

READING ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART* FROM CÉSAIRE'S PERSPECTIVE ON ANTICOLONIALISM

Yohanes Tuaderu
Prayoga School of Foreign Languages (STBA Prayoga) Padang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Yohanes Tuaderu, E-mail: john@stba-prayoga.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 10-10-2023 Accepted: 21-02-2024 Published: 01-03-2024 Volume: 8 Issue: 1 DOI: https://doi.org/10.33019/lire.v6i2.239	Trilogies – <i>Things Fall Apart</i> – from the concept of anticolonialism promoted by Aimé Césaire. It examines two main subject matters i.e.; the reason why African people struggle so hard to oppose the oppression of the colonizers and what efforts they develop to react to the bad treatment. The harassment of human values - what Césaire called "thingification", trampled culture, damaged socio-cultural foundations, destroyed native religions, and confiscated ancestral inherited lands- apparently triggered the struggle against colonialism. Meanwhile, the real way and effort made to fight the arrogance of the colonialists was to strengthen cultural identity and maintain the noble values that had united all tribes. In this way, the Igbo tribe and the Nigerian people finally gained independence on October 1, 1960 - 2 (two) years after the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i> was published.
KEYWORDS <i>Anticolonialism, Cultural Identity, Self-determination</i>	

1. INTRODUCTION

This research analyzes a novel entitled *Things Fall Apart* written by Chinua Achebe. In the foreword of the novel - Achebe (2017, page i), Penguin Books editor states that Achebe is widely known as the father of modern African literature and became so famous for his masterful African Trilogy i.e., the three novels: *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, and *No Longer at Ease*. This trilogy highlights the Igbo community life over three generations since the contact with the colonial party. Achebe voiced the rejection of the Nigerians against the arrogance of Western colonizers which destroyed the original social, cultural, and religious joints of their ancestral heritage. The three novels strongly sparked the movement to restore the cultural identity of black people in Africa. Achebe (1930 – 2013) not only wrote literary works or literary essays, he was also a professor who taught African Studies and Language and Literature in some universities – both in Nigeria and in the United States.

In approximately the same period, in Martinique - a small island of a French colony in the Caribbean Sea – appeared Aimé Césaire, a black intellectual who graduated from the École Normale Supérieure, University of Paris – as it is mentioned by Kelly (2000: p.11) who also fought for the dream of black African society through political channel in *Parti Progressiste Martiniquais* in 1958. His views on the importance of independence for self-determination are outlined in a

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well-known book written in French; *Discours sur le Colonialisme* which is translated into English as *Discourse on Colonialism*, the main ideas that are used by the writers in analyzing *Things Fall Apart*. Césaire started his struggle by founding The Negritude – a movement that was very influential among the black communities which led him to become Mayor of Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique.

Reading Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* from Césaire's Perspective on Anticolonialism – that becomes the title of this research – does not only bring together the same fighting spirit between Achebe and Césaire for true independence from Western colonialism but also to understand further the reasons from the point of view of socio-cultural and political studies why black people need to liberate themselves from Western domination. It is not by chance that Achebe and Césaire have the same dream of freedom but it is about a vision that triggers a massive and publicly open movement of most people in the Third World to free themselves from Western colonization. It seems as if Achebe fictionalized Césaire's idea on the anticolonialism itself (Shama, 2018).

The writer's attention mainly focuses on the discussion of the matters that trigger African people to defend and maintain their ancestral heritage related to social, religious, and cultural values destructed by the colonizer party. Okonkwo - the main character of *Things Fall Apart* represents the freedom fighters in Africa who fiercely opposed the abuse of the noble values inherited by their ancestors related to the gods they worshiped, for instance, who were considered by the colonizers as dead gods who cannot do them any harm because they are pieces of wood and stone. This is not merely an insult. This is also an abuse to the most sacred religious value of the Igbo people. Furthermore, the analysis also scrutinizes the way black people in African communities all around the globe struggle for their independence. As the research is carried out, the writer found the most obvious perspective of Aimé Césaire that brings him to stand at the forefront to oppose and fight for every form of colonialism i.e., forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses (Césaire, 2000:p.41). As a literary writer, Achebe articulated this spirit of fighting in form of a novel but it strongly and obviously represented the social reality existing in the Igbo community. who suffered from the very heavy oppression of the colonizers.

