Things Fall Apart: 
Chinua Achebe Writes Back to the Centre

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Abstract:
The postcolonial writings tend to challenge the simplified representations of the natives and their cultures in the colonialists discourses. These writings celebrate the native pre-colonial culture and society to assert that these communities were not without history, heritage or identity of their own, as claimed by the colonialists. The postcolonial writings reflect the pride of the writer and the community in their own culture and heritage. These narratives also describe the colonialists and their culture from a new perspective. The postcolonial writings also depict the resistance of the natives towards the colonialist ideologies and cultures. Chinua Achebe is an African postcolonial writer. His novel Things Fall Apart is one of the best postcolonial novels and has the status of an African classic piece of writing. It has all the major characteristics of a postcolonial discourse. The present study intended to investigate the portrayal of African culture and identity in this novel and Achebe’s response towards the colonialist ideology and culture, in the light of Postcolonial theories. The study found that Achebe has presented the African culture from the native perspective and has shown that Igbo culture and people had their own distinct culture, history and civilisation. However, the study also showed that Achebe has also dwelt upon some of the negative features of the pre-colonial Igbo culture, suggesting that it needed to be reformed and changed. He himself has an ambivalent attitude towards the colonialist ideology and culture, reflecting the fact that he has internalised the colonialist ideology and culture.

Keywords: Culture, Identity, Hybridity, Superiority, Resistance, Colonialist, Native, Ideology.

I. Introduction
Chinua Achebe in his creative works has focused upon the portrayal of African experience before and after it was taken over by the European Christian colonisers and the resultant consequences of this encounter between the two cultures and the belief
systems. The colonial encounter, as elsewhere, was to leave an indelible impact upon the local identity, culture and society. The dominant colonialists try to impose their culture and belief systems upon the colonised to establish and perpetuate their hold upon the occupied territories. The colonised are made to accept the inferiority of their own culture and the superiority of the culture and belief systems of the colonialists. This results in a deep sense of shame amongst the colonised about their own identity, culture and belief systems. The result is either mimicry or hybridity on the part of the colonised, or resistance and rejection of the colonialist culture and belief systems. A post colonialist narrative usually portrays the resistance on the part of the natives against the Empire and its apparatus of power. The present study means to examine the handling of these issues by Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*.

II. Literature Review

A brief literature review is presented here to provide the background and the context to the present study. Kwame Anthony Appiah in his introduction to the novel (1994, ix) declares *Things Fall Apart* as "Africa's best-loved novel". He further ads that it is "the archetypal modern African novel in English". Appiah has mainly examined it from the perspective of form and language. His focus upon the late nineteenth century portrayal of Igbo culture by Achebe in the novel is commendable and can serve as an appropriate starting point for a full-fledged investigation into the issues of the portrayal of African culture, the process of colonisation and the resultant issues of identity and hybridity, in the light of postcolonial critical theories.

Carroll (1990) has dwelt upon the portrayal of Igbo culture and society by Achebe. In his critique he has especially highlighted portrayal of the fine details of Igbo culture and the working of this society, but without ever referring to the imperial culture or the reasons behind Achebe's portrayal of it from the perspective of the Igbo people. Carroll has in particular stressed upon the portrayal of balance between spiritual and material or between personal and social. Significantly, he is silent on some very basic issues, as the present study means to show. He jumps to judgements which are not supported by the text of the novel. He has not noticed that Achebe has already internalised the ideology of the colonialists and his critical position and perspective needs to be revisited.

Irele (2000) has also critiqued *Things Fall Apart*. He has comprehensively discussed Achebe's portrayal of Igbo culture and society. It is a great and wonderful study, but many of his positions and assertions, especially about the issues of colonial encounter and the character of Okonkwo need to be re-examined and re-visited. Irele has referred to the double cultural experience of Achebe, but has not said much about this as Achebe's major limitation regarding his handling of the colonial encounter. He has focused on the artistic achievements of Achebe as a novelist of great merit and the presentation of the novel as a counter fiction and literature of resistance, which is very debateable.

