

Intertextual Threads: Unpacking the Quranic, Biblical, Malinké, And Igbo References in *Allah Is Not Obligated* by Ahmadou Kourouma And *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the intertextual network in **Ahmadou Kourouma's** *Allah n'est pas obligé* (2000) and **Chinua Achebe's** *Things Fall Apart* (1958), concentrating on the following sources of intertextuality: Quranic, biblical, Malinké and Igbo. The two novels sketch the complex cultural background and historical situation of the two societies with the help of intertextuality. By means of a comparative study, this article explores the complexity of cultural identity in West Africa so directing the intertextual allusions and so moulding the narratives. Using intertextuality to challenge accepted narratives about Africa and its people, the article argues that both works show complex images of cultural identity. Analysing the intertextual connections in both texts enables the other to understand the dynamic and complex process of cultural identification in West Africa. Although separated by decades **Achebe** writing during decolonisation and **Kourouma** reacting to the chaos of post-colonial civil conflicts, both writers employ sacred books and indigenous knowledge systems as powerful means of critique. In *Things Fall Apart*, Christian biblical allusions highlight the destructive colonial presence while Igbo proverbs, traditional storytelling, and religious ceremonies offer a nuanced depiction of pre-colonial society. Reflecting the postwar breakdown of West Africa, **Kourouma's** *Allah is Not Obligated* presents a more fragmented intertextuality via syncretic interpretation of Islam, tribal practices, and Western influences by child soldier Birahima.

KEYWORDS: Intertextuality, Cultural identity, Comparative literature, Quranic references, Biblical allusion, Malinke tradition, Igbo knowledge systems, Postcolonial critique, Decolonization narratives, colonial disruption, Ahmadou Kourouma “Allah is not Obligated”, Chinua Achebe “Things Fall Apart”, Sacred texts in Literature, Indigenous epistemologies, Syncretism in literature, Oral storytelling and African memory.

I- INTRODUCTION

The merging of intertextuality with literature offers a fruitful avenue for ideological criticism, the study of historical memory, and cultural identification. Within the postcolonial realms, authors of the African literary tradition attempt to engage with sacred texts, local customs, and cross-cultural dialogues. The Quran, the Bible, and the Malinké and Igbo cultures sew together foundational literary narratives while **Ahmadou Kourouma's** *Allah Is Not Obligated* and **Achebe's** *Things Fall Apart* depict indigenously African identity alongside the postcolonial socio-ideological ruin of African society.

Theories of intertextuality proposed by **Julia Kristeva (1980)** in *Desire in Language* and **Gérard Genette (1982)** in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* conceptualize intertextuality as more of an enhancement to literary meaning or interaction across texts irrespective of their historical or cultural origin. Intertextuality is not only become a strategy of African literature, but a political engagement against dominant narratives and a reconstruction of the epistemologies of Africa disrupted by colonialism. Building from Genette's framework, African literary critics such as **Graham Huggan (2001)** in *The Postcolonial Exotic* emphasize the political dimension of intertextuality and quare that authors like **Achebe** and **Kourouma** figuratively struggle anthropocentric portrayals of Africa through intertextuality. Similarly, **Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992)** in *In My Father's House* investigates the ways in which African authors assimilate Africa's cultural heritage into their writings, creating multicultural and multifaceted constructions of identity. **Kourouma**, responding to postcolonial civil strife, offers a fractured intertextuality through the eyes of the child soldier Birahima, who blends Islamic, tribal, and Western influences, while **Achebe** in the period of decolonisation, queries colonial distortions using Igbo proverbs and indigenous ways of knowing. Here especially relevant is **Aleida Assmann's theory of cultural memory (2011)**, since both books involve historical negotiation, Achebe reconstructing Igbo pre-colonial systems and Kourouma recording postcolonial disillusionment

This paper challenges conventional notions of African identity by comparing these cultural signifiers and arguing that Achebe and Kourouma employ **intertextuality** as a tool for **ideological critique and historical preservation. African literature actively**

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opposes colonial hegemony and preserves cultural memory by reclaiming agency through literary discourse, as evidenced by the way sacred texts, indigenous proverbs, and oral traditions are interwoven.

II- QURANIC AND BIBLICAL REFERENCES IN “ALLAH IS NOT OBLIGED” AND “THINGS FALL APART”.

In African literature, intertextuality is a potent weapon for ideological criticism, historical commentary, and cultural negotiation. Two important novels Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah Is Not Obligated* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* examine themes of fate, divine intervention, colonial disturbance, and cultural survival by closely reading Quranic and Biblical sources. Within the framework of postcolonial disintegration and resistance, these religious intertextual elements challenge power structures, ideological conflict, and moral ambiguity rather than only serve as thematic devices.