Literary research on *Things Fall Apart* has been carried out by many scholars, including four research papers in the form of journal articles discovered by the writer. The first research was conducted by Ali Salami and Bamshad Hekmatshoar Tabari from Tehran University, Iran with the title *Things Fall Apart and Chinua Achebe's Postcolonial Discourse*. This article was published in the International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL) Volume 6, Issue 3, March 2018 – employing Homi K. Bhabha – a leading contemporary literary critic who



approaches colonial and postcolonial phenomena from a new perspective. To his dual emphasis on the need to pay attention to cultural factors and make them a major force in the development of postcolonial studies, Salami and Tabari find that *Things Fall Apart* proves that Achebe as an insider with an objective point of view had allocated about one hundred and forty pages to provide a complete account of his life: communal Igbo society before the arrival of colonial troops and how that situation acts as a force that facilitates the downfall of the novel's protagonist. Okonkwo, depicted in all his "human frailties and strengths" attests to the fact that like any other human being, he "is considered the primary agent of change in society and the controller of his society's fate."

The second paper is *Things Fall Apart: A Postcolonial Study* by Atulkumar Parmar, Ph.D. – an Asst. Mahadeva Professor of English Desai Gramseva Mahavidyalaya, Gujarat Vidyapith, Randheja, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. His article – published in the Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies published on 22 May 2018 – criticizes Western subversion of African culture which plays an important role in perpetuating the image of the African continent as vile and chaotic in the minds of readers in modern era. For Achebe, it was now his duty to present a true picture of his world and so he took up a career as a postcolonial writer. Achebe belonged to the decolonization phase of Africa and he had no direct access to his country's colonial past. To reconstruct the past, he had to rely on historical research. Historical writing has two components: (1) relying on verifiable facts and (2) arranging those facts in a narrative. As a purposeful writer, he could have idealized or romanticized the picture of Africa he created from the ruins.

The third research was papered in *Language and Gender Representation in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart* done by Blessing U. Ijem & Isaiah I. Agbo and was published in English Language Teaching Vol. 12; No. 11; 2019. Ijem and Agbo found at the end of their research that radical feminists who argue that language constructs a certain reality and men do the construction while women are excluded in the construction process are the party who are responsible for the fact that the role of men and women in society is different. To a large extent, this statement is true of Achebe's use of language to create male and female genders, and circumstances and events in *Things Fall Apart* as revealed in this paper. According to Cameroon (2005), language is a thing that forces 'women's experiences into categories that do not fit' (p. 132). From this perspective, therefore, language does not only help to filter the reality but also distort the reality. In this study, it has been demonstrated that men and women are cast in different lights, a situation made possible by language.

The last research belongs to Çiğdem Pala Mull in *Clash of Cultures in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*. Mull advocates that multiculturalism in general emphasizes the appreciation of differences among cultures, offering representation and validation to groups and cultures that are



underrepresented, that do not typically have a voice. His focus is to recognize and appreciate the differences among the cultures. Therefore, in his assumption, Achebe wants to write back to the Western canon, correcting misrepresentations of Africa in Western fiction. While presenting his vision of Africa, he complicates and problematizes multicultural representation in the novel. His defense of African culture against Western invasions and prejudices is not one-sided and without depth. There are many disturbing elements to the traditional Igbo culture and the character of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and Achebe does not try to hide them. None of the four researches above scrutinize the novel *Things Fall Apart* from the perspective of anti-colonialism that is a social and political revolution of the colored- skin people to oppose the colonial power rely on barbaric, brutal violence and intimidation of the colonizers (Césaire, 2000:9).

2. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research is done by organizing the collected data and using them in the process of writing. According to Holliday (2002: p.98), the data can be used as evidence, and the activity of writing as the presentation and discussion of that evidence within the context of a developing argument. This so-called library research mostly depends on the availability of the primary source i.e., the novel entitled *Things Fall Apart*, and other secondary sources i.e., relevant books, journal articles, and other existing research papers related to the discussion. There is no interview or questionnaire distribution or any specific observation for data collection as it is commonly conducted in quantitative research. Qualitative research utilizes the descriptive method through the activities of identifying the research problem, determining the data collection method, analyzing the data collected, and disseminating the research findings.

This research aims to approach Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* from Aimé Césaire's viewpoint on anti-colonialism. From the social perspective, the result of this research is expected to broaden the understanding of society elsewhere about the reason why many black African communities struggled so hard to obtain their national independence. Meanwhile, from the scientific point of view, this research is also expected to give a meaningful contribution to literary science that a novel can be approached by utilizing social, political, or cultural concepts based on the notional belief of Stephen Greenblatt in Robson (2007: p.1) saying that literature never stands alone in isolation and is not completely separated from the historical context existing in the era when literary works were written.



3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aimé Césaire's Protests on Colonialism

Césaire protests and criticizes various inhuman practices applied by the colonizers which encouraged the black African community to continuously fight to expel the colonizers from the land of their ancestors. Césaire (2000:42-43) emphatically contrasts the colonialists' so-called achievements and progress with the worse facts that undermined the humanity of the African people when he loudly said,

My turn to state an equation: colonization = "thingification." I hear the storm. They talk to me about progress, about "achievements," diseases cured, improved standard of living. I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, and extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out.

The fact that colonialism has caused severe suffering among the colonized individuals cannot be denied. The denials of humanistic values and the objectification of humans are the reality encountered by the colonized. The term "'thingification' used by Césaire or "depersonalization" by Memi (2021: p.129) are very obvious to show that the colonizers had abused the dignity of humans in the colonial territories as if humans were only equivalent to inanimate objects. This is the cruelest crime against humanity that aroused resistance from all colonized nations on this earth. Césaire also contrasted the conflicting facts between socio-economic achievements and progress from the colonial point of view - and that was widely reported to the international community - with the reality of the decline in the socio-cultural values of the colonized caused by the massive and excessive exploitation carried out by the colonizers. The economic progress that is gained through the increase in living standards and the health improvement in the form of disease eradication efforts are not balanced by increasing respect for human values and appreciation for local cultural heritage with its various forms of expression.

The Igbo culture, social norms, and religious teachings that demand every individual in society to maintain harmonious relations with other people, their nature, and their ancestors' gods are undermined and smashed by the colonizer because they consider it completely meaningless and must be replaced with new teachings from the West which are considered more civilized and of higher quality. William and Laura Chrisman (1994: p.442) state that to control people's culture, the colonizer imposes two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate



undervaluing of people's culture – their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education and literature – and the elevation of the language and culture of the colonizer. So, if the colonizers build churches or schools or hospitals, they build those facilities for the sake of their mission: to control the colonized culture which they consider less civilized and wild, and to change the gods of indigenous society that they label as 'dead gods' with the new religion of the West: Christianity.

The conflict between the leaders of the Igbo clan and the English missionaries is reflected by Achebe (2017: p.143-146) as a source of great sorrow although they believe that the strange faith and the white man's god would not last. In an assembly with the local people, there is a dialogue that portrays this dispute,

"If we leave our gods and follow your god", asked another man, "who will protect us from the anger of our neglected gods and ancestors?"
Your gods are not alive and cannot do you any harm," replied the white man.
"They are pieces of wood and stone."

This quotation clearly proves that Western consideration of what the local people of Igbo believe is really bad and negative. Of course, bad assumptions like this gave rise to several reactions from the audience who consider the missionary's statement to be the talk of a madman, and some perhaps thought it was a joke, but there were certainly many of whom were angry and left the meeting. How can a belief that is so ingrained and rooted in the daily lives of the Igbo people be one-sidedly assessed so low and meaningless? How can the gods whom they revered and worshiped with great honor and boundless devotion suddenly be called "non-living" gods and considered nothing more than pieces of wood and stone? This was the beginning of a long feud between the Western colonialists and the native Igbo people which culminated in plans to kill the missionaries and burn churches by local residents and the arrest and trial of the perpetrators of that 'crime' under the Western system.