Innes (2007) has commented upon *Things Fall Apart* in the context of Achebe's portrayal of pre-colonial Igbo history. His reading of the novel is done in comparison to Conrad's portrayal of Africa (2005). Innes has highlighted the changes that take place in Igbo culture with the arrival of the white settlers. It is a wonderful study and is expected to be very fruitful for the comprehensive and exhaustive analysis and re-reading of *Things Fall Apart*. 
The brief literature review shows that there are issues and questions in *Things Fall Apart* which need to be addressed and taken care of. The present study intends to undertake this job and fill these gaps/silences and present a fresh perspective to the positions already taken up by the afore said critics.

**III. Research Methodology**

A qualitative approach based upon the exhaustive analysis of *Things Fall Apart* in the light of mainly postcolonial critical theories is to be adopted for this study. The following research questions, with guidelines from Tyson (2006), are designed to give the study a formal verifiable format:

i) How are the native characters portrayed, with what place in narrative?

ii) How is the native culture and society portrayed?

iii) How are the Colonialists and their ideology portrayed with what place in the narrative?

iv) How is the resistance to the colonialist ideology and culture presented?

v) Does the narrative reinforce or undermine the colonialist ideology of superiority?

vi) Can the novel be categorised as a counter fiction or a literature of resistance?

The major presumption of the study is that Achebe has portrayed the native pre-colonial culture and identity with the suggestion that it was ripe for reform and change, introduced by the colonialists, because of its inherent flaws and weaknesses. The study means to show that Achebe has highlighted and commemorated the native African culture and identity in his narrative, along with the portrayal of the weaknesses of that culture and society. Further, the novel is a fine manifestation of the instance of hybridity in every sense of the word.

**IV. Discussion and Analysis**

**The Portrayal of Native Culture and Society**

The novel begins with the reference to the long list of the achievements of Okonkwo, the native protagonist. He is the champion in wrestling. He is rich, with his barns full of yams and has just married his third wife. He has already won many titles, which carry prestige in Igbo society. Okonkwo is huge, tall, strong and alert. He is regarded as man of honour and standing. He is the pride of his clan and is known through the nine villages, constituting the world for the Igbo community. He is a great survivor and achiever. Okonkwo has brought honour and glory to his village. Okonkwo occupies the central position in the narrative. This is typical of any postcolonial text, as suggested by Ralph J. Crane (1992), a known postcolonial critic and theorist. This situates the novel in the tradition of the postcolonial literature. However, unlike other postcolonial writers, for example Narayan (2000), he presents the flaws of his protagonist instead of the colonialists.

The native culture is depicted in great detail and with all its complexities, quite in line with the approach of Ashcroft et. al (1989). Community and kinsmen are preferred to wealth and money in Igbo culture. The social aspect of the individual in Igbo culture is more pronounced and developed. Feasts and get togethers are a regular feature of the Igbo culture and society. The guests and visitors carry their own goatskins to sit upon and their own horns to drink wine from. Women sit upon sisal mats. On special occasions the son carries the stool for the father to sit upon. The host entertains the visitor with cola nuts, put in a wooden disc. Cola is very much valued in the native pre-colonial
African culture and society. It is considered the source of life. Before cola is broken, it is formally shown to the guests; they thank the host for it. Breaking cola nut carries prestige and honour. Usually it is the privilege of the host. Palm-wine is served after cola. Yam, yam pottage, foo-foo, egusi soup, bitter-leaf soup and vegetable soup are the main food items. On special occasions birds and goats are also slaughtered. Said (1993) rightly describes it as the re-writing of the colonial experience on the part of Achebe.

