post Colonialism comprises a set of theories which includes history, anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, film, political science, architecture, human geography, sociology, Marxist theory, feminism, theological studies and literature.

A definitive definition of Post Colonial theory is controversial. Post Colonial theory as epistemology, ethics, and politics addresses matters of identity, gender, race, racism and ethnicity with the challenges of developing a postcolonial national identity of how colonized people's knowledge was used against the service of the colonizer's

interests. Post Colonial theory encourages about the colonizer's creative resistance to the colonizer and also how the resistance gives texture to European imperial colonial projects, which utilized a range of strategies including anti-conquest narratives, to legitimize their dominance. The critical nature of Post Colonial theory destabilize western way of thinking, creating space for the subaltern or marginalized groups, to speak and produce alternatives to dominant discourse. The term Post Colonialism means the period of time after colonialism. It is also important to accept the plural nature of Post Colonialism, as it does not simply refer to the period after the colonial era.

Post Colonialism can also be seen as the continuation of colonialism, through different or new relationships concerning power and production of knowledge. Post Colonialism as a literary theory deals with literature produced in countries that once were colonies of other countries especially of the European colonial powers Britain, France and Spain. It also deals with literature written by citizens of colonial countries that portrays colonized people as its subject matter. A specific Colonial and Post Colonial segment is named Indies Literature in Dutch Literature. The very "post" defines as one that looks forward to a world that has moved beyond all the colonialism entails, together. The ultimate goal of post-colonialism is accounting for and combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures. It is not simply concerned with salvaging past worlds, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect. "The final hour of colonialism has struck, millions of inhabitants of Africa, Asia and Latin America rise to meet a new life and demand their unrestricted right to self-determination." This was a speech delivered by Che Guevara to the United Nations.

Previously colonized places are homogenized in western discourse and labeled as 'Third World'. Post Colonialism demonstrates the heterogeneity of colonized places by analyzing the uneven impact of western colonialism on different places, peoples and cultures. This is done by engaging "relations, practices and representations" of the past "reproduced or transformed", and studying the connection between the "heart and margins" of the empire. Post Colonialism recognizes that there was, and still is, resistance to the west. This resistance is practiced by many subaltern, the marginalized and the least powerful people. Postcolonial theory provides a framework that destabilizes dominant discourses in the West, challenges "inherent assumptions", and critiques the "material and discursive legacies of colonialism". In order to challenge these assumptions and legacies of colonialism, postcolonial studies needs to be grounded, which working with tangible identities, connections, and processes.

Post colonialism deals with cultural identity in colonized societies: the dilemmas of developing a national identity after colonial rule; the ways in which writers articulate and celebrate that identity and the ways in which the knowledge of the colonized people has been generated and used to serve the colonizer's interests; and the ways in which the colonizer's literature has justified colonialism via images of the colonized as perpetually inferior people, society and culture.

These inward struggles of identity, history, and future possibilities often occur in the metropolis and ironically, with the aid of postcolonial structures of power, such as universities. The notion of binary opposition changed the way of viewing others. In the

case of colonialism, the Oriental and the Westerner were distinguished as different from each other that is the emotional, static, Orient versus the principled, progressive Occident.

This opposition justified the "white man's burden," the colonizer's self-perceived "destiny to rule" subordinate peoples. In contrast, post colonialism seeks out areas of hybridity and culture. This aspect is particularly relevant during processes of globalization. Colonized peoples reply to the colonial legacy is by writing back to the center, when the indigenous peoples write their own histories and legacies using the colonizer's language such as English, French, and Dutch for their own purposes. "Indigenous decolonization" is the intellectual impact of Post Colonialist theory upon communities of indigenous peoples, thereby, generating postcolonial literature.

Middle Eastern studies and research produced works focusing upon the colonial past's effects on the internal and external political, social, cultural, and economic circumstances of contemporary Middle Eastern countries. Many countries of the Middle East, suffered from the fundamental problems over their national identity. More than three-quarters of a century after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, from which most of them emerged, these states have been unable to define, project, and maintain a national identity that is both inclusive and representative. Independence and the end of colonialism have not ended social fragmentation and war in Middle East.