Talking about socio-cultural institutions being undermined and replaced with Western institutions, this occurs in the practice of courts and legal systems for local people who commit 'disruptive' actions. Okonkwo and his five other clan leaders were arrested due to the action of burning the church in Mbanta – an action that was triggered by Okonkwo's disappointment and anger because his elder son – Nwoye – had become one of the Christian converts. Okonkwo's disappointment was also caused by the changed behavior of the Igbo people who had converted to Christianity and insulted the religion inherited from their ancestors and had even killed a sacred python which was considered to be the embodiment of the god of water – an action that greatly



angered the Igbo elders. Achebe (2000: p.192-193) tells about how the District Commissioner invited the six Igbo leaders to come to the headquarters and informed them what he was going to do to them in accordance with the destruction of the church – but in fact, it is a soft way to arrest them according to colonizer’s law. Achebe (2000: p.194) presents the statement of the District Commissioner as follows:

“We shall not do you any harm,” said the District Commissioner to them later, “if only you agree to cooperate with us. We have brought a peaceful administration to you and your people so that you may be happy. If any man ill-treats you, we shall come to your rescue. But we will not allow you to ill-treat others. We have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice just as it is done in my own country under a great Queen. I have brought you here because you joined together to molest others, to burn people’s houses and their place of worship. That must not happen in the dominion of our Queen, the most powerful ruler in the world.”

It is the District Commissioner who declares that their court of law guarantees the administration of justice. However, what happened in reality is the injustice treatment imposed by the ruler – even by the Queen of England who is labeled as the most powerful ruler in the world. In the next page, Achebe (2000: p.195) writes that the ‘prisoners’ hair was shaved off, their hands were handcuffed, and were left without eating anything throughout that day and the next. They were not even given any water to drink or go into the bush when they were pressed. And at night the officers of the prison came in to beat them and to knock their shaven heads. Then the question is: what kind of justice and good treatment are meant by the District Commissioner in his speech above? The answer is that there would be no justice and no good treatment of the colonizer to the Igbo people as equal human beings to the white men.

Césaire (2000: p.58) also objected to the educational practice in African communities as service, not for the sake of the social-cultural development of the native people but for the benefits that will be enjoyed by the colonizers as porter service, forced labor, slavery, transplantation workers, language interpreter, local teacher, Christian evangelist to convert indigenous people, and of course, officers who will be loyal to the white ruler. He blamed Western education for not giving a place to explore local sources of knowledge that is full of local wisdom, instead focusing more on promoting Western cultural values that are half-forced to be accepted by the students of the colonized. Even, when eventually Mr. Brown built a school and a little hospital in Umuofia, it was done in the name of the spread of a new religion. Achebe (2017: p.181-182) tells the following



situation,

Mr. Brown's school produced quick results. A few months in it were enough to make one a court messenger or even a court clerk. Those who stayed longer became teachers, and from Umuofia laborers went forth into the Lord's vineyard. New churches were established in the surrounding villages and a few schools with them. From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand.

It is obviously proved that the existence of schools built by the Western missionaries with the special intention of supporting the new religion to be accepted by the local people. Even if it is not for the need for the spread of religion, the school graduates will be also employed by the white men on their plantations, in hospitals, as colonial servants (like civil servants in independent countries), or as any officers who dedicate their lifetime for the colonial government.

In a particular sense, based on the data of the novel, the writer may state that the colonizers often manipulate their activities in colonized land which is seen as sincerely done to develop the country but in fact, there is always a hidden mission for their sake. This is what is declared by Césaire as Western hypocrisy. It is strongly related to the behavior and way of thinking of most European colonizers to consider what they do to the colonized people as civilizing them – not colonizing them. And for this kind of hypocrisy, Césaire (2000:32) labeled the Europeans as “the dupe in good faith of a collective hypocrisy”. It is a protest addressed to Europeans who cannot justify themselves and have deceived black Africans for so long. They always consider that what they have done to their colonized people and countries is something good and beneficial as Césaire (2000:31) states below:

The fact is that the so-called European civilization – “Western” civilization – as it has been shaped by two centuries of bourgeois rule, is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem; that Europe is unable to justify itself either before the bar of “reason” or before the bar of “conscience”; and that, increasingly, it takes refuge in hypocrisy which is all the more odious because it is less and less likely to deceive.

