

## Okonkwo's Tragic Flaws in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Judas Iscariot in the New Testament: Paradigm for Nigerian Politicians

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**Abstract.** Using the comparative analysis paradigm as a method, the study aimed at comparing Okonkwo's tragic flaws in Chinua Achebe's *things fall apart* with that of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament. The duo characters in view were victims of ego and greed respectively. The paper showed that Okonkwo's tragic flaws in Chinua Achebe's *things fall apart* and that of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament were that of strength and villain respectively. The paper also showed that a cultural and religious rift was created between imperialist dogmatism via colonialism and indigenous religious beliefs when the white missionaries introduced Christianity to Umuofia.

**Keywords:** Okonkwo, Tragic Flaws, Chinua Achebe, Judas, New Testament, Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

*Things Fall Apart* is a widely read novel in Africa, Europe and Asia. It touches the African culture with sound literary concepts. The novel was written from an Ibo cultural context in Nigeria. The Ibos are found in the South-East of Nigeria. They speak Igbo language. *Things Fall Apart* was constructed by Achebe (1988) in a literary style that reflected an Ibo cultural heritage and traditional theologumenon. The names of the

characters, the name of places, parables, idioms, songs, etc were encapsulated in the novel in such a way that the reader is well educated about the culture and world view of the Ibo people.

The muse of the novel was probably Chinua Achebe's experience of the activities of the colonial masters and the effect of colonialism on Africa and Nigeria in particular. *Things Fall Apart* was weaved by Achebe with some literary expertise to point out the socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-religious dichotomy caused by the things introduced by the white man. By so doing, African culture was played down by the white man's religion and activities to the extent that what held the people together in the context of the novel was torn apart and as such, the center could no longer hold.

Okonkwo was a major character in the novel and he played a lot of roles. One of such roles was the role of strength coupled with pride and strong will in the midst of fear for failure and weakness. Also, in the New Testament, Judas Iscariot was a major character who also played the role of strength and strong will. Therefore, using the comparative analysis paradigm as a method, the aim of this study is to compare

Okonkwo's tragic flaws in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* with that of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament. Ukpong (2006) opines that the comparative studies seek to establish similarities and dissimilarities between African and biblical life and thought, and correlate one with the other. This is the older model of African contextual bible reading.

## 2. The Literary Genre of *Things Fall Apart* and the New Testament

Aune (1988:13) gives the understanding that literary genres and forms are not simple neutral containers used as convenient ways to package various types of written communication but they are social conventions that provide contextual meaning for the smaller units of language and text they enclose. To Aune, the original significance that a literary text had for both author and reader is tied to the genre of that text, so that the meaning of the part is dependent upon the meaning of the whole. Generally speaking, genre is used to describe the style or category of art, literature, music, or any other type of discourse, written or spoken. Specifically, literary genre therefore means a category of literary composition or endeavor: a category meant to describe the writing style, technique, tone, length, and content of certain literary forms (GradeSave, 2015).

The novel *Things Fall Apart* has multi facet literary genre. The context in which a scholar is situating the study will determine which genre to place the novel. In one sense, "Things Fall Apart" falls within the literary genre of fiction (McCarthy, 1985). It is fiction because the characters and places did not exist in real life setting. It was a work though born out of the reality of the effect of colonialism on the Ibo culture, the story was an imaginary intellectual frame work aimed

at drawing attention to some negative effects of British colonialism on African culture in general and Ibo culture in particular. Although, the work was situated in an Ibo cultural milieu the character and places were imaginary. Although, places (like Umoufia, Abame), names (Okonkwo, Ikemefuna), cultural imageries (like yam festival, drum), etc were typical of the Ibo land or even in existence, they were super imposed by the author to show a high level of intellectual display of literary fiction. In another sense, *Things Fall Apart* falls within the genre of narratives (McCarthy, 1985). Greenberg (2007) viewing *Things Fall Apart* in the context of Benjamin's essay "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Work of Nikolai Leskov," examines the transition from oral to written narrative, a transition he elucidates with the distinction between what he calls "story" and "novel." This transition from the oral to the written is also central to Achebe's novel, and to his writing about literature more generally. Indeed, to put the argument of this essay succinctly, Achebe's novel can be seen as a portrait of Igbo culture precisely at the moment of transition from story to novel. Here Okonkwo was seen as a story teller. This depicts the literary genre of *Things Fall Apart*.