Kourouma's book, which chronicles the turbulent life of a child soldier named Birahima, combines biblical morality with Quranic fatalism to reveal how religious discourse is used as a weapon in militarised circumstances. His comment, "*Allah is not obliged to be fair about all the things he does here on earth*" (p-1) which means Allah is not obliged to everything right in this world, captures a terrible existential resignation that supports the way the book presents war as a field where faith and survival frequently collide in opposition.

Conversely, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* uses Biblical intertextuality to expose the disruptive colonial presence in Igbo society. The title of the novel alludes to the poem *The Second Coming* by William Butler Yeats, especially the line "*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.*" This allusion emphasises how Christianity changes Igbo epistemologies and power relations, so highlighting the fragmentation of indigenous order under European religious intervention. This study presents literature as a site of historical testimony and resistance by analysing religious intertextuality in both books, so exploring how Kourouma and Achebe use Islamic and Christian references to investigate violence, cultural resilience, and ideological imposition.

A- Quranic References in Allah is Not Obligated: Fate, Divine Intervention, and Religious Manipulation.

a- Predestination and Fatalism in War Discourse

Traditionally, Islamic theology interacts with Qadar (predestination), a notion fundamental to grasp moral responsibility, divine justice, and personal suffering. Kourouma's interaction with Quranic intertextuality captures the fatalistic perspective established in wartime narratives in which people call for predestination as both a means of emotional distance from suffering and a justification for violence.

Navigating the turmoil of war, Birahima frequently uses Islamic ideas on fate to justify bloodshed:

"*Allah is not obliged to be fair about all the things he does here on earth*" (p-1) which means Allah is not obliged to everything right in this world, This comment reflects a fatalistic attitude, so supporting the belief that divine justice does not always incrementally in to stop human cruelty. Scholar Mohammed Arkoun (2002) in *Rethinking Islam* contends that misreading Qadar can result in ethical disengagement, in which people submit themselves to injustice under the presumption that suffering is divinely approved. Another important Quranic reference shows up in the militarisation of Islamic rhetoric, especially in relation to talks on jihad. Although Quranic philosophy typically describes jihad as a spiritual battle towards righteousness, the book shows how warlords distort its meaning to support bloodshed.

"*Jihad is the path to righteousness. Those who die in battle are rewarded in paradise.*" (P-118). This quotation is probably being used in the framework of the book as part of Kourouma's critical analysis of how warlords and commanders exploit religious ideas like jihad to inspire child soldiers and excuse bloodshed during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Often showing such religious statements with a mix of naivety and cynicism, the protagonist Birahima highlights the abuse of religious doctrine for political and military goals. This comment captures a dangerous theological distortion that fits actual situations whereby jihad is interpreted as a militant doctrine instead of a personal moral struggle. **John Esposito (2003)** in *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* explores how extreme readings of jihad sometimes support military and political agendas, so strengthening ideological radicalisation instead of real spiritual development. Kourouma shows Birahima's growing mistrust in order to emphasise how child soldiers are compelled into ideological manipulation under the cover of religious obligation, so exposing this theft.

B- Biblical References in Things Fall Apart: Colonial Christianity and Cultural Disintegration.

Christianity as a tool of Cultural Disruption: Achebe's interactions with Biblical intertextuality in *Things Fall Apart* help to reveal the colonial intrusion into Igbo spirituality and government. By means of deliberate juxtaposition of Christian doctrine with Igbo ideas, Achebe exposes how missionary rhetoric turned into a tool for cultural destruction. The Biblical references draw attention to not only religious conversion but also systematic epistemological violence since colonial power systems were built under the cover of spiritual redemption and "civilisation," so negating indigenous knowledge systems. Igbo religious traditions are framed as superstitious or inferior by missionary figures, especially **Mr. Brown and Reverend Smith**, who present Christian theology as a competing epistemology. Political subjugation is preceded and facilitated by this theological colonisation, which creates a hierarchy of belief systems that undermines indigenous spiritual knowledge.

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Referring to Yeats's apocalyptic imagery, the title of the novel suggests the ideological fragmentation that arises when Christian doctrine clashes with Igbo customs. Achebe shows this difference through characters like Nwoye, the son of Okonkwo, whose Christian conversion marks a cultural upheaval.