Prosperous men have big compounds. The obi of the husband is situated near the gate of the compound. The huts of the wives are at some distance. There is an hierarchy which governs the place and status of wives. First wife gets the first place in social rituals and she controls the women folk on behalf of her husband. There are stacks of yam, sheds of goats and enclosures for hen in the same compound. There is a personal shrine (medicine house) for the husband. Okonkwo keeps the images of his personal god, the images of his ancestors and worships them with sacrifices of cola nuts, palm-wine and food. Achebe celebrates the beauty of the native girls. Ikwefi, one of the wives of Okonkwo is described as the beauty of Umuofia. Her daughter Ezinma, is called the Crystal of Beauty. By this Achebe rejects the Western stereotypes about Africa and African people.

The marriage of a daughter involves very complex rituals and customs. At sixteen a girl is ripe for marriage. The boy's family arrives at the place of the future bride. The elders from the two families sit to decide the issues of the marriage. The girl comes before the assembly, carrying cola nuts and alligator pepper. She gives the dish to the elder brother of her father, and shakes hands with the guests, starting with her suitor. They judge the girl for beauty and looks. The girl has prepared herself for the event. Akueke is wearing a coiffure in the middle of her head. She has rubbed her skin with camwood. Black patterns are drawn all over her body with uli. She is wearing a black necklace and red and yellow bangles on her arms. She also wears four or five rows of jigida on her waist. In the mean time, men drink palm-wine brought by the family of the boy, usually tapped by the boy himself. Finally the bride price is settled, through an elaborate and detailed exercise and negotiations. All this would lead to uri, the day of the departure of bride for her in-laws. The bride groom brings palm-wine for the whole village. The whole village contributes and participates in the feast for the guests. The feast is accompanied by music, singing and dancing. It is followed by isa-efi ceremony. The daughters of the family ask questions to the bride, who sits in the centre, regarding her sexual conduct. While she answers to the questions, she holds a hen in her right hand. If she satisfies the girls from her in-laws, the hen is slaughtered, its blood is made to fall on the ancestral staff, and the bride is ready to be taken to bridegroom's place. Before joining the dancing gala, the bride gives a gift to the musicians, usually a cock. A big fat goat is given to the in-laws. With reciprocal prayers, the bride leaves for her in-laws. The discussion and analysis has shown that Achebe has rejected the contention of writers like Hegel (1956) that pre-colonial Africa had no history, culture or civilisation.

Funerals are portrayed with great detail. When a man of titles dies, his funeral is attended by the whole community. Drums beat and guns are fired. Warriors and titled men wear smoked raffia skirts and paint their bodies with chalk and charcoal. Even the spirits of the ancestors are represented by egwugwus at the funeral. Okonkwo fires a gun at the funeral of Ezeudu and accidentally kills his young son and then is exiled to his
motherland for seven years. An accidental crime is a female crime and is atoned with specific rites and sacrifices.

The ancestors occupy a very important place in Igbo culture and society. Elders are respected and obeyed. Before anything is eaten, the ancestors are remembered and prayed to for life and health. A share of cola is thrown on the ground in the name of the ancestors. The spirits of the ancestors are represented as egwugwu to resolve the contentious issues of the community. The decisions taken in the name of the ancestors are binding on everyone. War is a reality in Igbo social experience. Okonkwo has shown prowess in the tribal wars. The intervention and protection of the ancestors is sought against their enemies. Feasts are held regularly to honour the ancestors. The whole community participates in the preparatory meetings. Age carries respect and prestige and the aged people get the place of honour in the meetings of the tribe.

A man can look towards a community for help and support. However, close and intimate friends are not thanked as a formality in Igbo culture (123). A mechanism of share-cropping is available. Though, the arrangement is heavily tilted in favour of the one, who provides seed for the crop. The worker gets only one third of the crop in spite of his hard labour. Whenever a man is in trouble, he can go to his motherland to be supported and comforted by the kinsmen of his mother, till he is able to come back to his fatherland. The commonest name in Igbo culture is Nneka, Mother is Supreme. Paradoxically, it reflects the centrality of the mother in the Igbo culture (116)

The art of conversation is valued in Igbo culture. A good speaker must be familiar with the treasure of Igbo proverbs. The conversation is full of proverbs, reflective of the oral tradition of storytelling. Ogbuefi Ezeugo gets the honour to address ten thousand assembled Umuofians because he is a powerful orator.