On the other hand, the literary genre of the New Testament include Gospel, narratives, epistles, and apocalypse. The story of Judas Iscariot is located in the Gospels (Mark 14:10; John 6:67-71; John 12:6; Psalms 41:9; John 6:66-71; John 6:70-71; Luke 6:16; John 12:4-6). The Gospels are the proclamation of the 'good news' about Jesus and intended to establish or increase the people's faith in him. They are portraits of the life of Christ, his teachings, his actions, his death, burial, and resurrection. In this same line of thought, Aune (1988:13) identifies four major literary types represented in the New Testament: gospels,

Acts, letters and apocalypse. These genres correspond obviously to the ancient biographical, historical, epistolary and apocalyptic literature. The gospels in this context represent the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In this context, also, the story of Judas Iscariot in the gospel is a biography. Being that the gospels are biographies of Jesus Christ, everything that happened around him including people and places cannot be left out of the stories. In this case, Judas is seen to have played the role of a bad acolyte in the biography of Jesus Christ. The story of Judas Iscariot is located within the literary genre of the New Testament biography. By this understanding, it means that the story took place within time and space in some places and cultural setting. The setting was a Greco-Roman Jewish setting. The language used was *koine* Greek. The documents were translated into English for most readers of which all of them were written in the first century Greco-Roman setting and required to be interpreted against the context of that period and space.

While the literary genre of *Things Fall Apart* falls within fiction and narrative, that of the gospel in the New Testament is a biography of Jesus Christ within time and space weaved up in a Greco-Roman milieu.

### 3. Theoretical Frame work

One of the scholars who has done a work on the comparative model in African studies and biblical studies in an African context is Kibicho (1968) and he argues that both in the Old Testament and Kikuyu religion, God is seen as the God of all people in the world, both those known and unknown to us. Another scholar in the model of comparative reading of the bible is Dickson (1979) who describes the continuity and discontinuity between the Old Testament and African life and thought as, theological, with the example of some Old Testament texts

including non-Jews as the object of God's activities despite some exclusive texts. To him, the encounter between Old Testament and African religious cosmology is similar in spite of the differences in details. Dickson also described the encounter as hermeneutical because it refers to some Old Testament texts being easily applicable in African life context. In this same line of thought, Akao (1987) also showed in his comparative work that both among the Yoruba of Nigeria and in Old Testament religious practice, God is not represented by images, and that this could serve as a bedrock for constructing African Christian Theology. In a similar vein Ottuh (2014) did a comparative study on Lazarus and the rich man (in the New Testament) with a Nigerian movie titled: "Love story." In this comparative study Ottuh showed that both in the bible and African world the rich neglect, oppress and harass the poor in so many ways. All of these showed that the bible is not read in isolation but within contexts. In other words the present day world can be challenged with the events and situations of the bible being Old or New Testament.

On the other hand, Rhoads (1993) asserts that Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* presents the cultural roots of the Ibos in order to provide self-confidence, but at the same time he refers them to universal principles which vitiate their destructive potential. Seeing his duty as a writer in a new nation as showing his people the dignity that they lost during the colonial period, he sets out to illustrate that before the European colonial powers entered Africa, the Ibos had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity (1973,8). Rhoads further argued that Achebe, however, cannot achieve his goal merely by representing difference; rather he must depict an Igbo society which can be seen as having dignity

and that what is remarkable about his Ibos is the degree to which they have achieved the foundations of what most people seek today in democratic institutions, tolerance of other cultures, a balance of male and female principles, capacity to change for the better or to meet new circumstances, a means of redistributing wealth, a viable system of morality, support for industriousness, an effective system of justice, striking and memorable poetry and art. Achebe is seen by Rhoads as a person who had tested Igbo culture against the goals of modern liberal democracy and to have set out to show how the Igbo meet those standards.

