

Colonialism as the Bedrock of Poverty and Precarity in the Igbo Culture (Southeast Nigeria) as Revealed in Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" and "Arrow of God"

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In his two novels "Things Fall Apart" and "Arrow of God" Chinua Achebe shows how the combined European forces of missionaries, businessmen and the military systematically annihilated the cultural, political and social foundation of the Igbo nation, wiping off in a twinkle the cultural history of one of the greatest civilizations in the world and enthroning an impoverishing system of colonial mentality and political cum economic dependency. By destroying the old Igbo society, with its political arrangement that was very democratic and averse to any central authority, and installing warrant chiefs, the colonialists succeeded in creating a psycho-social order that will guarantee dependency on the colonial masters even after the political independence of the people. Obierika of Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" captures the situation well in his famous speech: "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won over our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."

This paper intends to explore how colonialism guaranteed this falling apart of things by institutionalizing a socio-political arrangement that catapulted the people to seemingly irredeemable poverty and precarity.