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## ANSWER TO THE QUESTION NUMBER -2

Chinua Achebe has always been considered as the godfather of the modern African literature. Achebe's 1958 book, "Things Fall Apart" is a testament of the author's literary prolificacy. The literary undertones that are contained in "Things Fall Apart" echo Achebe's views about misrepresentations of the African culture through European literature. "Things Fall Apart" is Chinua Achebe's first novel, and it addresses the cultural conflicts that ensue when colonialists venture into an Igbo village. The book tracks the onset of British colonialism in Nigeria during the late 1800s and the complications that confront the local culture.

Achebe's book centers on the life of a village 'superstar' by the name Okonkwo and the arrival of white missionaries at the fictional village of Umuofia. The arrival of the missionaries brings chaos to the traditional Igbo society because its political structures are threatened by the colonial systems. Throughout his book, Achebe tries to reverse the negative notions that have been created by European texts such as Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness". Using "Things Fall Apart", Achebe introduces a new African identity from the perspective of an African. "Things Fall Apart" has often been mistaken to be the 'first African novel', but it is the book's rich African narrative that has greatly contributed to this misconception. This paper explores how Achebe's novel subverts the colonial discourse and acts as a counter-narrative to the European texts.

Most of the authors who seek to correct and protest against the post-colonial literatures do so by questioning the motives behind colonial discourses. When accomplishing this mission, the authors seek to "use indigenous cultural traditions, appropriate English, and focus on the aftermath of colonialism". Chinua Achebe's book manages to weave all these three elements together with the aim of subverting the colonial discourse. One scholar argues that every nation has to invent its own tradition and have the ability to narrate its own history.

In "Things Fall Apart", the author gives prominence to his nation's history by referring to his oral traditions repeatedly. After publishing "Things Fall Apart", Chinua Achebe wrote an essay that was addressed to "Victoria, Queen of England" where he claimed that his book "was an act of atonement with the past and a ritual return of the prodigal son". These sentiments are addressed directly to the colonizer and they are a major indicator of Achebe's colonial discourse.

The narrative style that is employed by Chinua Achebe is a compelling linguistic redress of the European literary texts. In his essay, "The African Writer and the English Language", Achebe sees the need for African literature to contain complex 'African scenes and materials'.

In "Things Fall Apart", Achebe uses the African scene to present readers with the compelling life of the pre-colonial Igbo society. The calculated depictions of the Igbo society are a direct address to the colonial masters who had previously depicted the traditional African customs and practices as heathen and

barbaric. The European occidental discourse was a major concern for Achebe when he was writing "Things Fall Apart". Some African writers had previously assumed a position of shame in light of the flawed European literary discourse.

However, using Okonkwo and the rest of Umuofia, Achebe assumes a position of dignity, solemnity, and glory. According to the author, life in the traditional Igbo society was complete even before the arrival of the European colonists. For instance, Okonkwo was already well known 'throughout the nine villages and beyond'. The hero's claim to fame was rooted in his fame as a champion wrestler in Umuofia and the neighboring villages. These claims are made at the start of the book and the author seeks to clarify his considerations of heroism. It is important to note that many European texts had painted people who rose against their African cultures as heroes. On the other hand, it was customary for European texts to depict those people who rose up against the colonialists as villains. In "Things Fall Apart", the author takes time to describe what made Okonkwo a hero. According to the author, Okonkwo was a champion wrestler, a brave man, a respected villager, and he was also obedient to the Igbo culture. These elements are a subversion of the European discourse where brainwashed individuals instantly became heroes.

The author has to rely on the English language to communicate his native values to both European and African readers. English is a colonial and foreign language and it is bound to misrepresent Achebe's culture. Previously, Achebe had claimed that English is an appropriate language for telling the African story. However, the author also claims that the language has to be altered and 'Africanized'. In one of his essays about the position of English in African literature, Achebe remarks that "the English language will be able to carry the weight of his African experience...but it will have to be new English".

This 'new English' is well represented in "Things Fall Apart", where the story of the Igbo culture is relayed to the readers in a concise but flowery manner. The Africanization of the English language in "Things Fall Apart" has been achieved using traditional Igbo narrative and rhetoric. Achebe's text uses a lot of Igbo words, parables, and riddles to bring his culture to the world. Furthermore, all the Igbo characters in the novel are given an authentic cultural feel through their use of the Africanized English language. By using the Africanized language, Achebe is able to offer a strong counter-narrative of the European texts whilst using the colonizer's language. "Things Fall Apart" offers a viable "counter-narrative to Euro-centric misrepresentations of Africa by successfully harnessing the colonizer's language to make it bear the burden of the author's native experience".

It is apparent that Achebe's novel is a reply to some of the existing accounts of Africa by Euro-centric authors such as Joseph Conrad. Most of these early accounts of Africa by novelists had assumed a political dimension. Consequently, Achebe chose to use political language in his book. Most of the African authors who had taken a discourse that was similar to that of Achebe mostly relied on their native African languages to protest against the colonial culture. For instance, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, another African author chose to voice his colonial protests by using his native Kikuyu language in his novels.

However, Chinua Achebe takes a different approach by choosing to use the English language to revitalize his culture. When Okonkwo is exiled by his tribesmen, he moves to another village but the author's choice of language is able to capture the hero's predicament.

English is used in "Things Fall Apart" to capture the tempo of the Igbo language through folktales, proverbs, and direct translations of the Igbo dialect. For example, most of the Igbo proverbs that are used in Achebe's book are traditional nuggets of philosophy and wisdom. The Igbo society used proverbs to pass wisdom from one generation to another. On the other hand, the folktales that are used in the book are a customized aspect of Nigeria's oral tradition history. The folktales serve as cautionary elements but they also act as safe custodies of Igbo's oral traditions. When the author uses folktales in the novel, he makes sure that their Igbo element is not absorbed by the technical elements of the English language. Consequently, aspects of the English language such as grammar, sentence structure, and punctuations are relegated in favor of the Igbo linguistic context.

According to the author, the European colonizers are responsible for 'things falling apart' in Nigeria when they introduce foreign values and ideas such as Leninism and individuality. Before the colonialists ventured into Umuofia, the villagers lived in harmony and they had a sense of belonging. The main argument in Achebe's book is that colonialism brought chaos to Africa. The communal life in Okonkwo's village was disintegrated by the arrival of European missionaries. In the end, Okonkwo commits suicide to escape the adversity that results from colonization. This is the author's greatest statement on colonial discourse.

"Things Fall Apart" is a book that succeeded in shattering the African stereotypes that had been perpetuated by European authors. Native Africans were portrayed as savages and uncivilized people who worshiped heathen gods. Achebe uses his book to unravel the negative effects that resulted from the incursion of colonialists into the Igbo society. The book also shows that the Igbo traditions were important to the history of the Nigerian people.

**THE END**