El-Dessouky (2010) illustrated the nature of the cultural conflict, as it is represented in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and showed that the clash between the African black culture of the Ibo tribe and the white British culture was created by the colonial masters and as such the white man was seen as tyrannical. Moreover, El-Dessouky showed that the conflict between the Ibo and British culture has two aspects; an internal, which can be traced within the same culture among its members and sometimes inside a specific character, on the other hand an external conflict that took place between two cultures, the African and the British one and that the pursuit of mere existence is the dominant theme within things fall apart. Moreover, Alumona (2003) postulated that Achebe's famous novel, *Things Fall Apart* (TFA), is an extended *reductio ad absurdum* predicated on a premise derived from an ironic twist on the name of the novel's dominant clan called Umuofia. Alumona argues that Umuofia, was presented in *Things Fall Apart* as a community endowed with socio-political and economic institutions which are so well developed that they can compare favorably with those of any other societies in the same epoch and level of development, anywhere in the world

and as such Alumona further submit that the novel is an indigenous portrayal and criticism of the culture and institutions of a denigrated people with a view to highlighting both their strengths and weaknesses, of which the work intend to show subsequently that Achebe achieves this by building an argument and persuasive rhetoric around the lives and careers of some dominant individuals and the operations or failures of societal institutions; for instance, the family, government, morality, law and order, diplomacy etc. Foley (2001) is of the opinion that the question of how to interpret the reasons for Okonkwo's downfall or fate is yet to be answered and that a number of different sources of explanation appear to be plausible at various levels, but it goes on to demonstrate that at least some of these putative explanations are incompatible if not mutually exclusive. Foley's work on the subject matter delves on an exploration of the possible reasons for Okonkwo's demise, to consider what worldview the novel finally supports and, indeed, whether the novel's outlook is coherent at all. Foley's conclusion is that although the overall perspective of the novel is highly complex, it does not necessarily follow that the actual meaning of the novel itself is either illogical or self-contradictory.

Begam (1997) opined that the concept of globalization in *Things Fall Apart* was necessitated by the British universalization of culture. In a bite to do a rejoinder of cultural relevance, Achebe (1958) must have unconsciously globalized the Ibo culture. To this extent, the concept of first world and third world is very worrisome especially when the first world is relegating the so called third world to the background. Hoegberg (1999) also see Achebe's presentation of the Ibo culture as encouraging violence in the name of strength and fame. The violence is both

sided: the British colonialism that wrecked some havoc to the Ibo in such a violent manner and the Ibo culture that seemed to celebrate Okonkwo for being daring to kill Ikemefuna. The question is: if the British were accused of violence can Achebe's Ibo community be exonerated from this same accusation? MacKenzie (1996) opined that the conflict of religion and culture were present in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. It was a tussle between the Oracle Umuofia Hill and Cave side and the invisible Supreme Being presented by the white missionaries. It was rift between the new culture presented by the white man and the Ibo culture already known by Okonkwo and all Umuofia people. All of these conflicts were going on in the mind of Okonkwo.