The interior of Africa was not colonized until almost the end of the 19th century, yet the impact of colonialism was even more significant to the indigenous cultures, especially because of the Scramble for Africa. The increasingly efficient railway helped European powers to gain control over all regions of Africa, with the British particularly emphasizing goals of conquest.

Many African empires existed in the pre-colonial era, such as the Empires of Ashanti and Benin, and the Kingdoms of Dahomey, the Buganda Kingdom, and Kongo. Nigeria was home to the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo cultures and Chinua Achebe was among the first to take up this history in the construction of a postcolonial identity, as in *Things Fall Apart*. Scholars question the recent post-colonial focus on national identity. The Moroccan scholar Bin 'Abd al-'Ali argues that what is seen in contemporary Middle Eastern studies is 'a pathological obsession with identity'. Kumaraswamy and Sadiki argue that the problem of the lack of Middle Eastern identity formation is widespread, and that identity is an important aspect of understanding the politics of the contemporary Middle East. Whether the countries are Islamic regimes, republican regimes, quasi-liberal monarchies, democracies, or evolving democracies, 'the Middle Eastern region suffers from the inability to recognize, integrate, and reflect its ethno-cultural diversity.

Post colonialism examines how societies, governments and peoples in the formerly colonized regions of the world experience international relations. The use of 'post' by post colonial scholars by no means suggests that the effects or impacts of colonial rule are now long gone. It highlights the impact that colonial and imperial histories still have in shaping a colonial way of thinking about the world and how Western forms of knowledge and power marginalize the non-western world.

Post colonialism is not only interested in understanding the world as it is, but also as it ought to be. It is concerned with the disparities in global power and wealth accumulation and why some states and groups exercise so much power over others. By raising issues such as this, post colonialism asks different questions to the other theories

of international relations and allows for not just alternative readings of history but also alternative perspectives on contemporary events and issues.

In post colonialism and related fields, subaltern refers to persons socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure. The term, Subaltern derived from the work of the Marxist theorist, Antonio Gramsci, entered postcolonial studies through the work of the Subaltern Studies Group. In the 1970s, the term began to be used as a reference to colonized people in the South Asian subcontinent. It provided a new perspective on the history of a colonized place from the perspective of the colonized rather than from the viewpoint of the colonizer's. The term subaltern is used in postcolonial theory. The exact meaning of the term in current philosophical and critical usage is disputed. Some thinkers use it in a general sense to refer to marginalized groups.

By the 1980s, the Subaltern Studies method of historical enquiry was applied to South Asian historiography. As a method of intellectual discourse, the concept of the subaltern originated as a Eurocentric method of historical enquiry for the study of non-Western peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Middle Eastland their relation to Western Europe as the center of world history, thus subaltern studies became the model for historical research of the subaltern's experience of colonialism in the Indian Subcontinent. Mainstream development discourse, which is based upon knowledge of colonialism and Orientals, concentrates upon modernization theory, wherein the modernization of an underdeveloped country should follow the path to modernization established by the development countries of the west.

Subaltern social, political, and cultural movements that contest and disassemble the exclusive claims to power of the Western imperialist powers, and so establish the use and application of local knowledge to create a new space of opposition and alternative, non-imperialist futures. To be heard and to be known, the subaltern native must adopt Western ways of knowing language, thought, and reasoning because of such Westernization, subaltern people can never express their native ways of knowing, and, instead, must conform their native expression of knowledge to the Western, colonial ways of knowing the world. As a means of constructing a great history of society, the story of the subaltern native is a revealing examination of the experience of colonialism from the perspective of the subaltern man and the subaltern woman, the most powerless people living within the socio-economic confines of imperialism; therefore, the academic investigator of post colonialism must not assume cultural superiority when studying the voices of the subaltern natives.

Some of the major figures in Postcolonial literature and theory are Chinua Achebe, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Buchi Machete, Frantz Fanon, Jamaica Kincaid, Salman Rushdie, Wole Soyinka and Gayatri Chakravorty. Edward Said took the term Orientalism, which was used in the West neutrally to describe the study and artistic depiction of the Orient, and subverted it to mean a constructed binary division of the world into the Orient and the Occident. This binary, also referred to as the East/West binary, is a key in postcolonial theory.

