

# The importance of adapting to changes in things fall apart, a book by chinua ache...

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Cesar Chavez once said, “ Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.” Respecting other cultures is very important if you want to have peace within your own culture. In the book *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, Western missionaries introduce new thoughts and beliefs into the Ibo society. The changes that were brought into the Ibo society caused major conflict between the two cultures and eventually led to the downfall of the Ibo culture. Throughout the book, there were several complex relationships. However, the most complex would be the father/son relationship of Okonkwo and Nwoye. When the missionaries arrived, Nwoye gained a sense of belonging and comfort and that allowed him to show his true feelings that he had been holding back. Chinua Achebe used Nwoye to emphasize that changes to a culture can be for the better.

After Nwoye’s conversion, he felt a sense of identity. When Okonkwo murdered Ikemefuna, Nwoye never recovered from his loss of what seemed like a brother. When Nwoye found out what had happened to Ikemefuna, “ He did not cry. He just hung limp” (Achebe 65). Nwoye felt overwhelmed with emotions; he felt betrayed by his father for taking part in something so horrific, but he knew that Okonkwo only did it to maintain his reputation of being masculine. He had to keep his abundance of feelings to himself or else he would risk appearing too feminine for his father’s liking. When the Western missionaries brought their culture into the Ibo society, Nwoye realized that he was a better fit for their religion; a religion where he didn’t need to hide his feelings or be forced into making decisions that he knew weren’t ethical.

Although the introduction of the Western culture brought conflict to many people in Nwoye's life, the missionaries provided Nwoye with an outlet that he could use to release his anger and frustration toward his father and the entire Ibo culture. Nwoye's fragmented relationship with his father growing up made him feel as if he didn't belong in the Ibo culture. His childhood was full of terrible memories that turned him into a despondent individual, which was emphasized when Achebe wrote, " At any rate, that was how it looked to his father and he sought to correct him by constant nagging and beating. And so Nwoye was developing into a sad-faced youth" (23). Okonkwo did not tolerate Nwoye's differences and, consequently, abused his son both emotionally and physically. Nwoye's father made him feel like an outsider in his own family and, because of that, Nwoye was afraid to be himself starting at a very young age. When Nwoye found out that he would be leaving his home to attend a Christian school, Achebe wrote, " Nwoye did not fully understand. But he was happy to leave his father" (145). The missionaries gave Nwoye a safe haven where he was free to be himself and not withhold any of his emotions out of fear, which was a great relief for him.

Nwoye's change of character helped shape the book *Things Fall Apart* as a whole. The missionaries' arrival sparked lots of curiosity within the tribe. The curiosity of the Ibo people, specifically Nwoye, led to conflict within families and between friends. All of the conflict that the missionaries caused shaped the outcome of the book by emphasizing that change comes with conflict but it can be both beneficial and harmful. For example, when Nwoye started questioning his identity, it caused him to express his feelings to Okonkwo

and put a strain on his family, which is shown when Achebe wrote, “ Nwoye struggled to free himself from the choking grip [of Okonkwo]” (145).

Okonkwo was furious with Nwoye when he had even the slightest suspicion that his son was betraying his culture. While Nwoye benefited from his change in identity, it was perceived in a negative way by his father.

In conclusion, Nwoye’s curiosity and eventual conversion to Christianity shaped the book *Things Fall Apart*. The conflict between the Western missionaries and the Ibo people brought up many conflicts that threatened the Ibo culture. While Christianity brought a negative impact to some lives, it brought a very positive impact to others. The missionaries allowed Nwoye to finally find a sense of comfort after Ikemefuna’s death and he was also able to find a sense of identity that he never received from the Ibo culture.

Although change does cause conflict, it can have a positive impact on those who accept and embrace the change.