Reading from the vantage of feminism, Strong-Leek (2001) queried the presentation of Okonkwo as a major character in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. To Strong-Leek, to read as a woman requires that one approach a work from a feminist vantage and therefore, not regard the work from the purview of patriarchy and as such, in order to read Achebe's 1969 literary masterpiece, *Things Fall Apart*, as a woman, one must query readings which suggest that Okonkwo is the only major figure in the novel, and alternately analyze the motivations of principal female characters who are thoroughly developed within the work. In response, in his *Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, Culler (1982:54) addresses these issues and forms several interesting conclusions stating that: "to read as a woman is to avoid reading as a man, to identify the specific defenses and distortions of male readings and provide correctives." Never the less, feminist scholars critique Achebe for arrogating weakness to women in the society. To Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, weakness is synonymous with a woman. Moreover,

Strong-Leek opined that Achebe's main character, Okonkwo emerges early in the text as a traditional hero, who has within himself the ability to languish or attain his goals and Achebe's readers understand that European colonialists do not precipitate Okonkwo's ultimate downfall. Instead, it is Okonkwo's seeds of self-destruction, which are deeply concealed in his desire to be the antitheses of his "feminine" father. One must acknowledge as well that male and female roles are societal constructs, and thus, the entire female identity is based more upon societal constraints rather than physiological realities. Women are taught to mother, while men are conditioned to dominate and control. Hence, we know that men may also read as women, if they are willing to rethink their positions, as well as women's positions within patriarchal constructs (Strong-Leek).

Concerning Judas Iscariot in the New Testament, Stammer (2000) asserts that he is the exemplar of treachery, the shadow defined by light and that to this day his name--Judas Iscariot--remains a synonym for betrayal. But what if the traditional understanding of Judas is actually a distortion? What if he is actually a victim of a sort of theological libel--a 1st century bad press--that helped create two millennia of Christian anti-Semitism? As Christians observe Good Friday, New Testament scholars are reexamining Judas' role in the fateful events that led to Jesus' crucifixion.

Hahn (2015) states that David Berger did a lot when he played Judas Iscariot in Lake Harriet United Methodist Church's production of "Jesus Christ Superstar" and admits that the musical's Judas is not so easy to write off as history's greatest monster. Instead, he comes across as a man agonized about his decision to betray his friend, even as he rationalizes that it is for his friend's own good. Hoffman (2008)

contends that the Gospel of Judas so constructed by some scholars is born out of Gnosticism and as such Judas should be seen as a betrayal.

Systemic comparative analysis of the tragic flaws of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and Judas Iscariot in the New Testament formed the theoretical framework for this study because of the issues raised here in both the literary works of the Nigerian scholar Chinua Achebe and gospel evangelists in the New Testament. The socio-historical frame work here is therefore concerned with some display of contrast between the character Okonkwo and Judas Iscariot. The works of the scholars that have been cited above have formed the theoretical frame work because their literary works addressed the character Okonkwo and Judas Iscariot in such a resonance manner that gives insight for a study of this nature. Within the context of this work, the narratives about the above characters in view will be very relevant to a contemporary society when such flaws can be derived and harnessed as lessons in a context. This is an aspect this work intends to explore in relation with the cotemporary political setting in Nigeria.

#### **4. Okonkwo and Judas as Literary Characters: A Comparative Analysis**

Generally, Achebe introduces the various aspects of any civilization in *Things Fall Apart*: an economy, family, a system of justice, language, socio-cultural relations, foreign relations, warfare, sports etc. He also introduces the many values of traditional and modern African society: honesty, self-determination, hard work and humility. We easily see that African society represented by Umoufia was an agrarian one with a significant dependence on yams and others like what Okonkwo describes as ‘women’s

crops’ – cocoyam, etc. Like any other society, there are developments of complex mythologies and rites around the system of economic activity. There is the sacred week of peace which Okonkwo inevitably violates with his uncontrollable temper, the rites and sacrifices to Ani, the earth goddess of fertility and even the feast of new yam. Generally, even with all the differences in the many African cultures, the similarities and striking. The Yam festival for example is also celebrated in Ghana by various tribes. So while Achebe writes about the Ibo, it is indeed an expression of African culture itself. Family is generally a patriarchy with polygyny. Okonkwo has multiple wives including Ekwefi, his second, and Ojiugo, his third. The man is expected to be the head of the household, and the controller of his wives which may include beating them. But there is allowance for romance in the classic sense. Achebe refers to this when he speaks of “not so young children playing in pairs” and even in the story of Ogbuefi Ndulue and his wife Ozoemena which speaks of love lasting into old age. Obierika says “It was always said the Ndulue and Ozoemena had one mind.” Achebe also presents a system of justice administrated by the elders and the priests and priestesses of the Gods. Indeed, it is this justice that begins Okonkwo’s fall after his gun mistakenly goes off and kills a young boy during the farewell dances at Ezeudu’s funeral. Justice extends to foreign relations which includes diplomacy before warfare as one would expect. So that, when a woman of Umoufia is killed, the elders accept Ikemefuna and a virgin in return rather than go to war and waste lives needlessly (Fafa, 2013).