Chapter 2

Influence of West and the loss of Igbo culture as portrayed in Achebe's Trilogy

Things Fall Apart is one of the most influential novels of Chinua Achebe. In the writing of *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe describes the history of Igbo, describing both the perfection and imperfections of their culture and traditions that made them different from western cultures. In traditional Igbo culture it is required for a “real” man to wed two or more wives. The women of the clan are aware of this and have accepted this ritual, and the first wife suggests to her husband to look for young wives. These women along with her husband lives peacefully helping each other in peace. In Igbo culture the killing of children or persons is a usual practice. Igbo religion says that twins must be killed because they are the signs of work of devil, and small boys should be sacrificed to the Gods as a sign of peace offering.

Achebe's novel shatters the stereotypical European portraits of native Africans. Achebe brings to life an African culture with religion, a government, a system of money, as well as judicial system. Achebe figures out the traditional Igbo family structure, to a model Igbo engagement and wedding ceremony to the Umofia Supreme Court and to a number of ritual manifestations and festivals. Throughout the novel the concepts of Supreme God - *Chukwu* and the personal God – *Chi* are discussed. The wishes of the God are known to the public by Oracles and Diviners.

Chinua Achebe describes Igbo culture, which encompasses polytheistic religion, father – son inheritance, farming traditions and belief in evil spirit. Religion is significant in Igbo culture. They are polytheistic, with different God's and Goddesses to oversee

each aspect of life. In the week of Peace, as, Ezani, the priest of the earth goddess says, ‘We live in peace with our fellows to honor our Great Goddess of the earth without whose blessing our crops will not grow’. Father – son, inheritance tradition is also important to the novel. Okonkwo spend much of his time, training Nwoye, his eldest son, with the idea that he will inherit Okonkwo’s farm someday. Achebe use regionally inflected language to describe the life style of his characters as well as environment. *Things Fall Apart* is rich with Igbo Proverbs. Achebe uses proverbs to preserve Igbo cultures and language as well as to show this value to entire Igbo community. Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* features in the use and explanation of the complicated Igbo myths and proverbs that the Europeans fail to acknowledge. Achebe craftily uses his character to speak in proverbs when they address one another. The use of proverbs is very important in conversation as the Igbo believe them to be a fountain of wisdom and respect.

Some of them are, “Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten. This means that proverbs are essential words of wisdom. “When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for walk”. This was an extreme way of saying that the moon gave the tribe the power to do anything. “A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness”. According to this proverb, if you respect greatness you will become great yourself. In addition, this proverb means that in Umofia that successful man respect greatness. Proverbs and folktales are used to comment on the behavior and activities of the principle character and to reveal Igbo moral and ethical codes.

Achebe uses *Things Fall Apart* as a window through which to reveal both the serious and the lighter aspects of Igbo men, whether engaged in individual activities at home or during folk festivals. Achebe gives the reader an overview of traditional Igbo life

and folk ways by describing the public, private and personal life of the characters.

Achebe is successful in fully detailing the life of Okonkwo who at the beginning of the novel is a very famous young man in all the nine villages of Umuofia. Okonkwo, who tries to protest the change in the end buried without respect or dignity and his fame is soon forgotten because of the greatest sin in Igbo religion that he commits by taking away his own life. *No Longer at Ease* is the second novel in Chinua Achebe's trilogy that explores Nigeria's history through Fiction. This second novel vividly demonstrates the moral destruction colonialism wrecked on Igbo society and culture. Obi finds that he cannot completely dissociate himself from the colonial culture which he has inherited from his father, nor can he totally identify with the Igbo culture of his ancestors. Throughout the novel there are songs and poetry that means different things at different times.

When Obi is away at school his poetry is a kind of pull towards Nigeria, calling and remembrance of home and yet, he write the poems in English. While he is in Nigeria, there are many songs sung in his presence, some of which Obi also dissects using the English language but not without Ibo pulling at his heart. All of his poetry and song represents his desire for him and his hearts need for it. He has studied poetry in England, but poetry also links him to home, these poetic contradictions are all appropriate to the novels ultimate struggle, which is that of the young man living under the end of a long Colonial reign.

