

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEWS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S "THINGS FALL APART" AND JOSEPH CONRAD'S "HEART OF DARKNESS", WITH REFERENCE TO POST COLONIALISM.

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Abstract: The study aims to bring out the different point of views the white man and the native African. How differently shown the world and created misrepresentations of the East. Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is a seminal work in postcolonial literature. The novel presents an indigenous African perspective, challenging European stereotypes of Africans as "primitive" and "uncivilized". Whereas Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad is a classic work in postcolonial literature, though its portrayal of Africa and its people is often criticized for its colonialist and racist undertones. The novel presents Africa as a "dark" and "uncivilized" continent, reflecting the European imperialist attitudes of the time. Achebe's portrayal of Igbo culture and society in pre-colonial Nigeria offers a nuanced and realistic view of African culture, highlighting its richness and complexity.

INTRODUCTION:

Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart portrays the Igbo culture and society in Africa from an indigenous, African perspective. Depicts the impact of colonialism on Igbo people and their traditions. Presents a more realistic, nuanced view of African culture and the effects of colonial rule. Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness portrays Africa and its people through the lens of European colonialization and imperialism. Depicts Africa as a 'dark, uncivilized' continent that needs to be enlightened by the Europeans. Presents a darker, more primitive and racist view of Africa influenced by the European imperialist attitudes.

PROBLEM:

Why should the two writers portrayed East/African continent differently? Why should the concept of racism ruled the writers at the time of writing these novels? What would be the information they wanted to convey to the future generations in East or West?

OBJECTIVES:

- To explore Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart
- To explore Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness.
- To explore the problems in the point of views of the writers
- To explore how racism impacted the novel/life in the novel.

Things Fall Apart challenges the European depiction of Africans as 'savages' by showcasing the richness and complexity of Igbo society. Heart of Darkness reinforces the European view of Africa as a savage, uncivilized place

that needs to be conquered and exploited by the colonizers. Achebe's novel provides an indigenous African perspective, while Conrad's novel reflects the European colonial perspective. The two novels offer contrasting portrayals of colonialism in Africa- *Things Fall Apart* presents an African view point, while *Heart of Darkness* reflects the European imperialist attitude towards the colonized continent. This highlights the different lenses through which colonialism was viewed and experienced.

Joseph Conrad presents a scathing critique of European colonialism and imperialism. He exposed the brutal and exploitative practices of the colonizers, highlighting the dehumanization of both the colonizers and the colonized. The novel depicts the African continent as a place of darkness and savagery, but also critiques the destructive nature of colonialism itself. Kurtz, the central figure, represents the corruption and brutality of the colonial system.

The African natives are often depicted as 'savages' who are treated brutally and exploited for their labor and resources. This portrayal reflects the colonialist mindset of the time, which viewed Africans as inferior and in need of European 'civilization'. The novel uses symbolism to convey its themes. For example, the Congo River represents the darkness and savagery of the colonial enterprise, while Kurtz's descent into madness symbolizes the moral decay of colonialism. The themes of power, domination, cultural identity and more corruption are woven through out the narrative, highlighting the complex and often messy nature of colonialism.

Achebe presents a rich and detailed description of various aspects of Igbo culture:

Religion: The Igbo are polytheistic, worshipping many gods and goddesses who govern different aspects of life. They also believe in spirits and have oracles who serve as mouthpieces for the gods.

Social Structure: The Igbo have a communal democratic system of government without a central leader. They have a strong sense of community and traditions that are passed down through generations.

Customs and Rituals: The novel explores Igbo customs surrounding marriage, war, law enforcement, and important ceremonies like the Week of Peace and the Festival of the New Yam.

We should look into the historical setting of the novel *Heart of Darkness*, the novel set in the late 19th century, a period marked by intense European colonial expansion in Africa. This historical context provides the backdrop for Conrad's exploration of the darker aspects of colonialism. Joseph Conrad's experiences as a sailor and his exposure to different cultures influenced his writing. His works often delve into themes of exploration, adventure, and the human condition in the face of adversity.