In *Things Fall Apart*, the reader follows the life of Okonkwo, a man with a tragic flaw in that "his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and weakness." (16) For Okonkwo, his father Unoka embodied the

epitome of failure and weakness. Okonkwo was taunted as a child by other children when they called Unoka agbala. Agbala could either mean a man who had taken no title or "woman." When Okonkwo learned that the word for a man without a title in Ibo is the same word that means "woman," he was crushed because to him that meant that his father (who had no title) was basically a woman. That is when Okonkwo became obsessed with social status and because of that obsession, he would do anything to protect his image as a strong man in his village. Okonkwo hated anything weak or frail, and his descriptions of his tribe and the members of his family show that in Ibo society anything strong was likened to man and anything weak to woman. "Okonkwo's fame rested on solid personal achievement" through his wrestling prowess (3) and so, because Nwoye, his son by his first wife, reminds Okonkwo of his father Unoka he describes him as woman-like. He saw masculinity in terms of violence and courage.

Foley (2001) gives four plausible explanations for Okonkwo's tragic flaws: first, the British colonisation of Igboland and the consequent disintegration of all that Okonkwo valued in Umuofia clan tradition; second, Achebe's deployment of the tragic mode and the question of whether Okonkwo fits the role of tragic hero; third, the possibility of Okonkwo being the victim of blind fate or of some kind of pre-ordained destiny; and fourth, the sense of divine justice, from whatever source, being meted out to Okonkwo. These suggestions did not answer the question of how Okonkwo contributed to his tragic flaws. The problem of Okonkwo was strength. He believes himself to be a very strong man and wishes everyone in Umuofia and environs to see him as such. To Okonkwo, a man that portrays any form of weakness is a woman. He dreaded this status to the extent that he

prefers to die than restrain from the impossible task. Okonkwo's tragic flaw in addition to the above already mentioned by Foley is strength. This strength led him to behead Ikemefuna. This same strength drove him to commit suicide when he saw that he was a convert of Christianity which in his opinion is contrary to the Ibo cultural world view.

Similarly, in the New Testament, the tragic flaw of Judas Iscariot is greed for material wealth. He was always ready to do anything to get money even if it will take him selling his master. The story is found in the Gospels (Matthew 26:14-47; Mark 14:10-46; Luke 22:1-52; John 18:2-5). According to Driskell (1991) the name 'Judas' "is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name 'Judah' and it means praise Yahweh." Judas' last name, Iscariot, probably means 'man of Kerioth.' Kerioth was a city of Moab near Hebron. It is also possible that 'Iscariot' means 'assassin' or 'bandit' and might tie Judas, and his father Simon (John 6:71) to a group of Jewish patriots known as Zealots. However, it appears the stronger evidence favors 'man of Kerioth.' Judas was one of Jesus' twelve original disciples. He was the treasurer for the group (John 13:29), but was known as a miser and a thief (John 12:4-6). Judas is best remembered for his betrayal of Jesus to those who sought to harm Him (Matthew 26:14-47; Mark 14:10-46; Luke 22:3-48; John 18:2-5). After this betrayal, Judas felt remorse and tried unsuccessfully to return the thirty pieces of silver he had been paid to betray Jesus (Matthew 27:3-4). Judas then went and hung himself (Matthew 27:5; Acts 1:18). Judas was consumed with greed to the point of betraying the trust of not only Jesus, but also his fellow disciples, as we see in John 12:5-6. Judas may have desired to follow Jesus simply because he saw the great things he was doing. Jesus' personality was such that

