

---

**NEO-COLONIALISM IS A STAGE DESIGNED BY COLONIAL POWERS TO GIVE  
THE COLONIZED AN ILLUSION OF FREEDOM: A NEO COLONIAL ANALYSIS  
OF *THINGS FALL APART***

**Maria Aftab**

M.Phil Candidate

University of Sargodha, Women Campus, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

**Anila Jamil**

Lecturer in English Literature

University of Sargodha, Women Campus, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

---

**ABSTRACT:** *This research paper aims at exploring how neo-colonialism is an indirect survival of colonial system. The assumptions of Nkrumah and Young along with the supporting views of Sarte and Bhaba regarding neo-colonialism have been used as a major theoretical framework for this paper. The novel Things Fall Apart (1958) has been chosen to show that neo-colonialism is in fact killing of two birds with one stone. It shows that how white men indirectly started working on colonizing the minds of people. The new globe order does not allow the direct rule therefore specific local bourgeoisie class plays the role of middle man in transferring the nation's wealth and resources to the ex-colonizers.*

**KEYWORDS:** Indirect rule, colonialism, Young, Neo-colonialism.

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

While using neo-colonial theory, the present study describes how neo-colonialism is the primary effective enemy of the countries. In fact it is a kind of master slave relationship between the colonizers and colonized. The term neo-colonialism was first founded by 'Ghanaian President Nkrumah'. Nkrumah (1965) believed that neo-colonialism is a fake illusion of freedom in reality it was a planned shift from old to the new order of ruling. So the words of Cuban revolutionary are very much justified in saying that example of underdeveloped truth are colonial, semi-colonial or dependent countries. These African countries are those whose economies have been distorted by imperialism who are abnormally domestic developed where the branches of industry or agriculture to complement its multifarious economy. It is clear that how African countries were exploited by white man for his colonial interests. Hence it is very justified from these words that imperialist's countries have now puppet of neo-colonialism for their vested interests. As Said (Culture and Imperialism, 1994) mentioned 'that the difference in the modern period between the modern imperialists and the Romans is that the Romans were there just for the look. They were just stealing but we go there with an idea'. It is obvious from this ironical statement that what kind of idea European imperialists have behind the exploitation. It is quite clear that white man has always given fake justifications for his illegal rule in the colonized countries. Here we can sensitize the differentiating nature of white man that their rule is better than Romans. Every act of favor takes the colonized in 'Heart of Darkness'. The main purpose of the neo-colonialism is to make people unchained slaves to the imperialistic powers and to create situations more difficult for the colonized countries where they will never be able to get freedom (Young, 1995, p.7).

From past to present, many Asian and African countries have been a victim to white ‘man’s psyche’ in which it is rooted that “if there be various species of mankind there must be a natural aristocracy among them a dominant white species as opposed to the lower races who by their origin are destined to serve the nobility of mankind, and may be tamed, trained and used like domestic animals”. So here one can trace the very roots of power dominated exploitation which resulted first in the form of colonialism than it took the shape of indirect rule (Neo-colonialism). In the novel *Things Fall Apart* white man’s intentions we see the clash of two cultures and we also observe that how white man’s psyche dominates in Ibo society.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Achebe in the whole novel ‘*Things Fall Apart*’ remains concerned with the issue of clash between old and new order or between cultural differences. We see in the novel how things fall apart with the arrival of white men in Africa and with the introduction of his policies. The conflict of the novel vested in Okonkwo which starts from the series of crushing blows which are leveled at traditional values by an alien and more powerful culture causing in the end the traditional society falling apart. Their indirect behavior of white men shows that Ibo culture is very much ugly and unsatisfactory. The novel *Things Fall Apart* deals with the reality of change that ruins the life of Ibo people ([www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com)). The villagers caught in a confusion and they were not in a position to accept the reality of change. (The Effects of colonialism in *Things Fall Apart*, 2015) states that Christianity was intriguing with the lives of tribal people and took them away from their family and cultural traditions. Many boundaries were broken in every belief. An example of this was that newly converted Ibo people were killing their honored snakes and even they gave up their families without any reason. So it is very much clear that how neo-colonial power shattered the roots of tribal people and the new tribal people were total opposite in comparison to the old villagers.