This is to contradict that they made a very serious effort to Christianize the indigenous people on one hand; by delivering the basic Christian teaching of love and affection, driving



people to leave ‘old pagan’ beliefs and turning 180 degrees around to the new order of the church - but on other hands they deceive local people and exploit local natural wealth for their personal and group interests. Achebe deliberately presents two contradictory figures of Christian missionaries - Mr. Brown who institutes an attitude of compromise, understanding, and non-aggression between his flock and the clan, and Rev. James Smith who is very strict, uncompromising, and manipulative. It is assumed that Mr. Brown is more acceptable to the local people since he is humble, loves to listen to what his converts talk about, and the way he reacts to different concepts of belief is elegant. On an occasion, Mr. Brown met Akunna – one of the great men of Umuofia who has given his sons to be taught in Mr. Brown’s school. They discuss the essence of their own religion in a very calm and friendly situation as described by Achebe (2017: p.179) below:

“You say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth,” said Akunna. “We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods.”

“There are no other gods,” said Mr. Brown. “Chukwu is the only God and all others are false. You carve a piece of wood – like that one” (he pointed the rafters from which Akunna’s carved *Ikenya* hung), “and you call it a god. But it is still a piece of wood.”

Mr. Brown is far more friendly than white men. In the dialogue that was initially started by Akunna above, he is capable of honoring the explanation of Akunna although he doesn’t really grasp what is meant by those sentences. He directs his converts not to underestimate the clan. He has successfully developed a cross-religious understanding in a peaceful, harmonious, and friendly relationship. There is no bad judgment, no insults, and there no violence during the discussion. Each party can control themselves and the exchange of religious belief is done smoothly. Achebe seems to deliberately present Mr. Brown as a contradictory figure to the more strict and radical Reverend James Smith - the missionary who becomes his successor after his leaving caused of his poor health condition. Meanwhile, the servitude performed by Mr. Smith in his capacity as a church pastor is really far from an ideal religious figure who is usually demanded to always be humble, kind to everyone, be a good listener, and always be able to control his thoughts, words, and actions so that he truly represents the God he serves in his ministry. The difference between what he teaches in the church to his people and the behavior he presents in daily life can draw him to be a hypocritical religious minister.

In the early twentieth century, there emerged a doctrine among Europeans about the Superior Race – as asserted by Du Bois (2007: p.69) – that is a theory that a minority of the people



of Europe are by birth and natural gift the rulers of mankind; rulers of their own suppressed labor classes, and without doubt, heaven-sent rulers of yellow, brown, and black people. This theory strengthened the practice of oppression of European colonizers in many parts of the world and legitimized all bad treatment of the native people all around the globe, including the Africans. For centuries, Europeans viewed Africa as a “dark continent” – dark by economic backwardness and physical development on the one hand, but also dark because of the exploitation and the slave trade which insulted the human dignity of black Africans – dominated by savagery and superstition, starvation, and tribal war. These European negative perceptions of Africa have caused the relationship between the European colonizers and the colonized Africans in multiple and contradictory ways. The colonizers situated “darkest Africa” in contrast to an enlightened Europe which affirmed both the spiritual and material superiority of European civilization – if it should be avoided to mention them as the Superior Race. This negative and misleading way of thinking resulted in a belief of most white colonizers that they had a noble mission – a civilizing mission – in colonizing the African continent: to bring light into the darkness that is to civilize the uncivilized. Consequently, they treated the Africans in a very bad way as stated by Césaire (2000: p.41) in the following quotation:

They prove that colonization, I repeat, dehumanization even the most civilized man; that colonial activity, colonial enterprise, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; that the colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as an animal, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform himself into an animal. It is this result, this boomerang effect of colonization that I wanted to point out.