Obi is in love with his native tongue and it holds a place in his heart. The struggle of languages is one of the many examples of how African tradition and English culture collide in this love. Obi loves his family and since his family is symbolic of his roots. He loves his root dearly. Obi holds the more liberal, belief that he may marry anyone he

wishes, even though his family and his countrymen are opposed to it. And, even though he wishes to marry Clara in the end despite her history, he is tied to his symbolic traditional culture. The issue of language is omnipresent in the novel and is simply one of the many issues that arise out of the colonial society. Obi struggles between two tongues, Ibo and English, just as he does between two cultures. He was born into one tongue, and he obtained “knowledge” in the form of other causing one of the basic problems throughout *No Longer at Ease*. African proverbs are interspersed throughout the novel, throughout the novel, *No Longer at Ease* which is about the protagonist's struggle for identity in Nigeria after he returns there from his education in England. The Igbo culture and values of his native Nigeria are in vast contrast to what he has learned in the Western world. Achebe peppers his novel with proverb after proverb, making the novel specifically and strategically African. Achebe attempts to establish that Africans had authentic linguistic codes with which they defined life and the world around them.

No Longer at Ease is an exploration of the process of change that occurred in African society because of western modernity introduced by colonialism. Achebe's use of proverbs in the novel involves an attempt to secure a place for orality in the written tradition. The transplantation of Igbo proverb from the rural setting of oral society into the urban milieu is a means to prove the adaptability of orality in the literate society.

One of the African proverbs used in the novel is: "A person who has not secured a place on the floor should not begin to look for a mat." This proverb is similar to the more common one, "don't count your chickens before your eggs are hatched." Both refer to not depending upon an outcome until you are certain, as Obi's impatience with the traditional attitudes of the Igbo, before he is certain he will be able to replace them with his

European values and manners, demonstrates. Another one is, "'A man does not challenge his chi to a wrestling match,' is the equivalent of 'Pride goeth before a fall.'" It's a proverb that speaks fittingly to the fate that befalls Obi from his pride and fatal flaw. Other one is, "We are not empty men who become white when they see white and black when they see black." In Nigeria, Obi has told his Umufioian sponsors that he will study law to help them with their village business. In England he decides to take a degree in English. This shift is suggested in the phrase one of the Umufioians speaks and also suggests that Obi has seen white and has become this empty man.

Arrow of God is a novel in which Achebe portrays two cultures confronting each other. Conflicts present within the Igbo society coupled with repercussions from external invasion result in the disaster of Igbo society. Thus it disintegrates from within and reorients itself to Christianity. This reorientation leads to the assimilation of Western values and eventually the Igbo identity is lost. The novel, *Arrow of God* is an exploration of Igbo culture. Like the novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *No longer at ease*, this novel also explores the intersection of Igbo tradition and European Christianity.

The *Arrow of God* is a political and cultural novel set in Nigeria in the early twentieth century. It explores the intersection of Igbo tradition and European Christianity by telling the story of Ezeulu, a chief priest of Ulu. In this novel, culture confronts their differences. Achebe portrays the disrupting effect exerted by the Colonialist upon Igbo society which disintegrates from within and reorients itself to Christianity.

The work of the missionaries in the Igbo regions affected them to a great extent that the Africans lost their native religious practices and lost to Christian world of beliefs and religious practices. Ezeulu himself is sending his own son, Oduche to church, to

know about and access to the power of white men. He wanted his son to be his eye in the church so that he can closely observe what was going on there and act accordingly.

Unfortunately, all his plans proved to be wrong, when Oduche get attracted to Christian religion and once he tried to shut a sacred python in a box because the catechists had taught him against the devotion to python. For Umuaro people, python is very much related to the devotion of deity of Idemili and nobody should kill a python. It was an act of sacrilege for the people in Umuaro.