Every community has its own oracle. They visit oracles to consult the spirits of their ancestors and to know their future. The Agbala Oracle is located in the hills. A small round opening leads to the inside of the oracle. Inside Agbala is dark and empty. Even the figure of the priestess visible to the pilgrim is dark. People make sacrifices to gods and goddesses to seek their blessings. Ani is the earth goddesses. She is the source of all fertility. The annual Feast of the New Yam is held to honour the goddesses. Great preparations are made for this festival. The walls of the compounds and huts are rubbed with red earth. Sometimes the compound walls are covered with palm fronds. Then patterns are drawn on them in white, yellow and dark green colours. Women paint themselves with cam wood and draw beautiful black patterns on their stomachs and backs. The children are also decorated, especially their hair are shaved in beautiful patterns. Guests from the mother land and the in-laws are invited to huge quantities of food.

Myth and legend are permanent features of Igbo culture. Wrestling contests, social ceremonies and dancing takes place at the village ilo, accompanied by drum beatings. Wrestling contests take place near an ancient silk-tree, which is believed to be the abode of the spirits of the children to be born. Women with the desire to have children, come to sit under this tree. Okafo attains the status of a legendary wrestler after defeating his opponents. In future, stories will be told of his prowess with which he could defeat hundreds of his opponents. There are myths about the vulture acting as a mediatory
between the earth and sky. There are also stories about the mythical origin of the locusts in the Igbo culture. There are stories about mosquitoes, and white men. The portrayal of native pre-colonial culture by Achebe can be fairly termed, what Fanon (2001) calls, an attempt to rescue history from the custody of the coloniser. This is also an answer to Conrad's narrative (2005), in which he dismisses Africans as only cannibals, savages, with unspeakable rituals and without any use of language.

**The Representation of the Inadequacies of the Native Culture:**

Achebe's is not a pure and undiluted celebration of indigenous culture and identity, like, for example one comes across in the novels of R. K. Narayan (2000). He is a direct beneficiary of the colonial experience of Africa. His parents embraced Christianity and Achebe has internalised the colonialist ideology and culture. Appiah (1994, ix) is right that there are columns of profit and loss in Achebe's portrayal of Igbo culture and society. But the column of loss and negative portrayal is longer and heavier. The protagonist Okonkwo is fathered by Unoka, a complete failure in every sense of the word. He was lazy and improvident. He was thin, with a haggard look and a stoop. He was poor and could not look after his family properly. He was a loafer and people laughed at him. He owed money, practically to every soul in the village and never thought of returning it. English intellectuals used to say the same things about the Irish people (Curtis, 1968). He were a coward and was afraid of wars. He had no title to his credit. He died in disgrace. Okonkwo is ashamed of his father. Unoka was called agbala, an inferior name for a woman. That is the history of the father of Okonkwo, who practically stands for and represents the past of Igbo culture and identity. The weaknesses of Unoka symbolise the inherent weaknesses of Igbo culture in spite of the assertions of the narrative that in Igbo culture it is the individual achievement and not the history that matters. Indirectly, Achebe has alerted the reader of the vulnerability of the Igbo culture and identity from the very beginning. Okonkwo's son Nwoye is also portrayed as lazy, and receives nagging and beating from his father Okonkwo. This has spoiled the relationship between father and son. Okonkwo's father and son are not the only lazy souls in Umuofia. There are other farmers who are equally lazy and harvest poor crops. The narrative shows that the Igbo culture and society suffers from a universal malaise. It smacks of colonialist ideology of superiority.

