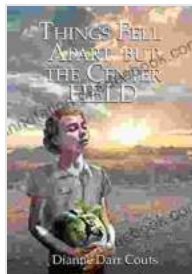


# Things Fell Apart But the Center Held: Chinua Achebe's Exploration of Colonialism's Impact on Igbo Society



**Things Fell Apart, but the Center Held** by Dianne Darr Coutts

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 26957 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 244 pages  
Lending : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported



Chinua Achebe's debut novel, *Things Fell Apart*, is widely regarded as one of the most important works of African literature. Published in 1958, the novel depicts the pre-colonial Igbo society in Nigeria and explores the profound impact of colonialism on its people.

Achebe's novel is a powerful and moving account of how the Igbo way of life was disrupted and ultimately destroyed by the arrival of European colonizers. Through the experiences of the protagonist, Okonkwo, Achebe sheds light on the complex and devastating effects of colonialism.

## Themes

### Colonialism

Things Fell Apart is a searing indictment of colonialism and its devastating effects on Igbo society. Achebe portrays the colonizers as arrogant and dismissive of the indigenous culture, and their arrival brings violence, disease, and social upheaval.

The novel explores the ways in which colonialism undermines traditional beliefs and values. The Igbo way of life is based on a deep connection to the land and a strong sense of community. However, the colonizers introduce new ideas and values that disrupt this traditional way of life.

## **Tradition**

Tradition is a central theme in Things Fell Apart. Achebe depicts the Igbo society as one that is deeply rooted in its traditions and customs. These traditions provide a sense of identity and belonging for the Igbo people.

However, the arrival of the colonizers challenges these traditions. The colonizers introduce Christianity and Western education, which gradually erode the power of traditional beliefs and customs.

## **Identity**

Things Fell Apart also explores the theme of identity. The novel depicts the Igbo people as a proud and independent people with a strong sense of their own identity. However, the arrival of the colonizers forces them to question their identity and their place in the world.

The colonizers attempt to impose their own culture and values on the Igbo people, and this creates a sense of confusion and alienation. The Igbo people are forced to grapple with the question of who they are and what their place is in the new colonial world.

## **Characters**

### **Okonkwo**

Okonkwo is the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*. He is a powerful and respected warrior in his Igbo village. Okonkwo is a traditionalist who clings to the old ways and values of his people.

However, Okonkwo's world is turned upside down by the arrival of the colonizers. He witnesses the destruction of his village and the undermining of his traditional beliefs. Okonkwo's tragic story is a testament to the devastating impact of colonialism.

### **Nwoye**

Nwoye is Okonkwo's son. He is a sensitive and intelligent young man who questions his father's traditional beliefs. Nwoye is drawn to the new ideas introduced by the colonizers, and he eventually converts to Christianity.

Nwoye's conversion to Christianity represents the changing values of Igbo society. He is a symbol of the new generation of Africans who are willing to embrace Western ideas and values.

### **Obierika**

Obierika is Okonkwo's close friend and confidant. He is a wise and thoughtful man who observes the changes brought about by colonialism with a keen eye.

Obierika represents the voice of reason in the novel. He tries to persuade Okonkwo to adapt to the changing times, but Okonkwo refuses to listen. Obierika's tragic death is a symbol of the destruction of the old order.

## **Narrative Style**

Achebe's narrative style in *Things Fell Apart* is unique and innovative. He blends traditional Igbo storytelling techniques with Western literary conventions to create a rich and vivid narrative.

Achebe uses a variety of literary devices to enhance the story, including symbolism, foreshadowing, and irony. He also employs a variety of narrative perspectives, including the third-person narrator, the first-person perspective of Okonkwo, and the perspectives of other characters.

Achebe's narrative style contributes to the novel's powerful impact. He uses vivid imagery and sensory details to create a realistic and engaging story that transports the reader to the Igbo world.

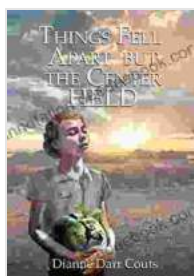
## **Literary Significance**

*Things Fell Apart* is a seminal work of African literature. It has been translated into more than 50 languages and is widely regarded as one of the most important novels of the 20th century.

The novel has had a profound impact on African literature and has inspired a generation of African writers. It has also played a significant role in shaping the way the world views Africa and its people.

*Things Fell Apart* is a powerful and moving novel that offers a unique and insightful perspective on the impact of colonialism on African society. It is a must-read for anyone interested in African literature, history, or the human condition.

Things Fell Apart is a complex and challenging novel that explores the profound impact of colonialism on Igbo society. Achebe's novel is a powerful indictment of colonialism and a moving exploration of the human condition. It is a must-read for anyone interested in African literature, history, or the human condition.



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