With regard to the Igbo people, where life was approached holistically, compartmentalized western investigation may prove to be an ambitious effort. The loss of political identity cross references to loss of identity in the cultural and religious levels is very much normal. As the Igbo land was conquered, the colonial administration wanted to set up a new system of ruling. They wanted to appoint warrant chiefs. The introduction of warrant chief system disturbed the system of African societies. These warrants were ultimately the puppets of colonial administration. So, many of the village chiefs did not want to be mere warrant puppets in the hands of colonizers. So people like Ezeulu reacted against this system of administration.

Ezeulu and his system could not withstand the powerful invasion and dominance of the white people. Even before the collapse of Ezeulu, Mr. Wright was able to keep the people of Umuaro to construct the new road between Okperi and Umuaro without paying them. Getting people to work without payment is nothing but slavery. Thus, the colonial administration had succeeded to control the fate of the Igbo people. Politically Igbo people lost the identity as independent society having its own rules, customs and traditions.

Towards the end of Arrow of God, people were incited to take liberties. The Christian harvest took place a few days after the death of Obika. It witnessed more participation than John Jaja Goodcountry and the rest belonging to the church ever dreamed. Those reluctant to accept it altogether sent one of their sons with a yam or two to offer to the God of this new religion. Thereafter any yam that was harvested in man's field was harvested in the name of the Son.

They have accepted Christianity and western culture and started to deviate from the indigenous traditions, but some inherited character trait which is the after-effects of a pre-colonial culture lingers on and they cannot define where they are and what they are.

Chapter 3

Character analysis of Chinua Achebe's Trilogy

Things Fall Apart chronicles the life of Okonkwo, the leader of an Igbo community, from the events leading to his banishment from the community for accidentally killing a clansman, through the seven years of his exile, to his return, and it addresses a particular problem of emergent Africa—the intrusion in the 1890s of white missionaries and colonial government into tribal Igbo society. It describes the simultaneous disintegration of its protagonist Okonkwo and of his village.

Okonkwo is the central character of *Things Fall Apart*. A young leader of the African Igbo community of Umuofia, he is known as a fierce warrior as well as a successful farmer. Okonkwo, the son of the effeminate and lazy Unoka, strives to make his way in a world that seems to value manliness. He objects everything for which he believes his father stood. He is determined to overcome the stigma left by his father's laziness and wastage of time. Okonkwo is a leader of the Igbo community of Umuofia. Okonkwo is “tall and huge” with “bushy eyebrows and wide nose with severe look”. When Okonkwo walks his heels barely touch the ground, like he walks on springs, “as if he is going to pounce on somebody”. Okonkwo “stammer slightly” and his breathing is heavy. Okonkwo is an ambitious man who has started his life from nothing to a man of great importance in his tribe; Okonkwo rules his family with iron fist.

Okonkwo consciously adopts opposite ideals and becomes productive, wealthy, thrifty, brave, violent and adamantly opposed to music and anything else that he perceives to be “soft” such as conversation and emotion. He is stoic to a fault. Okonkwo

is renowned as a wrestler, a fierce warrior, and a successful farmer of yams. He has three wives and many children who live in huts on his compound. Throughout his life, he wages a never ending battle for status. His life is dominated by the fear of weakness and failure. Okonkwo is quick to anger, especially when dealing with men who are weak, lazy debtors like his father. However, Okonkwo overcompensate for his father's weak ways, of which he is ashamed, because he does not tolerate idleness or gentleness.

The Protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo is also considered as a tragic hero. A tragic hero holds a position of power and prestige, chooses his course of action, possesses a tragic flaw, and gains awareness of circumstances that lead to his fall. Okonkwo's tragic flaw is his fear of weakness and failure. Although he is a superior character, his tragic flaw of the equation of manliness with rashness, anger and violence brings about his own destruction. Okonkwo is gruff at times and usually unable to express her feelings. His emotions are quite complex, as his "manly" values conflict with his "unmanly" ones, such as fondness for Ikemefuna and Ezinma.