Achebe shows that war haunts the imagination of Igbo people. Okonkwo has brought many human heads from war as trophies. On special occasions he drinks his wine from out of his first war trophy, which is a human head. Achebe has presented his protagonist as a barbarian, instead of a glorious war hero. He has also alerted the reader about the concept and practice of surrendering the children as hostages by the weaker villages to the powerful ones as guarantee of peace and security, another primitive custom. This is how the condemned child, Ikemefuna, comes in the custody of Okonkwo. The cruelty and savagery of the pre-colonial Igbo culture is highlighted through the unending sadness of Ikemefuna and his mother. He suffers for no fault of his own. He is separated from his family and through a lonely forest, in the company of a complete stranger, he comes to exile. One day he is taken to the forest and is killed. Okonkwo betrays his trust in the worst possible way. Innes (2007) incorrectly finds a parallel between the fate of Ikemefuna and the Biblical story of Isaac and Abraham. The two situations are entirely different. Achebe has dwelt upon and fore grounded the horrible images of things in Igbo culture. It does not look like the perspective of an insider. These acts are done at the bidding of the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves.
Agamemnon, the great Greek conqueror and warrior was required by goddess Artesmis to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia. The poet, Aeschylus, as an insider gives the fullest possible expression to the misery and the deepest possible anguish experienced by Agamemnon (1959). The act is never presented as a barbaric act. The murder of Ikemefuna leaves a devastating impact upon the son of Okonkwo. This is not the only dark spot on the face of Igbo culture. Twins are also thrown in the Evil Forest the moment they are born to die there. Achebe identifies the pre-colonial Igbo culture with ignorance, superstition, cruelty and barbarism. This is to establish the desirability of reform and change to be brought later by the white Christian missionaries, the advance party of the colonialists.

On occasions Achebe adopts the language and tone of the colonialist. He has internalised the ideology of superiority of the colonialists as suggested by Fanon (2008). Umuofia is powerful in war and magic. This makes the people of Umuofia fearful. Fear is said to be the defining feature of the protagonist of the novel. Okonkwo is not only afraid of his personal possible failure; he is feared by his own family. His wives and children live in perpetual fear of fiery temper. He is presented as a bully and he is ever ready to snub his wives. The Igbo gods are shown as capricious, "forces of nature are malevolent red in tooth and claw" (10). Fear of evil and fear of forest haunts the Igbo community. Darkness has an element of terror for Igbo people. Even their oracle is dark. The narrator calls them as "these people", as if they are lesser Other. The evil spirits walk around. It is a land of dangerous animals, which become sinister and uncanny during dark nights. In his description of his homeland, he seems to be similar to the colonialist writers like Forester when he depicts India (2007).

Women occupy a lesser and a lower place in Igbo society. A man can have many wives, as many as nine (15). They are treated as commodities of the husband. Wife beating is a regular feature of the pre-colonial Igbo culture. Ekwefi became Okonkwo's wife because she was impressed by his wrestling prowess. Okonkwo beats his second wife Ekwefi for cutting a few leaves to wrap food from a banana tree. Subsequently, he almost shoots her for some careless remarks on her part. At social gatherings, wives drink wine after their husbands have satisfied themselves to their heart's content. Discrimination against women is general and universal. Even the crops grown by women are inferior. Women grow cocom-yams, beans, maize, melons and cassava. Yam, the king of yams is grown by men. A girl child is not permitted to carry the stool of her father to a festival, which is the privilege of a male child. Women are required to sit in a different way. Boys are encouraged to do masculine tasks like splitting of wood or pounding food. The boys are fed upon stories of war and violence to cultivate their manliness. They are expected to control their women folk tomorrow with an iron hand. This is exactly what Innes (2007) calls the depiction of native woman in need of rescue by the white man, a justification of White Imperial rule. This perspective is endorsed by Spivak (1988). Okonkwo brings a young woman from the neighbouring village as a compensation for the murder committed of the wife of Udo. This young girl is forcibly separated from her family and she is made the wife of Udo without her consent. Okonkwo is unhappy with his son Nwoye because he believes that he has taken after his mother. Therefore he is worried for the future of his family. However, there are also women like Ekwefi, who are very daring and un-conventional. She runs away from her first husband Anene and comes to Okonkwo. She has the courage to confront the priestess of the Oracle. She is determined to challenge the gods for her daughter.
Limitations and inadequacies of Igbo culture are highlighted in the narrative. This brings us to the title of the novel, which is borrowed from the Irish poet W.B. Yeats (1989). Achebe suggests that with the arrival of the ideology in the guise of religion, old culture and belief systems gave way to new values. The father of Okonkwo died in disgrace, without a proper burial. He suffered from the swelling in the stomach and was shifted to the Evil Forest to die there. Obierika questions the desirability of many Igbo customs. Ignorance and superstition are in abundance in Igbo culture and society. Disease and illness are attributed to the evil spirits. Malaria is not understood and the incidence of child mortality is very common. This again is to establish the desirability of the reform and change in the face of primitive barbarism.

