

Shelter in a Person's House. The Owner of the House Did Not Entertain Choc de Choix: The Clash of Cultures and the Battle of Choices in *Things Fall Apart*

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Abstract: In the colonial epoch, the colonizers took religion as a lure to conceal their real purpose. They deployed Christianity in the façade to alter the traditional cults and culture of the newly trespassed states to gain control and power while they could use the occupied land for their benefit. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* fabulously renders colonial oppression, neglect, and the colonizers' exploitation of the cults/religion in Nigeria to tighten the imperial clench. How the ancient religious beliefs were assaulted by the whites via Christianity, how the Nigerians protested the English people on one hand and on the other, and how Nigerians even helped the colonizers unconsciously—are brought about in detail by the fiction. Okonkwo, the key character, loved his society and social customs more than his life but he was shocked by his society's supportive stand for colonial rule and their inactiveness to protect their tribal heritage from social demotion. This paper tries to focus on how he undergoes such circumstances and he confronts the battle of choice and meets the clash of cultures in the novel. His own son's religious conversion brought a fatal blow to his life and paralyzed him from the inside and the outside. The incompetence of the society against the colonial junta makes him impotent to lead a life in the community for the tribe. Besides, this brings the ultimate end to his life and the novel. To uphold his and his tribe's honor, he commits suicide which makes him untouchable to society. He neither wins the battle of choice nor the clash of cultures. To obtain these goals, this paper applies Post-colonial theoretical analysis with a special focal point on Edward W. Said's *Culture and Imperialism* and Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. This article tries to focus on religion and its impact on native cultures and how by shifting the culture, the ultimate power is also shifting from the natives to the white colonizers.

Keywords: Clash; colonialism; cults/religion; culture; decolonization.

The French term “choc de choix” denotes a clash of choices. This paper uses this term to indicate the conflict of selection faced by the chief characters and all other characters of the work of fiction *Things Fall Apart* during colonial times. In this novel, “the battle of choice” is elaborately portrayed. It stages

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the critical condition of Okonkwo's mental and social situation and portrays the path of the clash of two different cultures in various events. When Okonkwo tries to take retaliation against the colonial rule and regulation, the novel focuses on the point of the inability of the men of Umuofia and this surely tells the tale of the cultural clash between the colonizers and colonized. In the middle of the novel, readers witness the emergence of the clash of cultures and it blooms completely with all its drawbacks at the end of the novel. Moreover, Okonkwo falls apart in his battle of choice. Of his inevitable incapability, he meets his ultimate doom and the entire native civilization falls apart with him in the closing stages of the book.

The literature review of this paper is that S. P. Huntington's article "The Clash of Civilizations?" and E.W. Said's lecture "The Myth of the 'clash of Civilizations'" are consulted for analyzing the clash of civilizations and its effects. Fanon's books *Black Skin/White Mask* and *The Wretched of the Earth* are consulted to investigate the impact of the anti-colonial struggle on civilization. The relationship between culture and imperialism is explored from the point of view of Said's *Culture and Imperialism*. Other books and journal articles are also consulted to explore the relationship between religion and civilization. For instance, William Baldrige in his article named "Reclaiming Our Histories" explores that many missionaries served as federal agents of colonialism in the period of pre-colonial and colonial times.

In his groundbreaking article "The Clash of Civilizations," Huntington demarcates "civilization as the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species." (22) He hypothesizes that "the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be ideological or economic" (22). He asserts, "Great divisions in humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts in global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics" (22) in the future. He stresses "that conflict between peoples of the world have developed over the past two centuries, initially from that of princes or nation-states or that of ideology (as it happened throughout the Cold War)" (23). Moreover, he declares that, in the future, the clash between peoples will take the place of cultural and civilizational differences. Huntington, in his article, describes people, "cultures, civilizations, and their behaviors with stereotypes and labels." Huntington argues that "individuals may claim to belong to a

multitude of associations,” and that “this individual will eventually identify with a...civilization” (24).

Renowned Professor Edward W. Said, in his speech “The Myth of the ‘Clash of Civilizations,’” published in 1998 by the “Media Education Foundation,” agrees that “Conflict still exists, and the root of the conflict is cultural, but that’s all.” Said, for the most part, primarily opposes Huntington’s article. Said opines that “cultural conflict is still flourishing, due to the firm adherence to imperialistic political policy by the West. Only by removing the imperialistic ideology inherent to the West will cultural differences be surpassed.” (4) According to Said, “cultural differences still exist because of inconsistencies resulting from imperialistic ideology, which require a man to label and stereotype himself and others as superior and inferior, not because of the progression of man’s conflict to that of civilization versus civilization” (4).