The British also occupy the minds of people through fear, trade, education and treachery. The Ibos are afraid of the whites because the massacre at Abame and the ability to survive in the Evil Forest in Mbanta proves that the white man’s influence is very much strong. Further, soldiers back up the rule of the district commissioners and the word of the court messengers. Another incentive to accept the British is the desire for wealth and materialistic gains because white men introduces his fake policies in very impressive ways that tribal people started believing that if they wanted to get advanced then they will have to accept the foreign education and manners. So majority started believing in the teachings of Mr. Brown (Wren, 1981, p. 16).

Bohaen (as cited in Parry, 2006) stated that “In some respects the impact of colonialism was deep and certainly destined to affect the future course of events”. People lost their identities as Africans. In Achebe *Things Fall Apart* the newly converted were imparted policies which might train or tame them to renounce their life style as traditions advances the cause of colonial education and policy.

## **METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

My methodology is based upon the idea that how white man intrudes into the culture of clan. All the positive aspects of Ibo society were tarnished with the arrival of white man into their land. The tribal people were satisfied with their lives before the coming of external forces. But these white forces created mess with the lives of tribal people and departed

them among themselves. White man cleverly created conflict of identity into the lives of Ibo people. They were arrested in a confusion of right or wrong that is their culture too old and barbaric should be removed from the map of the world. Fanon (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961) states that how wickedly white man distorted our unity and our national identity. They make us realized that our forefathers were barbaric and non-civilized people and they are a source of shame for us. So you should not follow the old barbaric customs of your elders. In fact you should adopt our ways of life that are modern enough to civilize you.

Nkrumah (1965) states that indirect rule is more useful than the direct rule and it helps the imperial powers to employ their own policies for the sake of their material interests. We have the example of missionaries who tactfully employed their Christian manners and change the map of African people. Young(2003) stated that Colonialism is not fully ended rather it gives the guarantee of false freedom and shifts the government in the hands of local elite class the bourgeoisie who are foreign qualified and are less inclined to the promotion of local culture and political independence. The main theme of neo-colonialism is “divide and rule here” (Sartre, 2001, p.139). Neo-colonialism brings so many problems like economical political and social evils which give people inferiority complex stricken leaders. Between the former and the latter, corrupt knights, feudal landowners” (Sartre, 2001p.139). Bhaba (*The Location of the Culture*, 1994) also discusses the issues like hybridity and mimicry that is brought by the colonial powers how. Supportive ideas of Young (2003) along with Sartre (2001) relating to neo-colonialism have been explained to throw some light on imperialist’s nation’s role in the destruction of a society and its traditions. The idea of divide and rule is related with the thinking of white man. Race was the first and foremost idea behind which these theories are formed. Young states that White culture was considered as the basis for the ideas of legitimate governments (Young, 2003). He further explains that it is the deplorable dilemma that states are still in clutches of neo-colonialism. Side by side we have the ideas of Sartre(2001) who states that colonialism is not over rather it has shifted the government in the hands of few wealthy local people who serve as a local merchant acting as a middle man between foreign producers and a local market. They believed that European imperialism is one of the worst things in the history of mankind.

## ANALYSIS

We have taken some extracts from the novel ‘Things Fall Apart’ for the analysis to show that how the old traditions of Ibo society were replaced with the coming of new powerful culture. Said (*Orientalism*, 1995) states that the main focus behind the indirect rule is that Europe is the centre of everything. Everything in them is full of authority. Power is everywhere and knowledge is power so white man believed that they have the superior knowledge and it is their moral duty to enlighten the ‘others’ having inferior knowledge. When there is a clash present in the culture then the people are distorted and divided into different groups. Actually they are the product of hybrid culture.

Neo-colonialism debases the culture by introducing its exploiting policies. The character depicted was a man of courage even he did not lose heart in bad times but coming of white man destroyed the whole life of a brave person. While on the other hand his own son first adopted Christianity. As Obierika says that “white man put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart”. The knife of the white man supporting the cause of missionary policy attacked on the culture of Ibo society and cut it to bleed and die. The people of Ibo society were

free in appearance but in reality they were facing the challenges of imperialist powers. External forces stepped into their happy lives and created disturbances and problems.