The Negative and Stereotype Representation of Okonkwo:

Achebe's double consciousness makes him draw Okonkwo with some serious flaws. His wildness is also suggested by the fact that he can pounce upon people quite often. He is portrayed as an impatient man. Okonkwo is portrayed as being disrespectful towards other people, due to his arrogance. He is given the name of nza, a native bird, who forgets his chi after a heavy meal. He violates the Week of Peace and beats his wife for her failure to bring him food in time. After the murder of Ikemefuna, which was commanded by the Oracle, the misery and suffering of Okonkwo is negatively portrayed. He cannot sleep or eat. He is deserted by his own son, who embraces Christianity, the religion of the colonialist. Even then his condition is compared to that of a rat which is caught by the tail and dashed on to the floor (55). This is a very unkind and ungenerous comment. He is said to be a man of action and not a man of thought. This is a stereotype constructed by the colonialists about the Africans. Achebe portrays him as a stubborn, headstrong man, instead of a great warrior and national hero. At the end, he strives to drive the white man out but fails. He commits suicide. The narrative calls it the death of a dog. This shows that Achebe has already internalised the colonialist ideology of superiority. Interestingly Innes (2007) contends that the clan finds the behaviour of Okonkwo as aberrant. The present study finds it impossible to agree with it.

The Portrayal of the Colonialists and their Culture and Ideology:

The colonialists are introduced indirectly by Obierika when he visits Okonkwo in exile. The people of Abame had been warned by their Oracle about the possible danger from the white man. There is a moderate resistance in the Igbo society to the new religion. Their main response is curiosity. The Abame clan kills a visiting white man to pre-empt the danger. After some time, the colonialist search party arrives and they kill almost the whole unarmed Abame clan on the market day with their guns. The colonialist presence and ideology is launched through the missionaries. They build a church and the conversions start. The first batch of the converts are people, called in Igbo culture efulefu, the worthless, empty people. The first born son of Okonkwo, Nwoye, rejects his father and all that he stands for and embraces the religion of the white man. He is convinced of the superiority of the new religion. The new ideology gives him answers to the deaths of twins in the Evil Forest and the murder of Ikemefuna. He finds the hymns of the new religion as drops of frozen rain which melt on the dry palate of the panting earth. This has deep symbolic importance. The missionaries dismiss the Igbo gods as false and deceitful gods, who cause the deaths of innocent children, and their life style as wicked ways. Achebe has presented the positive attributes of the new religion. It preaches equality and freedom. It welcomes the outcasts into its fold (136). The firmness of the Christian priests is a source of inspiration to the new converts. The Christian colony
expands. Achebe presents the new religion as better and superior ideology, which attracts people towards it. The missionaries win their first battle when they and their church survive in the Evil Forest at Mbanta (130). With the gradual success of the missionaries, the natives are getting uneasy and resentful, but they offer no resistance.