Even though he feels inward affection at times, he never portrays affection towards anyone. Instead, he isolates himself by exhibiting anger through violent, stubborn and irrational behavior. Okonkwo demands that his family should work for long hour despite their age or limited physical stamina. He nags and beats his wives and son. Okonkwo is impulsive that he acts before he thinks. Okonkwo offends the Igbo people and their traditions as well as the gods of his clan. Okonkwo is advised not to participate in the murder of Ikemefuna because he is "afraid of being thought weak". When the white man brings Christianity to Umofia, Okonkwo is opposed to the new ways. He feels that the change is destroying the Igbo culture. Too proud and inflexible,

he clings to traditional beliefs and mourns for the loss of the past. When Okonkwo rashly kills a messenger from the British district office, his clansmen back away in fear, he realizes that none of them support him and that he can't save the village from the British colonists. Okonkwo is defeated. He commits suicide, a shameful and disgraceful death like his father's.

Nwoye, Okonkwo's oldest son, struggles in the shadow of his powerful, successful and demanding father. Okonkwo considers Nwoye as irredeemably effeminate and very much like his father, Unoka. As a child, Nwoye is the frequent object of his father's criticism and remains emotionally unfilled. Ikemefuna comes to fill that void and Nwoye, in his adoration of his adoptive brother, begins to emulate him. Nwoye encapsulates an innocent child who is very sensitive to his surroundings and is baffled by the seemingly arbitrary cruelties being committed around him. His dominant characteristic is his incredible ability to feel and sympathize, even more than some of the female characters. Though considered positive traits by modern women looking for a "sensitive man", Okonkwo isn't impressed and aggressively tries to keep his son from acting like "a woman".

He undergoes many beatings, at a loss for how to please his father, until the arrival of Ikemefuna, who becomes like an older brother and teaches him a gentler form of successful masculine. Nwoye remains conflicted, though he makes a show of scorning feminine things in order to please his father, he misses his mother's stories. With the unconscionable murder of Ikemefuna, Nwoye retreats into himself and finds himself forever changed. His reluctance to accept Okonkwo's masculine values turns into pure

embitterment towards him and his ways. By Ikemefuna's unjust murder, Nwoye grows increasingly alienated from his father and seems to lose respect for him.

Without Ikemefuna's companionship and influence, and with a loss of faith in his father, Nwoye reverts to his former gentle nature, instead of adhering to the false masculine one he pretended to have in Ikemefuna's presence. Okonkwo comes to view Nwoye as a disappointment and extremely effeminate. Neither father nor son is unable to see and understand the other on his own terms. Nwoye also exemplifies the familial aspect of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In contrast to Okonkwo, Nwoye creates bond with his family and Ikemefuna. Nwoye prefers his mother's folktales than to Okonkwo's violent war stories. It is Nwoye's brotherhood with Ikemefuna that helps Nwoye emulate the masculine trait that Okonkwo prefers. Nwoye is on the brink of separation from not only his father but also from his culture.

Nwoye is disturbed by some of the practices of his clan like the throwing of infant twins into the Evil forest. He feels something "snapping" inside of him when he hears the twins crying in the forest, and he again feels a "snapping" when he sees Okonkwo return home after killing Ikemefuna. These two instances are the start of Nwoye's separation from his father and also from his clan. When missionaries come to Mbanta, Nwoye's hope and faith are reawakened, and he eventually joins forces with them. The missionaries hymn about brothers living in "darkness and fear, ignorant of the love of God" touches Nwoye deeply. The "missionaries" message seems to speak a way of life in which fathers don't kill their adoptive sons and twins are not abandoned to die in the Evil forest. Nwoye appears to have found peace at last in leaving the oppressive atmosphere of his father's tyranny.

No Longer at Ease opens and closes at the trial of Obi Okonkwo, a young civil servant in the colonial Nigerian government who is accused of accepting bribes. The novel is a retrospective look at Obi's progress from the remote village of Umuofia in southeastern Nigeria, where he is the star pupil in the missionary school, to an English university, where he earns a degree with honour in literature, and then to a position with the Nigerian Civil Service in Lagos, where he finally succumbs to the prevalent practice of bribery and is caught.