One more well-built argument Said holds is that “no one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are [nothing] more than starting points, which if followed into actual experience... are quickly left behind.” (6) Edward W. Said asserts “that the method of stereotyping used by Huntington demonstrates the subtle effects of how an imperialistic mindset presents an unwanted bias” (6). “Huntington,” as stated in Said’s opinions as articulated through, *Culture and Imperialism*, “is nothing more than a prize progeny of Imperialism who demonstrates the Western Imperialistic attitude of having to associate groups of people with their specific attributes. By stereotyping groups of people as Confucian, Western, Islamic, American, etc., one limits those individuals to the characteristics prescribed by the label themselves.” (7) Edward Said never assumes that an “individual can be classified as belonging to a specific group of people, as does Huntington, because that is what divides cultures, peoples, and races.” Said act is in response to Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations” by resolutely conflicting with Huntington’s advance “toward explaining the roots and the future of the cultural conflict” (7). He then reveals “Huntington to be a classic example of the Westerner who arrogantly labels people as belonging to respective civilizations, being a living example of the ill effects of Imperialism.” (8) In the target novel, Achebe subtly expresses how Westerners try to clash with the native culture and start the superiority complex in the psyche of the colonizer.

Fanon’s well-celebrated books *Black Skin/White Mask* and *The Wretched of the Earth* have had a prime global influence “on the anti-colonial” struggle.

Fanon argues that “culture is a major element in the resistance to colonialism” (236). According to Fanon’s observation, aboriginal culture and civilization are crucial factors in “decolonization.” “It opposes colonial ideology and reasserts the identity of indigenous peoples. The problem is that indigenous culture is almost certainly distorted and perverted by the colonizers’ hegemonic belief systems. Laws, religion, and systems of education were put in place by colonial powers.” (237) Fanon remarks that:

the “colonial situation brings a halt to national culture in almost every field. By the time a century or two has passed there comes about a veritable emaciation [starvation, or thinning out] of the stock of national culture. After a century of colonial domination, we find a culture, which is rigid in the extreme, or rather, what we find are the dregs [leftovers] of culture, its mineral strata. The withering away of the reality of the nation, and the death pangs of the national culture are interlinked to each other in mutual dependences.” (238)

Fanon also reflects that

“Colonization distorts the natural development of culture and interrupts cultural development. New experiences which would have shaped cultural development are interrupted or totally stopped by the imposed hegemony of the colonizers. In a myriad of ways, the military or economic power of the colonizers is used to define tradition and meaning. The colonizers clinch those aspects of traditional culture that serve their interests while at the same time interrupting its development. Furthermore, colonial powers restrict and limit interpretations of indigenous culture to create an imagined and socially constructed cultural purity. The net result is the vitality of the culture and cultural development is lost while superficial aspects which serve colonial rule are maintained and often exaggerated. It is the eventual revolt against colonization that revives cultural development. Culture is not put into cold storage during cultural conflict. The struggle itself is in its development and in its internal progression which sends culture along different paths and traces out entirely new ones for it.” (244)

Fanon believes that “after the conflict, there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized” (245). The African societies were matriarchal, according to Garikai Chengu; but “European colonialism and its use of Christianity” changed those societies “to an oppressive patriarchal system of control.” (237) To express colonialism and its ever-changing mode, Fanon demonstrates that “Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state” (237). More than hundred years, “Christianity

has acted as an ideological shield to protect colonialism. In Africa and South America, the expansion of Christianity was the ideological sword that justified invasions, wars, slavery, and the expropriation of natural resources. Colonialism was dependent on massive violence, and Christianity was the justification for that violence. Patriarchal Christianity brought to Africa the monogamous nuclear family unit, whose sole purpose was to pass on private property in the form of inheritance from one generation of males to the next.” (237) Fanon claims that:

“culture is a powerful weapon in the anti-colonial struggle. As resistance to the colonizer gains strength, it revitalizes and enhances traditional culture, usually adding new forms of expression to traditional understandings. It is both cultural and vicissitudes of the political economy, which eventually lead to resistance and rebellion: Colonial exploitation, poverty, and endemic famine drive the native more and more to open organized revolt. The necessity for an open and decisive breach is formed progressively and imperceptibly and comes to be felt by the great majority of the people... International events, the collapse of whole sections of colonial empires, and the contradictions inherent in the colonial system, strengthen and uphold the native's resistance while promoting and giving support to national consciousness” (238).

