Topic: “Things Fall Apart”

Subtopic: Identity, religion, and culture

Thesis statement:

Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" explores the issue of identity through his main character, Okonkwo. Okonkwo is a proud and respected member of Nigeria's Igbo tribe, and his identity is inextricably linked to his social status and masculinity. However, as European conquerors threaten the Igbo people's traditional way of life, Okonkwo's sense of identity is torn apart. He tries to reconcile his desire to preserve his people's traditions with the realities of a changing world, which eventually leads to his untimely demise. Achebe uses Okonkwo's story to underscore the importance of cultural identity and the tragic effects that can occur when that identity is threatened or lost. The main character, Okonkwo, and his father, Unoka, also address the subject of identity in their relationship. Unoka is a weak and indolent man who does not meet the Igbo tribe's conventional manhood norms. Okonkwo's lack of achievement and respect in the community makes him feel ashamed and determined to disassociate himself from his father's history. Okonkwo's identity is thus defined by his rejection of his father's weakness and his unwavering pursuit of power and achievement.

International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT). “The Post-Colonial Reality in Chinua Achebe’s Novel Things Fall Apart (1958).” *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 26 Apr. 2019, www.academia.edu/38793395/The\_Post\_Colonial\_Reality\_in\_Chinua\_Achebe\_s\_Novel\_Things\_Fall\_Apart\_1958\_.

Summary: The essay analyzes how Achebe’s work sheds light on the details of the postcolonial condition, with an emphasis on the protagonist, Okonkwo, and his community's encounters with the forces of British colonialism and their cultural, social, and psychological consequences. The essay dives into Achebe’s critique of colonialism and its disruptive consequences on traditional African civilizations, focusing on themes such as cultural conflict, identity crisis, and the decline of indigenous governance systems, spirituality, and social organization. Overall, the article provides a critical analysis of "Things Fall Apart" within the context of postcolonial studies, shedding light on Achebe’s exploration of colonialism's enduring legacy in Africa and its continued relevance to contemporary issues of identity, power, and cultural resilience.

Intention: This essay explores the impact of British colonialism on traditional African civilizations, focusing on themes such as cultural conflict, identity crisis, and the decline of indigenous governance systems, spirituality, and social organization. This essay would be good evidence to support my main topic since it’s related to the impact of colonialism on traditional African societies and how it has affected their cultural, social, and psychological aspects. The essay provides insights into the complexities of the postcolonial condition and highlights the enduring legacy of colonialism in Africa, making it relevant to contemporary issues of identity, power, and cultural resilience.

Fole, Andrew. “Okonkwo’s Fate and the Worldview of Things Fall Apart.” *Semanticscholar.Org’*, Aug. 2001, pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c66b/9dfd91ab8649a4e0faa6a52743f370440ee5.pdf.

Summary: This essay talks about Okonkwo’s fate in light of the novel’s worldview and the cultural backdrop of Igbo society in pre-colonial Nigeria. It talks about Okonkwo's character development and the elements that influenced his actions, decisions, and eventual downfall. Okonkwo’s devotion to traditional Igbo ideals such as masculinity, honor, and strength, as well as his attempts to adjust to colonial-era changes in social and cultural dynamics. Okonkwo’s destiny symbolizes the novel's wider themes and tensions, such as the confrontation between traditional African beliefs and Western colonial influence, the degradation of indigenous cultural practices, and the breakdown of societal hierarchies. Furthermore, it discusses how Achebe uses Okonkwo's story to express broader implications about the details of human nature, the consequences of strict devotion to tradition, and the challenges of reconciling cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

Intention: I can use this essay as evidence for my main topic to explore Okonkwo's symbolic significance in conveying the broader themes and tensions of the novel, such as the clash between traditional African beliefs and Western colonial influence, the degradation of indigenous cultural practices, and the breakdown of societal hierarchies. Additionally, I can use the use of Okonkwo’s story to highlight the complexities of human nature, the consequences of devotion to tradition, and the challenges of reconciling cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

Ofori-Yeboah, Benjamin. “Culture in Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart.” *African Studies Review*, JSTOR, 26 May 2014, www.academia.edu/867853/Culture\_in\_Chinua\_Achebes\_Things\_Fall\_Apart.

Summary: The article delves further into the novel’s cultural theme. It talks about the various aspects of Igbo culture depicted in the work, as well as how they impact the narrative, characters, and plot. It discusses how Achebe depicts the richness and complexity of Igbo cultural traditions, customs, and practices, as well as the societal norms and values that shape the character’s lives. The article goes into the novel's depictions of Igbo culture, including language, religion, social organization, rituals, and art, and analyzes their significance within the story's background. It also looks into how cultural ideas and practices shape the character’s identities, relationships, and interactions with their surroundings. Furthermore, the article discusses cultural struggle and change, particularly in the context of external pressures like colonization and Christianity.

Intention: The article provides a great analysis of the various aspects of Igbo culture depicted in the novel, including language, religion, social organization, rituals, and art. It also discusses how these cultural elements impact the narrative, characters, and plot. Additionally, the article’s discussion of how cultural ideas and practices shape the characters' identities, relationships, and interactions with their surroundings could be used to support my analysis of the novel's themes the article's discussion of cultural struggle and change could be used to support your arguments. I could use the article’s analysis to show how the clash of traditional Igbo culture and Western values causes tensions, disputes, and eventually the disruption of indigenous ways of life.

Rani, Mamta, and MJBAS Journal. “The Impact of Colonization on African Identity and Culture in Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart.” *Mediterranean Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences (MJBAS)*, 31 July 2023, www.academia.edu/104756748/The\_Impact\_of\_Colonization\_on\_African\_Identity\_and\_Culture\_in\_Chinua\_Achebe\_s\_Things\_Fall\_Apart.

Summary: The article looks at the significant impacts of colonization on African identity and culture, as represented in the novel. The author talks about how Achebe’s novel depicts the breakdown and modification of traditional African societies and cultural norms following European powers' introduction of colonial control. The article addresses how the characters in the novel particularly the protagonist Okonkwo and his community, deal with the arrival of colonial powers and the resulting degradation of their indigenous identity and cultural practices. The article talks about the aspects of African identity and culture as shown in the novel, such as language, religion, social structure, and gender roles, and examines how colonization affects them. It may also explore themes of resistance, adaptability, and loss as the protagonists deal with the obstacles of colonialism. The essay emphasizes the importance of "Things Fall Apart" as a literary work that illuminates the historical and psychological consequences of colonization for African societies. The author provides vital insights into Achebe’s portrayal of the complexity of African identity and the long-term impact of colonialism on current African societies.

Intention: I can use the information from the article as evidence to support the emphasis on the damaging effects of colonization on African identity and culture. The article illustrates how Achebe's novel portrays the detrimental effects of colonialism on traditional African societies and cultural norms. This information can be used to show how the arrival of colonial powers led to the breakdown and modification of African culture and identity. Additionally, the essay focuses on the character’s responses to the challenges of colonialism, such as resistance, adaptability, and loss. I can provide evidence for the long-term impacts of colonization on African societies.