The protagonist of the *No Longer at Ease*, Obi Okonkwo, is a young man born in Ibo in the Eastern Nigerian village of Umuofia. He was well educated and eventually sent to study law in England, a course of study he eventually changed to English. He stays in England for nearly four years, at times longing for the warm weather of home and all the other nostalgic qualities his memory supplies him during long winters abroad. Nevertheless, his arrival is less than what he has expected. He was well educated and eventually sent to study law in England. He stays in England for nearly four years, at times longing for the warm weather of home and all the other nostalgic qualities his memory supplies him during long winters abroad. His arrival is less than what he has expected.

Because he is educated, he is given a "European post," and he works in an office whose ethics he finds repulsive. He stands firmly against the bribery that goes on and is opposed to his boss, a very old, white, and English colonial man named Mr. Green. Obi finds himself in a constant battle between traditions of the world into which he was born that of the village and his traditional African roots, represented by the Umofian's Progressive Union, and the conventions of a changing world. Obi finds himself at the

beginning of a generation of change, caught between two worlds. He is unable to marry the woman that he loves because she is considered an outcast. He claims to want to marry her anyway because by the time he has children, the world will have changed, and it will not matter, just as it does not matter now that his father is a convert to Christianity. Still, Obi loses his fiancée, his mother, and finds himself in serious debt. He must pay back his scholarship loan and is responsible for sending money home.

Obi breaks under all of this pressure and gives in to the bribery he had stood against so idealistically, but he does not give in without guilt. At the end, he even claims to be finished with bribery, right before he is caught. Obi's birth name is *Obiajulu* which means "the mind at last is at rest," and this naming is a looming irony, considering the title of the novel and Obi's predicament. Obi is ill at ease in both of his cultural experiences—he lies in the middle, a difficult place.

The character of Mr. Green is representative of the white, European presence in Africa that resulted from the spread of England's empire and its colonial hold on Nigeria. He is an arrogant man, who believes that the African is "corrupt through and through" and that it is the British who have brought Africans civilization and education. Nevertheless, Mr. Green seems to be committed to Nigeria, and there are characters in the book such as his secretary, Miss Tomlinson, who constantly support him in spite of his "strangeness." Miss Tomlinson, however, is also a white Englishperson living in Nigeria. The narrator tells the reader that Green works long and hard hours, but this "quality" is constantly being uprooted by reminders of his colonial attitude and superiority complex. He thus has a problematic relationship with Obi, who is an educated African in a

European post. Still he believes in education, which makes it both ironic and fitting that he pays for the education of his steward's sons.

Mr. Green finds it a problem that Africans ask for weeks off at a time for vacations. However, this tradition was actually started by the very Europeans who held these high posts in civil service prior to the Africans themselves. These contradictions are constantly arising out of the character of Mr. Green. He is an archetypal figure of patriarchic colonialism that finds it difficult to relinquish such a position. In fact, when he thought Nigerians would attain independence, he had threatened to resign. Significantly, Mr. Green is a figure of an older world that is constantly present in the Nigeria of the late fifties, which Achebe portrays, only several years before its eventual independence, when a figure like Green will remain a problem but eventually become obsolete.

Arrow of God is the third novel in Nigerian author Chinua Achebe's African Trilogy and was published in 1964. The novel is set in 1920s colonial Nigeria, and centers around Ezeulu, the chief priest of six Igbo villages in Umuaro who worship the god Ulu. When the novel opens, Umuaro is fighting against a neighboring area, drawing the attention of the colonial overseer, T.K. Winterbottom. A Christian missionary comes to Umuaro, and Ezeulu is called away from his home by Winterbottom and offered a position in the colonial administration. When Ezeulu refuses he is jailed. While Ezeulu is in jail, the yam harvest cannot be gathered in until he has called a special feast in honour of Ulu. Ezeulu refuses to call the feast, despite the pleadings of villagers, believing his actions to be the will of Ulu. As a result, the yams rot and famine strikes. The villagers, having lost their faith, convert to Christianity. Chinua Achebe's Ezeulu is the Chief Priest of Ulu, the preeminent religious leader in the six villages of Umuaro. It is his

responsibility to interpret the will of Ulu and to perform the two most important rituals the Festival of the Pumpkin Leaves and the Feast of the New Yam. The first is a purification ceremony through which the villages' sins are exorcised before the new crop is planted. The second sanctifies the harvest and marks the beginning of a new year. Thus, Ezeulu is an intermediary between the physical and spiritual worlds, a man with dual responsibilities.