The very first part of the novel *Things Fall Apart* portrays untouched Igbo culture. The second part focuses on the emergence of missionary people in Igbo land. The function of missionary work can be found in the admission of William Baldrige:

“Many missionaries served as federal agents and in that role negotiated treaties which left the natives no land. Most missionaries taught the native people to hate anything Native American and that it is also necessary to hate native friends, families, and ourselves. Missionaries deny speaking with natives in any language, but their own. The missionaries continue to function as ‘Christ-bearing colonizers’” (529).

He adds, “Fighting the oppression of the missionary system is a struggle for justice that becomes a struggle for power. Power lies at the core of Christian colonialism” (530). In this regard, Robin Horton presumes that “African conversions were not so much a tribute to missionary success as expressions of African nationalism, through which the colonial ruler's religion was given a strong indigenous bent. Moreover, Christian conversions are in colonial societies as signifying responses to internal changes that were already

underway, and as a form of’ (qtd in Viswanathan 521) domestication or neutralizing alien religious and cultural beliefs.

The author tells an event about “a white man who arrived in Abame market with his iron-horse” (i.e. bicycle). Fearing the iron horse, the Igbo people killed the white man. After a few days, some white people take revenge for it by massacring in the market of Abame. When Okonkwo was in banishment missionaries came “to Umuofia and built a church there. Although the Umuofians were not happy with what was happening, nonetheless they permitted white men to live there. The terror of Abame massacre and their chauvinistic belief in Igbo gods who will potentially destroy the strangers prevented the natives from opposing the intruders. In Mbanta a missionary named Mr. Kaiga succeeded in acquiring a piece of land to build a church. The missionaries won converts who were mostly the victims of harsh Igbo customs. At the beginning, the white men did not show any enthusiasm to occupy the land. They march slowly and steadily learning about these people and their customs, showing themselves as philanthropic men who have come there for the welfare of the natives” (Takey 85). Consequently, it establishes the clash of cultures where “a more technologically advanced (the white) invaded and exploited a weaker” (Takey 85) culture.

In Umuofia, the missionary “Mr. Brown learned a great deal about the clan through his meetings with a village elder Akunna. This knowledge would be valuable for dealing with the Igbo.” (Takey 85) The speaker utters this “... In this way, Mr. Brown learnt a good deal about the religion of the clan and” concluded “that a frontal attack on it would not succeed. And so he built a school and a little hospital in Umuofia” (85) and thus brought improved technology with them. Mr. Brown visited “from family to family”-begging natives to send “their children to his school. But at first, they only sent their slaves or sometimes their children. Mr. Brown begged and argued and prophesied (Achebe 132). Brian W. Shaffer fairly condemns the responsibility of the missionary people in the Nigeria. He believes that *Things Fall Apart* discloses that Christian missionary community is one of the components of colonization stratagem, “the church functioned as a beachhead for political and economic imperialism... The British anticipated route of culture and progress for the natives actually leading to the degeneration of the culture and communal anarchy; as a result, collapsing the whole society” (81). Besides religious and educational institutions “they also started trading centers to attract more people to them. Hitherto, crops were seen as seeds or food, but these trade centers opened the doors of prosperity by paying the price for them in the form of money. This was the next step in

solidifying their stand in the Igbo land. The trading centers lured people thus" (Takey 85): "The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store, and for the first time palm oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia" (Achebe 130). Another source of conflict can be seen in the form of the Umofian economy. Umofians were farmers. The missionaries' arrival changed the ancient system of farming. It took children out of the fields and put them in the classroom. Farmlands were devalued; crops were worthless comparing money; thus, people suffered economically. Now, the whites commenced ruling Umuofia using their own government besides their church (Achebe 127). The whites constructed "a court where the District Commissioner judged cases in ignorance" and had envoys of the court "who brought men to him for trial (Achebe 127). "These court messengers were greatly hated in Umuofia because they were foreigners and also arrogant and high-handed" (Takey 85).

