

# Things fall apart essay sample



Artistry – Achebe brings to life an African culture with a religion, a government, a system of money, and an artistic tradition, as well as a judicial system. While technologically unsophisticated, the Igbo culture is revealed to the reader as remarkably complex. Achebe stereotypes the white colonialists as rigid, most with imperialistic intentions, whereas the Igbos are highly individual, many of them open to new ideas. But readers should note that Achebe is not presenting Igbo culture as faultless and idyllic. Indeed, Achebe would contest such a romantic portrayal of his native people. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe depicts negative as well as positive elements of Igbo culture, and he is sometimes as critical of his own people as he is of the colonizers. Intellectual value – As an Ibo writer, Achebe is interested in the effects of Western customs and values on traditional African society. In simple and dignified language, *Things Fall Apart* describes a complex and sympathetic portrait of a traditional Ibo village.

It shows us a society that contains much of value and undermines Conrad's vision of Africa as the heart of darkness. Although it does not paint a vision of an ideal society, the novel, nevertheless, introduces us to a range of timeless and empathetic characters, and portrays them in a way that makes them instantly recognizable to us over both time and space.

Suggestiveness/Emotional Value – From Achebe's own statements, we know that one of his themes is the complexity of Igbo society before the arrival of the Europeans. To support this theme, he includes detailed descriptions of the justice codes and the trial process, the social and family rituals, the marriage customs, food production and preparation processes, the process of shared leadership for the community, religious beliefs and practices, and

the opportunities for virtually every man to climb the clan's ladder of success through his own efforts. The book may have been written more simply as a study of Okonkwo's deterioration in character in an increasingly unsympathetic and incompatible environment, but consider what would have been lost had Achebe not emphasized the theme of the complex and dynamic qualities of the Igbo in Umuofia.

Spiritual Value – Achebe did an excellent job of portraying the pre-colonial culture of the Ibo. This book was not only educational, but entertaining as well. His ability to focus mainly on one individual and still show the complexity of the entire clan's beliefs and self-governing tactics was incredible. It is hard to believe that he was able to show us so many aspects of the pre-colonial culture in so few pages. This book definitely left me wanting to learn more about their culture. Some of the areas, I feel, really stood out to show they were a civilized people included their social organization, their economic system, and their religious beliefs. Religion was also already in place in the pre-colonial times. The Ibo were deeply religious.

It seems that everything they do is dictated by some religious belief. Religion was involved in the way they raised their families, the way they governed, the way they interacted, the way they decided on war and other issues, and even the way they farmed. They may have practiced what may be considered a ridiculous religion by outside standards, but it was a religion none the less. In fact, one of the things that struck me the most in this book was the conversation between Mr. Brown and Akunna. Throughout their conversation, at times they seemed to be saying the same thing. Akunna brought up some interesting points when he was comparing the religions.

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There were several similarities that would almost make it seem the Christian God and the God the Ibo worshiped were one and the same.

Permanence –The achievement of Things Fall Apart set the foreground for numerous African novelists. Because of Things Fall Apart, novelists after Achebe have been able to find an eloquent and effective mode for the expression of the particular social, historical, and cultural situation of modern Africa.[4] Before Things Fall Apart was published, Europeans had written most novels about Africa, and they largely portrayed Africans as savages who needed to be enlightened by Europeans. Achebe broke apart this view by portraying Igbo society in a sympathetic light, which allows the reader to examine the effects of European colonialism from a different perspective. The language of the novel has not only intrigued critics but has also been a major factor in the emergence of the modern African novel. Because Achebe wrote in English, portrayed Igbo life from the point of view of an African man, and used the language of his people, he was able to greatly influence African novelists, who viewed him as a mentor. Universality – THINGS FALL APART gives European and American readers the rare opportunity to understand a culture that no longer exists and that is incredibly different from our own.

Yet we can identify conflicts and problems that Achebe's characters face that have some universal resemblance to the problems and conflicts that we face even in the modern world. Most importantly, perhaps, Achebe's novel emphasizes the immense power that people and institutions hold over the lives of those who are less powerful. Okonkwo once held power over the weak in his culture. Finally he, himself, experiences a total lack of power over his own life and his culture's destiny. How many of us or our

contemporaries also experience to some extent this same sense of disillusionment and powerlessness that led Okonkwo to his tragic end. Okonkwo is, like Hamlet and Oedipus, a tragic hero. He is a flawed man, but also a man of heroic potential. Most importantly, Okonkwo is Achebe's vehicle for carrying the reader into the heart and spirit of the misunderstood and oppressed individual.

Style – Things Fall Apart has been called a modern Greek tragedy. It has the same plot elements as a Greek tragedy, including the use of a tragic hero, the following of the string model, etc. Okonkwo is a classic tragic hero, even though the story is set in more modern times. He shows multiple hamartia, including hubris (pride) and ate (rashness), and these character traits do lead to his peripeteia, or reversal of fortune, and to his downfall at the end of the novel. He is distressed by social changes brought by white men because he has worked so hard to move up in the traditional society. This position is at risk due to the arrival of a new value system. Those who commit suicide lose their place in the ancestor-worshipping traditional society, to the extent that they may not even be touched in order to receive a proper burial. The irony is that Okonkwo completely loses his standing in both value systems. Okonkwo truly has good intentions, but his need to be in control and his fear that other men will sense weakness in him drive him to make decisions, whether consciously or subconsciously, that he regrets as he progresses through his life.