

things fall apart essay sample

[Religion](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Things Fall Apart there are many cultural collisions created by the introduction of Western ideas into Ibo culture. One example of a cultural collision caused by the introduction of Western ideas into Ibo culture is when Okonkwo's first son, Nwoye converts to Christianity. This causes a cultural collision between Okonkwo and Nwoye because Nwoye wants to become a Christian, but Okonkwo doesn't like the white men or Christianity. This cultural collision is caused by the white men bringing in western ideas to Ibo culture. This collision is very important to the book because it leads to the destruction of Okonkwo and fuels his anger. This collision shapes the meaning of the novel as a whole by symbolizing many things and relating back to many important quotes in the book that help develop the plot. To begin, Nwoye converting to Christianity is a cultural collision caused by the introduction of Western ideas into Ibo culture because Nwoye wanted to convert but he knew his father did not like the white men's faith western ideas brought into Ibo culture were the white men's faith called Christianity. People in the clan like Okonkwo did not like the white men's faith because it went against their faith and claimed that everything they believe in is false. "Although Nwoye had been attracted to the new faith from the very first day, he keep it secret. He dared not to go too near the missionaries for fear of his father" (149). Okonkwo has been known for his bad temper and so Nwoye wanting to convert created a huge conflict between him and his father. Nwoye knew if his father knew about him being interested in the faith that his father would kill him. "Answer me," roared Okonkwo, "before I kill you!"(151). When Okonkwo found out about that Nwoye was among the Christians he almost killed him and then kicked him out of the house.

Okonkwo's response to Nwoye converting to Christianity was very harsh and he did not take it very easy.

He felt like his son converting was a curse and he did not understand why this had happened for him. "Why, he cried in his heart, should he, Okonkwo, of all people, be cursed with such a son" (152). {"What are you doing here?" Obierika had asked when after many difficulties the missionaries had allowed him to speak to the boy. "I am one of them," replied Nwoye. "How is your father?" Obierika asked, not knowing what else to say. "I don't know. He is not my father," said Nwoye, unhappily. And so Obierika went to Mbanta to see his friend. And he found that Okonkwo did not wish to speak about Nwoye"} (144). This shows how Okonkwo's response to the cultural collision challenged his identity as a father and made him so mad that he disowned his son. You can also see by the quote that Nwoye is unhappy that his father disowned him. It shapes the meaning as a whole by showing that because Okonkwo let his anger destroy him, it caused him to lose both of his sons. Secondly, the cultural collision challenged the characters sense of identity by challenging Okonkwo to rethink his faith and question why this happened to him. It also challenged Okonkwo by seeing how far he could be pushed.

"And immediately Okonkwo's eyes were opened and he saw the whole matter clearly. Living fire begets cold, impotent ash" (153). This quote is showing how the cultural collision opened Okonkwo's eyes, by symbolizing Okonkwo's anger towards Nwoye converting as a burning flame. This quote also refers back to the novel when Okonkwo says fire can destroy everything that it consumes and Okonkwo realizes that his anger is like a fire and because of it he has destroyed everything in his path, like when he killed <https://assignbuster.com/things-fall-apart-essay-sample/>

Ikemefuna. It also symbolizes Okonkwo's anger because a fire is fueled by itself and eventually will burn out and become nothing but ash and Okonkwo's anger has ultimately destroyed him and left him with nothing. Okonkwo's response to Nwoye converting contributes to shaping the meaning of the novel as a whole by symbolizing many things and helping develop anger in Okonkwo. This cultural collision helps develop anger in Okonkwo by making him very angry at Nwoye for being with the white men.

His anger is symbolized as the fire and therefore it helped to destroy Okonkwo by fueling his fire. " Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and of nature, malevolent, red in tooth and claw. Okonkwo's fear was greater than these. It was not external, but lay deep within himself. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father. Even as a little boy he had resented his father's failure and weakness, and even now he still remembered how he had suffered when a playmate had told him that his father was agbala. That was how Okonkwo first came to know that agbala was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken to title. And so Okonkwo was ruled by one passion – to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of those things was gentleness and another was idleness" (13). This quote describes Okonkwo's fear and how his life was dominated by fear, Okonkwo feared change, failure and weakness.

So when the white men showed up and tried to convert people Okonkwo feared for the failure of his clan to stay together and fight as one. He also

feared change, so he did not like the new religion or the fact that it said that all of his religion was false gods and he feared his clansmen converting to Christianity. “ How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart” (176). This quote showed that exactly what Okonkwo feared would happen has happened. The white men have come in and converted Nwoye and others, which has led to weakness in the clan and now they can't fight. When Okonkwo realizes this he fights by himself and then hangs himself. This symbolizes the self-destruction caused by his anger towards the Western ideas brought to Ibo culture.

Also this shows how his response to the cultural collision shaped the meaning as a whole and how it contributed to conclusion of the novel. To conclude, In Things Fall Apart there were many cultural collisions caused by the introduction of western ideas into Ibo culture. One very important collision was created when Nwoye, Okonkwo's oldest son converts to Christianity. This creates a collision because Okonkwo fears change and doesn't like the white men or their new faith, but his son Nwoye is interested in the new faith and likes it. This collision leads to Okonkwo self-destructing and killing himself and it also shapes the meaning of the novel as a whole by symbolizing many things and relating back to important quotes in the novel, that develop a story. This cultural collision also shapes the novel

as a whole by showing that because Okonkwo let his anger destroy him, it caused him to lose both of his sons and left him with nothing.