"He told stories of the Virgin Mary and her child. But the stories seemed to him to make sense, unlike the tales of the tortoise and the lion". Here Achebe discusses the way colonial religion undermines indigenous epistemology by contrasting Christian redemption narratives with Igbo folktales. As Biblical parables replace ancestral wisdom, so undermining cultural continuity and communal identity and so establishing Western theological frameworks as authoritative, this narrative confrontation shows the methodical displacement of traditional knowledge systems. According to **T.O. Beidelman's** (1971) novel ***Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Impact*** discusses how Christian conversion strategies frequently used theological superiority claims to force cultural displacement by framing indigenous belief systems as irrational. As biblical discourse undermines Igbo cosmological balance and upends traditional governance structures, Okonkwo's eventual downfall is representative of the ideological crisis colonial Christianity imposes.

Achebe and Kourouma examine the relationship between faith, ideology, and violence through their involvement with intertextuality in the Quran and the Bible. Kourouma's disjointed Quranic engagement reflects postcolonial instability, whereas Achebe's organised Biblical discourse reflects colonial disruption.

Though Kourouma depicts Islam's chaotic deployment in civil war contexts, where religious principles are opportunistically invoked and distorted, Achebe shows how Christianity's methodical introduction, through systematic theological replacement, fractured Igbo society. Both writers demonstrate how sacred texts can be used as tools of power; Kourouma shows how they can legitimise postcolonial disorder, while Achebe shows how they can establish colonial order. This contrast demonstrates how literary devices such as religious intertextuality reflect different historical periods in Africa's interaction with other belief systems.

III- MALINKÉ AND IGBO TRADITION

Both *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and *Allah is Not Obligated* by Ahmadou Kourouma deftly incorporate indigenous oral traditions, so elevating these cultural components above mere stylistic accents. By means of their intentional blending of proverbs, folktales, and oral storytelling approaches, both writers establish the epistemological validity of African knowledge systems and generate linguistically creative works challenging Western literary traditions. Kourouma creates a unique voice that reflects cultural hybridity in "Allah is Not Obligated," weaving Malinké proverbs and expressions throughout Birahima's first-hand account. Saying things like **"The elder who has lain down sees further than the child who has climbed a tree"** adds age-old wisdom with several purposes. Beyond only offering cultural authenticity, these proverbs create a different perspective for understanding the terrible facts of civil war. Kourouma's proverbs frequently juxtapose ethical conundrums that result from traditional societies confronting postcolonial violence by often contrasting moral standards against the moral anarchy of modern conflicts. With its digressive structure, direct audience address, and integration of explanatory asides, Birahima's story technique itself reflects the Malinké griot tradition. But Kourouma purposefully breaks this oral legacy by using dictionaries and Birahima's scattered schooling. This narrative technique captures the disrupted flow of cultural knowledge in war-torn nations, where conventional methods of intergenerational learning have been sharply disrupted. The dictionaries start to represent symbolic substitutes for seniors, flawed knowledge sources unable to totally replace natural cultural immersion.

Reflecting the still-intact pre-colonial society depicts in the early parts of "Things Fall Apart," Achebe's use of Igbo oral traditions follows a more ordered pattern. Saying things like "looking at a king's mouth, one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast" helps one access collective knowledge that controls social relations and spreads moral principles. Achebe offers these proverbs as sophisticated rhetorical tools illustrating the intellectual complexity of Igbo language, not as exotic curiosities. "Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten," one older person notes. Beyond proverbs, Achebe uses Igbo myths, folktales, and songs establishing the cosmological framework via which characters view their world. Reiterating community values and tying people to the natural world, the story of why the tortoise's shell is not smooth serves both entertainment and educational uses. Analogously, the egwugwu ceremonies show the dramatic expression of oral tradition, in which ancestral knowledge physically shows up in community ceremonies. The slow degradation of these customs by colonial and Christian influences shows how oral knowledge systems become susceptible when cut off from their supporting social systems. Furthermore Using Malinké proverbs, Kourouma negotiates the complexity of survival, power, and dishonesty in *Allah is Not Obligated*. One such proverbs, **"A dog that wags its tail for everyone will eventually get slapped"** (pp-15) captures the precarious situation of the protagonist, Birahima, who is thrown into the violent world of child soldiery, where trust is fragile and alliances are fleeting. Resonating with studies on postcolonial trauma, such **Rothberg's (2019)** theory of **"the implicated subject,"** this proverb captures the larger theme of betrayal and opportunism in conflict-torn settings. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* similarly combines Igbo proverbs as fundamental components of social structure and cultural philosophy. The Igbo idea of personal agency and the spiritual linkedness between a man and his fate is reinforced by the proverb **"When a man says yes, his chi says yes also"** (pp- 23). Scholar **Abiola Irele (2001)** contends that by

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using oral traditions, Achebe preserves indigenous epistemologies against Western erasure, so acting as "**a counter-discourse to colonial historiography.**" These oral customs are used by both writers to challenge Western narrative power. Indigenous knowledge forms perform a kind of epistemological resistance when they are included into Western literary forms, such as written novels. Their work shows how sophisticated philosophical systems and sophisticated aesthetic ideas found in African oral traditions demand great intellectual thought. At the same time, both writers modify these customs instead of presenting them as fixed objects. Oral traditions change in response to historical demands, as seen by Kourouma's fractured, dictionary-dependent renderings of Malinké expressions and Achebe's contextual translations of Igbo ideas.

