

Race and Ethnicity in *Things Fall Apart*

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Abstract

This article is to project the original state of Nigerian tribes, who were suppressed by discrimination in race and culture. In *Things Fall Apart*, the author depicts the real suppression and oppression of Nigerian community and examines the effect of British colonialism on Igbo society from an African perspective. Achebe's intention was, he tries to expose the value and culture of African society to the readers. The British invasion has force to marginalize from every aspect of Igbo society from religion, traditional values, gender roles etc.

Keywords: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Racial Discrimination, Cultural Bias, Colonialism, Marginalization, Suppression.

Things Fall Apart, written by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, was published in 1958. It is an Archetypal African novel in English which deals with the effects of colonisation that destroyed the originality of Nigerian tribes. Set during the period of colonisation, it takes place in the village of Umuofia, one among the Cluster of nine tribes in Igbo. The title of this work expresses the destruction of the Igbo race and ethnicity. Our living world is a mixture of different people from different cultures. Some people try to spread their cultural habits through fantasies.

The Nigerians are Dark in colour with tightly stuffed curly hairs. Their Dresses, Foods, Dances, Rules and Habits are unique as their environment. Spoken language is Igbo. They cultivate Yams which seems like Beets, which is a symbol of Masculinity. Men married many women. Most of the men are wrestlers and are conscious of their masculinity. They focus on their acts of bravery. They have certain unusual rules and regulations like, if someone offends someone, it is repaid by Sacrifice and Gifting virgins. These are cultural practices of Nigerians.

As a cultural person, Okonkwo who enjoys the beauty of Africa is a Roaring Flame. He is best in wrestling, married to three ladies, respects the elders in his village and he strongly believes in Gods of their culture. Even he sacrifices his adopted son Ikemefuna who stays in his house for the sacrifice. He wants to follow and protect the myths and rituals of the village. He accidentally

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shoots a boy at an important person's funeral. That is the starting point of his fall. He and his family are separated from that village. He obeys the law of Umuofia and leaves his village.

Being occupied by Whites creates a conflict between the Black and White cultures. British men enter Umuofia in the name of Christianity. They start institutions and later they form administration there. They see Africans as aliens because of the contrasting features. That's why the author mentions English as Locusts, which are destroying insects. It is an image of English destroying African culture. They are not ready to accept or allow the native people to praise their own gods. The English change people's habits, dressings and regulations. People are brainwashed by the pleasures of English culture. Nwoye, the son of Okonkwo converts to Christianity. Actually, he is an easygoing young man who does not mingle with their troop, loses his native beliefs after the sacrifice of Ikemefuna, whom he loves as his own brother. His conversion makes Okonkwo think of his son's action is feminine. Masculine Okonkwo cannot tolerate his son's action. Likewise, the Eastern culture corrupts the core natives of Nigerian tribes.

The Whites decide to build a Church at Umuofia. The people try a lot to avoid that, but they are all vain. The church is built, and it is destroyed by the people of Umuofia to protect their God's rituality. They are imprisoned and beaten up in police station. Huge fine is also collected from people. In my perception, Whites dislike the race of Nigerian, that's why they force the white culture among people. Sometimes it results in positive things like Being educated, Well mannered, and Disciplined. Even though they are civilized with the modern culture, they lose their freedom due to the encounter on Native's race and ethnicity. The main reason for the destruction of African ethnicity is their easy going attitude, fantasy for foreign cultures and disunity among people. Everyone desires to protect their own culture. Okonkwo wants to fight again but others are not ready to fight again and die. So they decide to surrender themselves. At last Okonkwo commits suicide to avoid his death under white rule and his own culture's destruction.

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is one of the unequal relationships. If somebody forces any culture on the English, they can't accept that, but all others should accept their culture and praise them. The fact is that the Blacks are stronger than White, if Blacks try, they may avoid those things that happened in Umuofia. But due to the Disunity and Easy going attitude the Nigerians allow themselves to fall apart.

Works Cited

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