Heart of Darkness remains a seminal work of literature on the theme of colonialism, influencing generations of writers and thinkers. Its critique of colonialism and its portrayal of the darker aspects of human nature continue to resonate with readers today. *Heart of Darkness* is a powerful exploration of the horrors of colonialism, imperialism, and the human condition. Through the journey of Marlow and the critical view of the European colonial enterprise, highlighting its destructive impact on both the colonizers and the colonized.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* depicts how the arrival of European Christian missionaries and colonial rule disrupts and destabilizes Igbo society. It shows the clash between Igbo culture and the foreign value systems, ideas and traditions imposed by the colonizers. Achebe portrays the devastating effects of colonialism on the Igbo people, including the loss of their customs, rituals and cultural pride. The novel highlights how the Igbo are forced to adapt to the new religion, government and culture brought by the Europeans, leading to the erosion of their traditional way of life.

By presenting an authentic portrayal of Igbo culture from an indigenous perspective, *Things Fall Apart* challenges the European stereotypes of Africans as primitive and uncivilized. Achebe shows the complexity and richness of Igbo society, countering the dehumanizing depictions of Africans in works like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The novel provides a more realistic and nuanced view of African culture, highlighting both its strengths and flaws. It reveals the internal contradictions and fault lines within Igbo society even before colonialism, while still celebrating its unique traditions and values.

Things Fall Apart is a seminal work that offers an indigenous African perspective on the impact of colonialism on traditional cultures. Through its vivid depiction of Igbo society and the devastating effects of colonial rule, the novel challenges Western stereotypes and provides a more authentic representation of African culture and history.

The novel critiques the devastating impact of European colonialism on traditional Igbo society, emphasizing the erosion of cultural practices and the loss of cultural pride. Through the protagonist of the novel Okonkwo, Achebe depicts Africans as proud people who value their cultural heritage and are willing to defend it against the encroachment of European values. The novel's themes of cultural conflict, identity, and the impact of colonial rule are central to post colonial studies, which aim to re-examine the history of colonialism from the perspectives of the colonized and analyze the economic, political and cultural impact of colonialism on both the colonized and the colonizers.

The novel *Heart of Darkness* presents Africa and its people through the lens of European colonization and imperialism. Conrad presents a darker, more primitive and racist view of Africa, reflecting the European imperialist attitudes of the time. He uses symbolic imagery like "darkness" to reinforce the European perception of Africa as a savage, mysterious place that needs to be conquered and enlightened by the colonizers. Conrad's critique of colonialism is more focused on its moral and psychological impact on the colonizers.

Things Fall Apart presents an indigenous African perspective, depicting the richness and complexity of Igbo culture and society in pre-colonial Nigeria. Achebe challenges European stereotypes of Africans as 'primitive' and 'uncivilized'. It focuses on the devastating impact of European colonialism. Christian missionaries on the traditional Igbo way of life. Achebe provides a nuanced, realistic depiction of the effects of colonial rule from the perspective of the colonized. The novel devotes the majority of the narrative to the character development, plot and detailed descriptions of Igbo culture, before the arrival of the Europeans. This emphasizes the richness of the indigenous society.

Heart of Darkness delves into the themes of power, domination, moral corruption and 'darkness' of the human soul. Racial imagery and the symbolic use of 'darkness' and 'light' are central to the novel's exploration of colonialism. *Things Fall Apart* explores themes of cultural identity, tradition and the clash between indigenous and colonial value systems. Race is used primarily as a physical descriptor, not a symbolic one. "*Things Fall Apart*" presents an indigenous African perspective that challenges European stereotypes, while, "*Heart of Darkness*" reflects the European imperialist view point, using symbolic imagery to depict Africa as a savage, mysterious place on earth. The two novels offer contrasting portrayals of colonialism and its impact on African cultures.

CONCLUSION:

"*Things Fall Apart*" was groundbreaking in its portrayal of African culture from an indigenous perspective. It challenged the prevailing European stereotypes of Africans as 'primitive' and 'uncivilized' by presenting a rich, complex depiction of Igbo society. While "*Heart of Darkness*" has been criticised for its own Eurocentric biases, it was groundbreaking in its time for its critique of the brutalities and moral corruption inherent in European colonial

rule in Africa. Achebe's novel allowed African readers to see their own culture and history represented in literature, rather than through the lens of European colonialism. It empowered African to reclaim their narrative and identity. Despite the controversies surrounding Conrad's portrayal of Africa and Africans, the novel *Heart of Darkness* remains widely read and studied for its literary merit and its exploration of universal themes like the human condition and the corrosive effects of power. While the two novels offer contrasting perspectives on colonialism in Africa, they both had a significant impact on the readers and the literary canon. "Things Fall Apart" empowered African voices and challenged Western stereotypes, while "Heart of Darkness" provided a critical lens of the moral decay of European imperialism, albeit through a Eurocentric lens.

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