Césaire objects to the ways Europeans treat colonized people he mentions “as an animal or like an animal”. In the last sentence of the quotation, he evokes the colonized people to realize that bad treatment and triggers them to react and oppose that kind of dehumanized action. Furthermore, on the next page of the same book, Césaire (2000: p.42) also views the hidden mission of the colonizers saying to civilize the indigenous people, in fact, it is done to create forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elite, and degraded masses. The assertion affirms how furious Césaire is and therefore he must appear at the very forefront to fight them all. He protests the situation of no human relation between the Europeans and the Africans,



but the relation of domination and submission which turn the colonizing people into very low-level beings in society.

The Ways Césaire Take to Oppose Western Colonization

In the highest point to oppose Western oppression through the practice of colonization, there should be the pride and the fondness of civilization as ancestral heritage passed from generation to generation of the Igbo clan. Césaire (2000: p.51-52) gives a very loud stress on the Negro civilization when he says,

Once again, I systematically defend our old Negro civilization: they were courteous civilizations. So, the real problem, you say, is to return to them. No, I repeat, we are not men for whom it is a question of “either-or.” For us, the problem is not to make a utopian and sterile attempt to repeat the past, but to go beyond. It is not a dead society that we want to revive. We leave that to those who go in exoticism. Not is it the present colonial society that we wish to prolong, the most putrid carrion that ever rotted under the sun. It is a new society that we must create, with the help of our brother slaves, a society rich with all the productive power of modern times, warm with all the fraternity of olden days.

Césaire expects the black Africans to have a high sense of pride and appreciation for their local civilization. Adequate appreciation for their own civilization is expected to build a sense of self-confidence that is more or less equal in the interactions with other nations, including the Western people. The problem they faced when they were colonized by Western nations was that they were not clear and firm enough in their statements - verbal or non-verbal – about their pride in the civilization they have had before the arrival of the colonialists. By having this sense of pride and appreciation, the African nations can rise to build a progressive community as dreamed of by all levels of society. This development can be carried out by utilizing the two main resources they already have namely modern productive power and the warmth of brotherhood inherited from the past.

When Achebe composed *Things Fall Apart* in the mid-1950s, he wrote against the dynamic and anxious backdrop of a soon-to-be independent Nigeria (which was granted full independence on October 1, 1960). Depicting Nigeria's past which is clearly filled with political meaning from the previous century of British colonial rule, *Things Fall Apart* also voices the spirit of freedom among the Nigerian people, especially members of the Igbo tribe. In keeping with Aimé Césaire's



protest against colonial practices, Chinua Achebe wanted his cultural heritage, customs, ceremonies, beliefs, oral traditions, rituals, family, social life and religion to be recorded. Regarding this fact, Akers Rhoads (1993: p.62) wrote,

“One of Achebe’s aims is to present the peculiarities of the Igbo culture, especially the beauties and wisdom of its art and institutions, though...Achebe also presents its weaknesses which require change and aid in its destruction. A further aim, however, is the presentation of a common humanity which transcends the European and the African, which belongs to both but is peculiar to neither.”

Therefore, Achebe wants to write back to the Western canon, correcting their misrepresentations of Africa in Western fiction. While presenting his vision of Africa, he complicates and problematizes multicultural representation in the novel. His defense of African culture against Western invasions and prejudices is not one-sided and without depth. There are many disturbing elements to the traditional Igbo culture and the character of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and Achebe does not try to hide them.

The role of education is also considered important in the effort to obtain political independence from the colonizer. In contrast to Césaire, who mostly justifies the education held in colonial era is merely for the sake of the colonizer, Achebe (2000: p.181) presents the sincere service of Mr. Brown, a Christian missionary in the Igbo clan, who persuaded the local people to send their children to his school. This to show as if among the bad things and the manipulative practices applied by the colonizers – there exist some good Europeans who really care about the African future life, as stated in the followings:

Mr. Brown begged and argued and prophesied. He said that the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women who had learned to read and write. If Umuofia failed to send her children to the school, strangers would come from other places to rule them. They could already see that happening in the Native Court, where the D.C. was surrounded by strangers came from distant town of Umuru on the bank of the Great River where the white man first went.