The new religion is followed by the government of the white man. Courts are established to maintain law and order and the trade and economic interests of the colonialists. Empire establishes itself in the wake of religion. The District Commissioner holds court and tries the offenders of the law of the white man. Prisons have been established. Even the titled men of Umuofia are sentenced and humiliated and made to do menial work beneath their dignity in the prison. Okonkwo is the only nationalist man. He contemplates resistance, but the clan has lost its spirit, especially after the Abame massacre. Obierika maintains that the natives have already lost their battle. The British have won over the natives towards their side through religion and administrative measures. Igbo community is like a house divided against itself (152). The portrayal of the encounter between the natives and the colonialists by Achebe is flavoured by sympathy for the ideology of the colonialists. There is a reference to the economic prosperity of the natives under the administration of the white man (153). The native belief systems are called overwhelming madness, while the ideology of the white man is presented as a method. This is something unusual. A missionary, Mr. Brown is presented as a very sensible man. He is shown as being respected by the natives. He is presented as a popular man, who is honoured and respected wherever he goes. He is presented with gifts by the natives. One influential native, Akunna, even hands over his son to Mr. Brown for his education. Mr. Brown builds a school and hospital to support the progress of the Empire. This throws light on the nexus that exists between education and Empire. The new missionary, Mr. Smith, provokes a clash between the church and the clan. The clan destroys the church. The clan leaders, including Okonkwo are arrested through deceit and treachery. They are insulted, humiliated, flogged and degraded during imprisonment. They are released only after the payment of fine. Okonkwo makes a last effort to fight against the white man. The natives have already been won over by the apparatus of the Empire. They desert the nationalist leader Okonkwo. His situation is not very different from that of Antony in Antony and Cleopatra (Shakespeare, 1995). Okonkwo commits suicide. Practically no resistance is put up by the natives against the White Rule. The District Commissioner arrives at the scene accompanied by a small contingent and the natives obey his orders without a murmur. Suicide is an abomination and the nationalist hero is buried like a dog (179).

**Achebe's Silence on resistance to Colonialist Oppression and Ideology:**
Achebe has portrayed the native Igbo culture quite in detail. He has also portrayed the negative features and weaknesses of the Igbo culture and society. But he is almost silent on the native resistance to the colonialist culture and ideology. He is also silent on the cruelties and the oppression of the colonialists, their culture and ideology. In this he is different from many postcolonial writers. Sidhwa (1989) blames the British for their partiality, for their policy of divide and rule in India. She holds them responsible for their failure to prevent massacres (1987). She shatters their myth of moral superiority and shows that the British in India were corrupt both morally and financially. Achebe makes only a passing reference to the treachery and deceit of the colonialists. The massacre of the unarmed Abame clan on the market day is not less than the Amritsar Massacre, committed by Dyer. Every Indian postcolonial narrative mentions it, while every
colonialist narrative is silent on it. Achebe has mentioned it in only one sentence. Achebe is silent on the arbitrary justice and exploitation of the colonialists, one comes across in Gurna's *Paradise* (1994). He has also not said anything about the damage done to the native culture and identity under colonialism like for example Ahmed Ali (2000) has done.

V. Conclusion

The present study through an exhaustive analysis of *Things Fall Apart* in the light of postcolonial theory and Feminism has answered the research questions raised in the beginning of the study. The study has shown that Achebe has rejected the contention of the imperialist critics and historians that Africa had no history or culture before the arrival of the white man. He has shown that Igbo people had a very rich and complex pre-colonial culture and history at the end of the nineteenth century. The Igbo people are presented as self-sufficient with a normal and complete life. They have a deep sense of history and are optimistic of the future of their community. In this sense the novel becomes an exercise in writing back to the so called centre of civilisation. Achebe has also referred to some of the negative aspects of the Igbo culture, rather unsympathetically. He seems to be on the side of the colonialists. His portrayal of Igbo culture suggests that it asked for reform and change. He suggests that the Igbo people were convinced rationally of the superiority of the culture and ideology. This is why it met no resistance. The colonialist culture and ideology are presented as better alternative. No resistance is portrayed to either the colonialists or their ideology. The narrative reinforces the superiority of the colonialist culture. *Things Fall Apart* cannot be categorised as a literature of resistance. This makes Achebe different from other postcolonialist writers like Narayan, Sidhwa or Hamid. He seems to be closer to colonialist writers like Forester and John Masters. It means that Achebe himself is heavily influenced by the colonialist culture and ideology.

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