The drawbacks of native cultures can be considered as the weakest point. For these shortcomings, the white man's culture got an upper hand. Okonkwo's exile is the brightest example of the negative aspects of the native culture. In chapter 13, at the end of the funeral of Ezeudu, one of Okonkwo's stray bullets kills a young boy. Killing someone of the same clan is an offense against Ani, the earth goddess. In addition, the killer "must flee from the land" (Achebe 127). Okonkwo flees with his family and the villagers burn his house, kill his domestic animals, and destroy his property without any qualms, as they are just the messengers of Ani ensuring her justice, nothing personal. They are just "cleansing the land which Okonkwo [has] polluted with the blood of a" kinsman (Achebe 88).

Another weakness can be found in chapter 16. During his second trip, Obierika mentions to his friend Okonkwo the marauding Christian missionary people have already arrived in Umuofia. What has alarmed Obierika is that he has found Okonkwo's eldest son Nwoye among the converts whom he tried to talk to but got rather rebuffed. Innocent Ikemefuna's death shows the path of conversion as Nwoye could not accept the native customs. In chapter 21, before Brown leaves for home, he visits Okonkwo. Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, after conversion became Isaac, joins the "new training college at Umuru" to become a teacher. Brown hopes that Okonkwo will be happy hearing, knowing his son's success, but, the opposite happens; Okonkwo drives Brown out of his place threatening to beat him in case he visits him again. Okonkwo tried to educate his son as a brave Igbo; but unfortunately, the reverse happened. In this battle, he has no

choice. His son is converted though he is trying to surrender his whole existence “for the sake of his” clan. Thus, Umofia’s social culture (respecting elders, combined family structure, etc.) was challenged as well. The Osu were outcasts in the Igbo land, but were made the social elite and wealthy. Nwoye, who feared his father, disrespected his father after becoming Christian. Clan leaders were imprisoned, their heads were shaved and their hands were cuffed. In many cases, the young generation accepted Christianity and started conflict with elders who were supporters of Igbo culture. Unfortunately, they all were colonized and Igbo culture is lost.

The village has changed so much by these days that Okonkwo’s return from exile goes unnoticed. With the inception of a new government and religion, it seems unidentifiable to him. The villagers seem to be more preoccupied with trading stores and new institutions than Okonkwo’s return along with Igbo traditional matters. He feels sad for his clan, as he perceives that it is “breaking up and falling apart;” Okonkwo grieves deeply “for the warlike men of Umuofia, who [have] unaccountably become soft like women” (Achebe 129). It is the rise of the white culture in the realm of native culture, which is going to be demolished by the former one perpetually.

Christianity and Igbo religions are utterly different and are creating cultural conflict between the followers of both religions. The white men try to enforce the Christianity over the people of Umuofia. The whites consider Umuofian gods as evil spirits who tell them to kill their innocent children: “your gods are not alive, and cannot do you any harm, and they are made of pieces of wood and stone.” Cultural conflict shows the path of civilizing policy of the westerners and the accurate imperialist facade at the back of it. It demonstrates the breakdown experienced by the flourishing and dissimilar Igbo culture by the interference of the colonizer culture. The clash of cultures reaches its peak at some point in the observation of the yearly ceremony of Ani, the Mother Earth. Publicly one of the converts named Enoch unmasks an egwugwu, which is an unpardonable crime in the eyes of the Igbo. The ceremony falls on a Sunday and such an incident shuttered the church activity. The masked spirits arrive at the church compound to demolish it. In chapter 23, the author relates that Okonkwo is happy, as he finds that the good old days coming back and so is the warlike spirits of the clan; the clan is correcting its faults and tying the loose ends. He has given a fiery speech to goad his clan to act. Two days pass by without any incident, although Umuofia men keep themselves prepared remembering what happened in Abame.