drew crowd as a celebrity of the time. Judas probably felt he could profit from collections taken for the crowd. The fact that Judas was in charge of the moneybag for the group would indicate his interest in money (John 13:29-Read more: <http://www.gotquestions.org/Judas-betray-Jesus.html#ixzz3YqEevb2b>). The guilt of his wrong doings led him to commit suicide. The question is: why did he not repent and seek for forgiveness? He felt he cannot face Jesus. Apart from that he felt that it is better to die than to face Jesus to apologize.

In the opinion of Brevda (1986:67) Judas Iscariot is a tragic hero in the episode of his betrayal of Jesus Christ but not as a conventional villain of the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tradition. Brevda sees Kemp as rejecting the New Testament explanations for Judas' betrayal-that Judas was motivated by avarice (Matthew 26:14-16; John 12:6) or that Judas was motivated by demonic spirit entering into his body (Luke 22:3-6; John 13:27, 6:70-71)- and instead sees Judas to be motivated by love. This argument is predicated on the assumption that Judas was the one that gingered Jesus to fulfill his mission for dying for the world for the atonement of sin. Furthermore, Shilling (2004) writing from the point of view of seeing Judas as mythical film character postulates that Judas is perhaps best defined and best understood through mythic mediums such as story and film, as opposed to historical, scriptural studies that adhere strictly to the gospel texts alone and Judas, as seen in story and film, is not restricted to or defined exclusively by a series of actions that characterize him as a villain. Rather, especially in filmic depictions, he shifts from a villain to a tragic hero, and as such, allows for a fuller discussion of the various influences and choices with which Judas may have been faced than is possible in the genre of gospel text. One weakness in these

divergent arguments is the inability to show to us the bargain between God and Judas to carry out such act. Although the death of Jesus Christ on the cross has been ordained by God, Judas was not officially appointed by God to carry out the act of betrayal. Jesus equally reacted in such a way that portrays that Jesus was pleased with what Judas did (Matthew 26:24). It is plausible to postulate that Judas carried out the act under his free will. Judas committing suicide was a clear implication of guilt for wrong doing. In like manner, in *Things Fall Apart*, the Oracle has approved the sacrifice of Ikemefuna but did not appoint Okonkwo to carry out the killing-he did it out of his own feeling of strength.

In a comparative note, both the author of *Things Fall Apart* and the New Testament were writers engendered by the happenings of their environment. Both Achebe and the Evangelist were familiar with the setting of colonialism and imperialism. While the evangelists experienced the dominance of the Roman government in their Jewish setting, Achebe on the other hand, experienced the dominance of the British government in Nigeria. While the main character in *Things Fall Apart* is Okonkwo, a similar character in the New Testament especially in the Gospels is Judas Iscariot. Moreover, the similarity is more glaring on the action of the duo against a close person. While Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for material gain, Okonkwo betrayed Ikemefuna for ego.

## 5. Paradigm Lessons for Nigerian Politicians

### 5.1 *Strength versus weakness*

Okonkwo and Judas were victims of over assertion of Strength. The duo characters were too conscious of strength that they do