Through the character of Mr. James we feel the true sense of colonial manners. The novel is the exercise of realizing the fact that Africans have lost their roots and neo-colonialism has made its place in the land. They propagated the gospel of Christianity and attracted a large number of Ibo people. The converts turned into enemies and clash of opinions was a routine matter. Obierika remarked that his own men and son took place of strangers. In neo-colonial conditions, the gap between powerful and weaker increases. Actually people themselves were giving place to neo colonial powers by adopting by adopting white man's manners and assimilating in them their main stream of culture and religion. Neo-colonialism gave birth to the local elites in the novel who were foreign educated and colonially trained "may therefore less inclined towards local culture and political independence (Ashcroft et al,2001).

As a result of this indirect rule this elite class comes with the borrowed identity and manners that produces havoc in the lives of other people (Loomba, 1998). Similar is the case with the tribal people who were foreign educated stricken leaders who did nothing to the life of a brave man Okonkwo. The very attitude of adopting foreigner ways of life was the root cause for things to be fall apart. In Africa, Mr. James used every strategy to have full control over the country. He divided things into black and white called the Ibo people the sons of darkness and created a thinking among the people that their culture is inferior and urge people have the knowledge of foreign education if they want to become superior and advanced. Mr Smith's bitter and rigid policies disturbed the lives of people at a greater level. The impact of foreign education and culture "further transformed their mentality" (Rodney, 1981, p.275).

Imperialists have made neo-colonialism as an ideological war which can never be winning without promoting local traditions and culture. Rodney (1981:p275) observes that African dependency has created neo-colonial class and people who manipulated the colonial economic structure for their own benefits. In *Mission to Kala*, the colonial authorities nominate the chief of Vimili who goes on to live an opulent life at the expense of the people. Colonial education produces black elite's aliens on the map of the world. At each and every level of neo-colonial policy whether it is education the elites are much indebted to the imperialistic powers to sustain an imported life style. Neo colonial period brings the fruits of social economic problems and inferiority complex. Mr Brown is first missionary who first came in the Ibo society. He was very kind soft hearted and gentle person. He used to listen the views of elders in the Ibo society and respected tribal religion. He built up many hospitals and buildings in Mbnata. But we can clearly see the wicked behavior of Mr. Brown that how cunningly he fulfilled his material interests and the majority of tribal people accepted Christianity as a religion. He used indirect policies to gain his material interests. His soft behavior does indicate that his basic purpose behind the disguise of gentleness was to create identity conflicts among the tribal people. So it was the indirect policy of Mr. Brown through which he produced hybridized people. At the end of the story Obierika blamed District Commissioner 'that man was one of the greatest man in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog'. The neo-colonial forces joined hand in hand with social obligations and expectations things indeed fall separated to Okonkwo who suffers terribly and finally destroyed.

## CONCLUSION

Colonialism was a direct rule but after the world wars the First World War (1914-1918) and the Second World War (1939-1945) colonial powers changed their manner of authority by placing the puppet of neo-colonialism. They use capitalistic policies globalization in order to open new markets for their business and products. (Sipvak, 1991). Same is the case with the Ibo people where the arrival of white man is the root cause of separation. With the usage of their capitalistic social policies missionaries were got succeed in their mission.

## REFERENCES

- 1980. "Ozo in the Novels of Chinua Achebe." *Nsukka Studies in African Literature* 3: 71-79. "The Effects of Colonialism in Things Fall Apart." [123HelpMe.com](http://123HelpMe.com). 09 Mar 2015
- Bill, A, Pal, A, and Said, E. (Routledge, 2001).
- Bohen, A.A. (1987). *African Perspective on Colonialism* (1987).
- Chakravorty, G.S. (Routledge, 1987). *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*
- Frantz, F. (Penguin, 1994). *The wretched of the Earth*.
- Homi k, B. (Routledge, 1994). *The location of culture*.
- Kwame, N. (1965). *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*. New York: International.
- Loomba, A. *Colonialism/Post-colonialism*. (Routledge, New Critical Idiom)
- Paul, J.S. (Routledge, 2006). *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*.
- Robert, W. (1981). *Achebe's World*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Rondey, W. (1981). *How Europe under developed Africa* (1981)
- Said, E. (Penguin new edition, 1995) *Orientalism*.
- Said, E. (Vintage, New edn, 1994). *Culture and Imperialism*.  
[www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com)