The District Commissioner returns and Smith meets him; the villagers let the meeting go unnoticed. After three days passed, then the commissioner passes his envoy to the elders of the Umuofia, and he is inviting them to come and meet him in the courthouse. Okonkwo is one of the six leaders invited. The other five leaders, and he [Okonkwo] go to meet the commissioner, as according to their custom, they should not refuse a call. The leaders go to the meeting armed with machetes. The commissioner tells them that he has called them in to know what exactly happened. He has heard his men's side of the story, and now he wants to know what they have to say so that he may know the truth and stop such things from happening in the future, which is very important to sustain the friendship between the two sides. As Ogbuefi Ekwueme, the chief of elders, explains Enoch's unmasking of an egwugwu and what followed it, all of a sudden they are arrested off guard and led into the guardroom. The commissioner meets them later and tells them that he will let them go unharmed if they cooperate. He goes on to say that his men have brought to them "a peaceful administration" as a result they "may be happy" (Achebe 137). If somebody behaves toward them badly then the commissioner's men will embark on rescuing them. But at the same time, they will not be allowed to mistreat others. There is a court of law, which ensures "justice, as it is" maintained in his "country under a great queen" (137). The reason they have been brought to the courthouse and arrested is that they had assaulted others and "burnt people's houses and their place of worship," which should not take place in the realm of their monarch, "the most powerful ruler in the world" (137). The commissioner penalizes them with two hundred sacks of cowries and tells them that if they pay the fine and agree to go by what he has said then he will release them. Although the commissioner tells his messenger to treat the confined leaders with respect, the messenger shaves their heads and taunts them with bantering remarks about their titles. They are not given any food or drink, nor are they allowed to go to the privy to urinate or defecate. Instead, the messenger laughs at them when they are hard-pressed. The leaders remain stunned for three days and start talking, as they cannot stand their hunger and thirst any longer. Okonkwo out of rage shouts that the Igbo should kill these whites not now, but at the very beginning. Hearing this, the messenger comes with a stick and beats the leaders. This disgrace of the indigenous leaders represents their failure to use influence and power in their own country. Whites use force and betrayal to rule colonized country. They talk about good governance, but in practice, they follow treachery, perfidy, and dominance.

During the leaders' incarceration time, the messengers go out to the village and demand that if the villagers do not pay two hundred and fifty bags of cowries forthwith then they will take the "leaders to Umuru before the big white man and hang them" (Achebe139). Here, it is incredibly comprehensible that whites are showing terror, fear, and force to initiate their authority over the natives. The villagers start panic-stricken and apocalyptic rumors spreading. Ezinma tries to consult Obierika about her father, but he is not to be found. The village crier appeals to the villagers that they should gather in the marketplace and produce the cowries as demanded. Receiving the cowries, the commissioner allows the leaders to go telling them about the great queen and peaceful good governance. Though natives have their own rules and laws, but whites brought their laws into the native country (which is illegal for whites as they should follow the native laws and rules). The great queen of England is unacceptable in Nigeria. The punishment and dishonor delivered by the whites are objectionable as they are not the Nigerian authority.

Meanwhile, the men come home broken and shattered. The village crier announces another meeting in the marketplace. It appears to the villagers that, finally, some decisions will be made to mete out the bad things that were happening around them. Okonkwo lying in his obi decides to take revenge by himself if the villagers deny going on an all-out war against the white men. He ruminates on those old days "when men were men" (141). The following morning, almost all the people from the nine villages gather in the marketplace. Okika, one of the six leaders incarcerated, speaks first and says that their gods, ancestral spirits, and Agbala are mourning because of the "sacrilege" and "abomination" they have witnessed. He goes on to say that the clan has been taken apart because some of their people have abandoned them, furthermore, they "have joined a stranger to the soil, their fatherland" (144). Fighting strangers will mean fighting and skilling their brothers, which has been a taboo, but again, such a crisis has never occurred before and the situation demands that they "must root out this evil". If the converted native people "take the side of the evil" then they "must root them out too;" (Achebe 144) moreover, it is the proper time to do that. At this juncture, the head messenger along with four others arrives in the marketplace with an errand that the commissioner has ordered that the meeting be stopped immediately. *Kotmas* or the messengers of the Court are local Africans, however work for the British imperial administration, and are yet more intolerable than the intruder whites. Outraged Okonkwo confronts the head messenger, who holds his ground fearlessly, "the men of Umuofia

... [merge] into the mute backcloth of trees and giant creepers, waiting” (*Achebe* 144). Okonkwo strikes the man with his machete and decapitates the man's head. The meeting stops, chaos erupts, and Okonkwo realizes that Umuofia men won't go into any war. He hears a voice asking why he has done such a thing, which seals his faith in Umuofia residents. Broken-hearted Okonkwo wipes his machete on the sand and leaves the marketplace for his home.