not want to be seen as being weak in decision making and action. The can be likened to the adage in Nigeria that says that “too much of everything is bad. It is a statement of common sense that depicts the paradox of strength and weakness. What was considered to be strength by Okonkwo and Judas was actually weakness in disguise. By implication, too much assertion of strength can lead to weakness. By this understanding, it is plausible to postulate that ‘behind strength, there is weakness and behind weakness there is strength.’ Okonkwo and Judas failed to understand this in their milieus because they were driven by ego and villain. Okonkwo was a one who always prefers to assert power in order to feel like a man. He does not give up even when he knows that it is a bad fight. He does not want to be seen as a woman or as weak. This led him to his untimely death. On the other hand, Judas Iscariot was a very greedy and stubborn. Even when he has been told of how Satan will use him to achieve a bad purpose. He was hardened. He was warned several times but he never yielded such warnings. Over assertion of strength was equally the problem of Judas. He never gave up his evil plans. This is also a lesson that Nigerian politicians should learn. The lesson is that we must learn to acknowledge our weakness and work on such weaknesses. Politicians who always want to show how tough they are end causing problems for themselves and the society. Politicians should learn to concede to defeat when they lose election like President Goodluck Jonathern so that peace will reign. Strength without good reasoning is indeed a show of weakness.

### ***5.2 Inhumanity to humanity***

Okonkwo and Judas were inhuman to a fellow human. Okonkwo killed Ikemefuna in the story. Ikemefuna though a foreigner, he took Okonkwo as a father and he even

called him father. Judas Iscariot did the same thing to Jesus Christ when he betrayed Him. He was a close associate of Jesus yet he sold Him out to crucified by those who hated him. He hypocritically gave Jesus a kiss to identify him before his enemies. Judas’ kiss was a clear betrayal of love and trust simultaneously. Both Ikemefuna and Jesus Christ were victims of sacrifice but were maliciously treated by those who claim to love them. This type of betrayal is rampant among politicians in Nigeria. The resultant effect is the violence we see among politicians. This lesson should be learnt by politician to desist from the politics of hate and betrayals. This hatred which they nurse against one another can lead to all sought of black mail on print, audio and visual medias. At last the enmity is intensified and the resultant effect is violence. This is also a lesson that should discourage politicians from cultism and ritual killings. Being over ambitious for power can lead one to do abnormal things against fellow humans.

### ***5.3 Inordinate Cravings and Legitimacy***

While Okonkwo has excessive cravings for power and fame, Judas Iscariot has excessive cravings for money. Legitimate ambitions such as doing the right things to get the right thing is not bad. While Okonkwo killed Ikemefuna to justify and satisfy his daring strength and masculine ego, Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for money. Okonkwo’s and Judas’ self-justification did not in any way helped their society rather, it gave birth to more problems. Such problems include; guilty conscience, regrets and finally doom. Okonkwo wanted to be famous and Judas wanted to become very rich. They never bothered about the consequences of their cravings and as such, it all ended in tragedy. This is another socio-economic pitfall Nigerian politicians must avoid. Politicians

should desist from greed of any kind. Greed can make a politician do anything to get what he wants. Politicians Nigeria should learn to follow legitimate process towards the achievement of their political ambitions.

#### **5.4 Reasonability versus sensitivity**

In appraising of *Things Fall Apart*, Alumona (2003) came to the understanding that *Chi* in Igbo cosmology in a different context is dictum which holds only when a man is reasonable about his ambitions and refrains from troubles and setting for himself impossible tasks. Proper conduct in life is tantamount to one's *Chi* saying go ahead with this or that ambitions and when the *Chi* says no one should be sensitive. In the novel, Okonkwo in many ways set for himself a lot of impossible tasks and consequently his *Chi* says no to many of the tasks but he was not sensitive enough to know when to fight on or withdraw. Judas did the same thing. He was never sensitive to the voice of his creator. Okonkwo and Judas are like the proverbial dog that refuses to understand the owners whistling because it has decided to perish. They threw caution into the wind and carried out their betrayals on their victims respectively. The duo did not listen to their *Chi* and God respectively. For instance, Judas was warned by Jesus during the last supper of the betrayal yet he did not yield the warning. Although, Jesus Christ and Ikemefuna were victims of sacrifice, their *Chi* never permitted them to be involved in the betrayal that will lead to the performance of the sacrifice. Reasonability and sensitivity are virtues that must be imbibed by politicians in Nigeria to succeed. A good politician should learn how to read the times and environment before embarking on political engagements. Politician should be critical and well articulating in their reasoning. Judas like Okonkwo was not sensitive to the directive

of the their *Chi*. While we agree that ambitions are good but caution must not be thrown into wind while trying to achieve them.