Things Fall Apart does not only depict colonialism one-sidedly. Achebe presents a sympathetic Mr. Brown who urged the Igbo to send their children to school because he knew that the colonial government would deprive the Igbo of their self-government if they did not master



the language, as well as the ability to read and write. In essence, he urged the Igbo people to adapt so as not to lose all their autonomy in their future self-government. However, it is difficult to view colonialism in a very positive light: suddenly the Igbo had to relate to the colonial government on European terms. Abame's story and the discussion of the new justice system show how different the European frame of reference is from the egwugwu frame of reference. The colonial government punished individuals according to European cultural and religious values without first seeking to understand the cultural and religious traditions behind the practice. In the next session, through Obierika – Okonkwo, the main character's best friend – Achebe emphasized that it was impossible for white people to understand Umuofia's customs without understanding the language. This idea reflects one of Achebe's goals in writing *Things Fall Apart*: the book not only serves to remind the Western world that Africa has language and culture, but also to provide an understanding of Igbo culture through language. Achebe highlights the extent to which cultural and linguistic structures and practices are intertwined, and he is able to recreate the rhythms, images, and speech rhythms of Igbo society in English. As things began to "fall apart," it became clear that what the colonialists had dismantled was the complex Igbo culture.

Tired of the misrepresentation of Africa and African society from a Western perspective, Achebe attempts to depict Western colonialism and Christianity confronting the animist tribal system in Nigeria in its complexity. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe depicts the positive and negative aspects of Igbo society without romanticizing or sentimentalizing them. The description of Africa as a Dark Continent, the animalistic qualities given to Africans, and the darkness of the soul indicated by dark skin color are ideas that Achebe challenges. Targeting Western readers, he wanted to show that Igbo culture was democratic, tolerant, balanced, open to progress, and had a functioning belief system and an effective justice system. The Africans do not deserve to call as "barbaric Negro" – that both Césaire (2000: p.53) and Achebe refused the use of the term and said that it was the idea of a European invention.

4. CONCLUSION

Things Fall Apart is a true portrait in the form of fiction which gives readers an idea of two important things: how the British treated the Igbo tribe in Nigeria and how the Igbo tribal members reacted to the British bad treatment. In general, Césaire mention the society whose essence has been drained, local culture which has been trampled on, socio-cultural institutions that have been destroyed, communal land which has been confiscated, native religions which have been destroyed, and extraordinary works of art inherited by the ancestors that have been destroyed as



the reason why African people rose up against the colonizers. Achebe highlights the inhumane treatment experienced by Okonkwo and 5 Igbo tribal leaders when they were detained for 3 days on charges of burning a church as the main trigger to reject the presence of British colonizer in the Igbo region. It is said that their head-hair was shaved, they are locked up in a room without food and drinking water at all, and without access to a place to defecate. But again, the readers of *Things Fall Apart* also get an implicit reflection about the colonizer hypocrisy as another fact that causes the local people hate the missionaries and their church ministers.

Meanwhile, to fight the inhumane treatment and the colonialists' ignorance to the fate and future of the colonized, both Césaire and Achebe recommended two important things: giving high respect to the civilization inherited by their ancestors so that other nations would see them as being equal compared with other nations' civilization, and at the same time, they must work hand in hand to strengthen their cultural identity in order to be able to build a new society by empowering their productive forces and solid brotherhood.

The writer did not find the recommendation to go through political channels or to be involved in an open physical war in accordance with the ways to liberate the Igbo tribe in Achebe's fictional novel and the African black communities in reality from the Western colonizers. Even Okonkwo, the main character of *Things Fall Apart*, consciously chooses to commit suicide by hanging himself on a big tree rather than leading at the forefront to take up guns to fight against Western colonizers. It assumes that Césaire and Achebe prefer non-violent movements to war that may put their nations at more serious risk and danger.

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