By means of these rich intertextual references to indigenous oral traditions, both books assert cultural continuity despite historical disturbance. They see narrative not only as entertainment but also as a basic tool for maintaining identity, spreading values, and sense-making regarding horrific historical change. By doing this, Kourouma and Achebe create literature as a vital site for recovering African epistemologies and so claiming their modern relevance.

IV- INTERTEXTUALITY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY:

By combining historical, literary, and oral traditions that define a society's self-representation, intertextuality shapes cultural identity in a vital way. Postcolonial writers use intertextual references to recover indigenous narratives, challenge cultural erasure, and participate in conversations with colonial texts. Intertextuality emphasises the dynamic character of identity by combining many traditions, so reflecting the complexity of legacy, language, and society change. *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah Not Obligated* reveal how intertextuality forms cultural identity in postcolonial African writing. Both novels build hybrid identities reflecting historical upheavals and social changes by combining indigenous oral traditions, religious references, and colonial discourse. While opposing colonial erasure, Achebe's use of Igbo proverbs and Kourouma's integration of Malinké oral storytelling support cultural memory. Their interwoven stories show the dynamic and changing character of African identity, so subverting accepted wisdom about it. As Graham Allen points out in his groundbreaking word "**Intertextuality**" (2000), "all texts are necessarily intertextual... the meaning of a text does not reside in the text itself but is produced by the reader in relation to the network of textual relations the reader perceives" (p. 1). Postcolonial African literature, in which writers negotiate several cultural traditions, languages, and literary conventions to express emergent identities in the wake of colonial encounters, calls especially for this intertextual framework. Through intertextual interaction with several traditions, Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah Is Not Obligated* reflects the conflict between indigenous values and postcolonial disruptions, so embodying cultural hybridity. Birahima, the protagonist, sets this suspense right away in his first speech: "**I'm respectful, I'm rude as a goat's beard and I swear like a bastard. Having been in Liberia and personally killed many people with my own hands, I do not respect the speech of my elders**" (Kourouma, p. 2.). Birahima's unreserved declaration places him between the violent reality of war, which subverts cultural standards, and Malinké oral traditions where respect for elderly indicates wisdom. Kourouma creates a narrative that defies easy identity classification by combining Malinké proverbs, Islamic references, and French language influences. By means of Birahima's voice, the book questions colonial legacies, trauma brought about by war, and the flux of cultural identity, so orienting intertextuality as a means of historical reckoning. Frequent references to four dictionaries: Larousse, Petit Robert, Harrap's, and the Glossary of Ivorian French, Birahima underlines the intertextual complexity of the novel and functions as both a narrative device and a metaphor for cultural hybridity. Through the weaving of these linguistic sources into his narrative, Kourouma emphasises the junction of colonial and indigenous influences forming West African identification. The protagonist's dependence on several dictionaries reflects his fractured viewpoint influenced by linguistic adaptation, displacement, and violence. This intertextual approach supports the themes of cultural hybridity, negotiating of meaning, and the fluid character of postcolonial identity in the novel.

Linguistic hybridity in postcolonial African literature is "**not simply a technical problem of translation but the fundamental condition of postcolonial African identity,**" claims Christopher Miller (1990). The protagonist, Birahima, in Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah is Not Obligated* must negotiate several linguistic codes, oscillating between Malinké oral traditions, French colonial discourse, and regional dialects. His effort to translate culturally specific ideas, such as "**gnama**" the shadow of a person OR an animal that remains after his death, "**Toubabs**" is a white person, "**FAFORO**" my father's cock, "**GNAMOKODE**" (bastard), "**BILAKORO**" (is an uncircumcised boy) open the complexity of postcolonial identity building. This process captures what Homi Bhabha calls the "**third space**" of cultural translation, a transitional area where meaning is negotiated between many linguistic and cultural contexts. Birahima's dependence on four dictionaries Larousse, Petit Robert, Harrap's, and the Glossary of Ivorian French which help to show how language is both a tool for survival and a marker of displacement. Through the constant interaction between historical memory, linguistic adaptation, and cultural hybridity, Kourouma shows how postcolonial identity is formed by embedding these multilingual elements into his narrative, so exposing the conflicts between imposed colonial languages and indigenous epistemologies.