#### **5.5 Polemic versus Apologetic**

Okonkwo and Judas were characters who preferred to defend their actions by bringing up arguments to justify them. There were other able men of Umuofia but they could not behead Ikemefuna because they felt it was unfair to do that to boy who has become part of Umuofia by affiliation. Okonkwo beheaded the boy not because he hates the boy but to show how daring and how masculine he is before his equals in the society. He justified himself with the argument of strength. Judas justified his argument with his crave for villains. Although, the arguments were heated on the table it was inherent in the narratives. It is so because they never apologized and asked for forgiveness. Okonkwo and Judas are characters that find it difficult to apologize for their wrong actions. They would rather die than to apologize. To Okonkwo, an apology is a sign of weakness. Eventually they paid with their own lives. Politicians should learn to apologize whenever they are wrong. They should not only be remorseful and give an apology they should also learn to make amends. Nigeria Politicians and humans in general should not weave arguments to defend their wrongs, rather, they should learn to admit their weaknesses and apologize if they are wrong.

#### **5.6 Masculinity versus Femininity**

Masculinity dominated the novel *Things Fall Apart*. Even though, the female characters in the novel were conspicuous, the story line was patriarchal. To Okonkwo, weakness is synonymous with femininity that was why he arrogated weakness to his

father. Gender stereotyping also played a dominant role in the New Testament. Judas Iscariot was also a character who criticized Jesus for allowing a woman to anoint Him with the alabaster perfume (John 12:1-8). First, the woman was seen as an unclean person not because there was a doctor report but as a result of religious and cultural mindset. Second, she was being seen as being wasteful. The parallel reading in Luke 7:36-50 affirmed the coloration of gender stereotyping. It was as the woman folk never does anything right in the society. The same gender discrimination was present when the man who committed adultery with a woman was set free and the woman was subjected to punishment (John 8:1-11). Masculinity plays a dominant role in Okonkwo's and Judas' cultural settings. Masculinity also plays a dominant role in Nigeria's society and politics. Male politicians should regard and give important consideration to women in the political sphere of the nation. Although, many women are involved in Nigeria's politics in recent times, the percentage is still very low when compared to men.

## 6. Conclusion

The paper has shown that Okonkwo's tragic flaws in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and that of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament were that of strength and villain respectively. While Okonkwo was a major character in *Things Fall Apart*, Judas was also seen as a similar literary character in the New Testament gospels. Judas' action was carried out on Jesus Christ. Between cultural and Christian tenets as shown in the novel *Things Fall Apart* and the New Testament there is a rift. While the white missionary taught that Christianity is superior to Okonkwo's culture, Okonkwo on the other hand resolved to also show to the white man that Umuofia culture is superior and as such

Christianity should not be allowed to destroy the point of unity.

While the novel *Things Fall Apart* falls within the genre of fiction, that of the gospel in the New Testament is a biography. However, these literary works have some implicit and explicit lessons for the reader. Okonkwo as a character in *Things Fall Apart* and Judas Iscariot as a character in the New Testament have acted like any other human being would have acted. These characters are replicated in the present day Nigerian society. They do things to satisfy their selfish desire even though it appears as if they are fighting for the masses. This description for these characters in view in this study best fits into that of political elites in Nigeria. Many of them do not care about the welfare of the society in that they care for what they stand to gain. They do not mind killing their opponents and truncating the will of governance if they do not get what they want. The lesson such Nigerian politicians must learn from the story of Okonkwo and Judas Iscariot is to learn to desist from inordinate ambitions. Among other things, they have also been thought to be reasonable about their ambitions, learn to apologize and make amends when necessary. This type of acts should not be seen as weakness but as strength for personal and societal development.

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