The commissioner arrived at Okonkwo's place in chapter 25 with a band of armed soldiers to arrest Okonkwo for his crime of killing a kotma. The commissioner met Obierika and other villagers in front of the house and demanded that Okonkwo be handed over to him, or else he would lock all of them up. Obierika leads the commissioner and his men to a tree behind Okonkwo's house; the commissioner finds Okonkwo's dead body hanging from the tree. Out of shame and agonizing dishonor, Okonkwo hangs himself. He committed suicide to defend his manhood. He has lost his reputation and his ancient culture is now changing by the church and Christian values. Although he decides to pay for the clan by taking revenge, but the clan refuses to take it. The clan, which Okonkwo valued most, is now doing nothing for protecting its honor and heritage. He did a lot for the clan, and now he must pay for his blind faith in the tribe and its values. Here, Okonkwo's demise is a wretched disintegration of the entire social order of the natives. Okonkwo's tragedy “is not only the tragedy of an individual, but of the whole civilization” (Maleki 13). He stands for Africa, furthermore, his tale becomes Africa's history. That's why “the fall of Okonkwo is about all... loss of identity in the historical situation and primordial past” (Maleki 13). It is the story of losing cults, their religion at the hand of imperial authority that uses religion to impinge upon the culture to tighten the imperial grip.

Obierika informs the commissioner that only strangers like him can cut the dead carcass of Okonkwo down and laid to rest it in the grave, as committing suicide is considered a crime against the goddess Earth; moreover, an individual who executes it is untouchable for the natives and strangers will bury him (147). Although Obierika is trying to follow the clan's rule, but the clan itself is unable to uphold its own rules as Igbo culture is invaded by the European culture. Obierika further states that Okonkwo was a great man in Umuofia whom the commissioner has driven to commit suicide, who will now be buried like a dog. As a consequence, here starts the story of slavery and a life to live “like a dog”. Now, not only Okonkwo but also the whole

tribe, the whole of Nigeria, and in a greater sense the whole of Africa itself, will be buried under British Empire. The suicide of the hero brings to an end the collapse of the long-established Igbo civilization. According to the author, the commissioner cannot attend a monotonous burial ritual for an African native who committed suicide because doing so would imply giving importance to the indigenous matter, which may induce the locals to harbor pity for the commissioner as a white person. He plans to note down a book based on his experience and knowledge of the natives, the heading of which is *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*. He decides to write a paragraph on Okonkwo as he has murdered a court envoy along with make suicide, presuming that it will make an intriguing reading. Here, the bogus account of the District Commissioner presumes “the otherness of the Africans” (Kortenaar 32). He discovers mystery in this suicidal event—“its impenetrability as an example of the foreignness, the difference of supposed primitives. By fitting Okonkwo into a comprehensible narrative, the Commissioner establishes both Okonkwo’s essential otherness and his heroic character.” (Kortenaar 32) In consequence, the suppression of one culture by another is completed successfully. Hence, it is focused that the invasion of colonial culture into the native culture disrupted religious practices, the judicial system, social life, and even personal belief.

Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* represents the cultural roots of the Igbos in order to provide self-confidence, but at the same time he refers them to universal principles which vitiate their destructive potential. Seeing his duty as a writer in a new nation as showing his people the dignity that they lost during the colonial period, he sets out to illustrate that before the European colonial powers entered Africa, the Igbos had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity. Achebe, however, cannot achieve his goal merely by representing difference; rather, he must depict an Igbo society that modern readers can see as having dignity. What is remarkable about his Igbos is the degree to which they have achieved the foundations of what most people seek today—democratic institutions, tolerance of other cultures, a balance of male and female principles, capacity to change for the better or to meet new circumstances, a means of redistributing wealth, a viable system of morality, support for industriousness, an effective system of justice, striking and memorable poetry and art. Achebe appears to have tested Igbo culture against the goals of modern liberal democracy, and has set out to show how the Igbos meet those standards. Achebe aims to present the peculiarities of the Igbo culture,

the beauty, and wisdom of its arts and institutions, as well as to focus on its weaknesses which require change and aid in its destruction (Rhoads 61).

In conclusion, it can be said that Okonkwo loved his culture and social customs more than his life, but he was traumatized by his society's inactive stand against colonial rule and social demotion to protect their tribal heritage. He endures this severe circumstance. His son's religious conversion brought a fatal blow to his existence and paralyzed him internally and externally. All these setbacks and the ineffectiveness of the native people against the colonial junta make him impotent to lead a life in society for the tribe. Besides, this brings the ultimate end to his life and the novel. Okonkwo has committed suicide to uphold his reputation and his tribe's prestige, rendering him untouchable in both society and his tribe. For the sake of the entire society and clan, he had made a significant sacrifice. Furthermore, at the end, he wins neither the battle of choice nor the clash of cultures, and such numerous failures establish the British Empire.

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