T.K. Winterbottom, is the British district officer in the region. He is called Winabota by the natives, with a reputation as the "breaker of guns," earned when he destroyed Africans guns to end the dispute between Umuaro and Okperi. He is a veteran bureaucrat who is critical of his superiors while nonetheless complying with their directives. Winterbottom has a hardened opinion of Africans, viewing them as naturally savage and prone to corruption, yet he respects the noble-looking Ezeulu for testifying truthfully against his own people in Umuaro's land dispute with Okperi.

Obika is Ezeulu's second-oldest son by his wife Maefi. Obika is very handsome and hotheaded, with a proclivity for palm wine. Though his father chides him and complains about him—in particular his love of drink—Ezeulu also respects Obika's strength and masculinity. Obika is admired by the village people for his beauty and agility, and he plays an important role in numerous rituals. His impertinence earns him a lashing from Wright when he arrives late for mandatory construction work on the British road.

Conclusion

Achebe brilliantly imagines the lives of three generations of an African community as their world is upon the forces of colonialism from the first arrival of the British to the waning days of empire. In African trilogy Achebe depicts the failure of modernity and pre-colonial culture, in the unequal struggle of colonialism, to produce a model of ethical guardianship for contemporary times. The plot of these works was intended to shed light on different aspects of Igbo social culture and practices as well as to highlight the nature of conflicts that threatened the indigenous society as it came under the intrusion.

Though his novels appear to be about colonization and the trauma of that experience, they are seeking to address the crisis of culture generated by the same experience at the same time. Achebe marks gender differentiation with cast in-depth evocations of decision making and reasoning power displayed in activities such as household management, personal ambition, ritual observance, conversation, public debate and the personality differences that further manifest themselves as people go about the daily business of living in the complexly organized societies.

Examining the problems triggered by the imposition of external control and the resulting experiences of both a public and private nature, he reveals in detail a range of deadly emotions – anger, anxiety, condescension radical rage and gaping dissatisfaction, desperation, inordinate ambition, inferiority complex, traumatic fear or insecurity, male superiority, shame, grief, possessiveness, impulsiveness – alternating with isolated

moments of tenderness, filial love and male friendship and female companionship, all of which ultimately outweigh the negative passions.

His double framed yarn not only sheds fresh light on key aspects of the threatened culture of the people, providing insight into how they think of others and how a masterful portrait of the goals and hidden assumptions that underwrote the colonial mission. The trilogy claims to cultural integrity defended by Okonkwo, Ezeulu and others, more so as the novels establish a parallel between their attitude and that of Mr. Smith, whose intransigence on behalf of the Christian cause mirrors that of Okonkwo on behalf of the traditional world. They are the true protagonists, embodying each in his own way the logic of the cultural conflict enacted in the novel, the logic involved in the drama of the colonial encounter.

The downfall of Ibo society is a product of both the white man's external influence and increasing internal disunity. Ibo society would have continued to prosper had the white men not arrived and attempted to control it; however, the coming of the Europeans alone was not enough to destroy the Ibo. If they had stood their ground and defended their traditions they could have protected their way of life. Beliefs and customs are certainly evidence of the depth of Ibo culture, their irrational basis could not withstand the white man's defiance of them. It is these beliefs – the presence of a social structure, the development of a religion – which not only show the richness of Ibo culture, but also lead to its downfall.

The project tried to analyze the theory of Post Colonialism, in the works *Things Fall Apart*, *No longer at ease* and *Arrow of God*. Through this project Achebe tried to analyze the loss and downfall of Igbo society and its culture. Achebe's novel shatters the

stereotypical European portraits of native Africans. Achebe describes the history of Igbo, describing both the perfection and imperfections of their culture and traditions that made them different from western cultures. Achebe's novels also discuss the change that happened to his characters throughout the novel. His novels vividly demonstrate the moral destruction colonialism wrecked on Igbo society and culture.

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