Birahima's sarcastic call to Islamic values in *Allah is Not Obligated* draws attention to the junction between official religious doctrine and localised interpretations, a phenomena in "**beyong Timbuktu**" (2016), Mali, "**vernacularization of Islamic**

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knowledge in West Africa" by Ousmane Kane emphasises the dynamic adaptation of Islamic teachings to local linguistic, cultural, and social context. Islamic knowledge in West Africa is often mediated through oral traditions, indigenous customs, and pragmatic uses fit for daily life rather than rigorously following classical interpretations. This process helps religious dialogue to remain relevant and accessible, so promoting syncretic expressions of faith that combine local epistemologies with Quranic principles. Kane's approach highlights how historical interactions, colonial influences, and changing communal identities help to define Islam as it is experienced in West Africa. As Kourouma's protagonist negotiates an uncertain world where religious dogma is filtered through the experiences of violence and displacement, he epitomises this dynamic. "God doesn't have to be fair about everything here on Earth," he said. Allah has no need to concern minutiae. That's what we say back in the village" captures the pragmatic means by which faith is reconciled with adversity. Kourouma emphasises the fluidity of religious identity in West Africa by including these unofficial interpretations into the conversation of the book, so showing how Islamic knowledge is flexible enough to fit daily life outside of doctrinal rigidity. This interaction between orthodoxy and vernacular belief highlights the larger concept of hybridity by showing how religious and cultural memory endures despite political unrest and systematic violence. Kourouma's narrative technique also bears influence from Western literary traditions. With Birahima straying between several warlords and military camps, the picaresque framework of the book subverts European literary traditions by means of African content. "Kourouma's invention lies in his ability to adopt Western literary forms while fundamentally transforming them by African linguistic patterns and epistemologies," Lydie Moudileno notes in "Postcolonial Francophone Autobiographies" (2006).

Chinua Achebe deftly combines indigenous Igbo oral traditions with colonial literary forms to shape cultural identity in *Things Fall Apart* using intertextuality. Reading Chinua Achebe notes Simon Gikandi (1991) that **Achebe** creates "a narrative that balances indigenous and colonial literary traditions without privileging either" (p. 45), so illustrating how postcolonial literature interacts with many textual traditions. Achebe questions the disturbances brought about by colonialism by combining Igbo proverbs, folklore, and historical narratives with colonial language. This interaction of books lets *Things Fall Apart* be a site of resistance and reconciliation where the negotiation of historical memory and literary influences shapes identity. Reflecting Stuart Hall's claim that identity is "constituted within, not outside, representation," Achebe's intertextual approach emphasises the dynamic and changing character of cultural identity, so contributing powerfully to postcolonial debate (Hall 222).

Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* is a key intertextual device that supports cultural identity and questions colonial narratives aimed at discounting African intellectual traditions. Emphasising themes of humility and historical awareness, the proverb "**looking at a king's mouth, one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast**" (Chapter four, p. 25) emphasises the continuity of lineage and power. Florence Stratton contends in *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* (1994) "**these proverbs establish the philosophical groundwork of the novel, demonstrating the sophisticated intellectual traditions that colonial discourse sought to negate**" (p. 89). Using Igbo oral traditions, Achebe crafts a layered story that centres indigenous epistemologies in the middle of the book. Part of Okonkwo's tragedy is his strict and often uncompromising view of these conventional values, which shows how dynamically negotiated cultural identity is rather than set. This intertextual interaction finally emphasises how postcolonial writers recover indigenous knowledge systems, so supporting the changing and multifarious character of identity. Achebe's interactions with biblical intertextuality in *Things Fall Apart* capture the larger conflict between colonial textual authority and indigenous oral traditions. Entering the story, Christian missionaries challenge accepted Igbo belief systems by claiming a different perspective of meaning. By declaring, "**Your gods are not alive and cannot do you any harm... They are pieces of wood and stone**," (Achebe, Chapter Sixteen, p. 138), directly rejects Igbo spirituality and positions Christianity as the most often used textual tradition. This moment captures Edward Said's idea of "a contest over narrative authority" (**Culture and Imperialism**, 1993, p. 156), showing how colonial discourse tries to replace indigenous epistemologies. Achebe's use of intertextuality lets Igbo proverbs, mythology, and oral traditions stand in contrast to Biblical teachings, so building a layered narrative where cultural identity is negotiated through opposing textual systems. The book finally shows how postcolonial writing interacts with intertextuality to recover underprivileged voices and oppose erasure.

Reflecting the larger challenge over cultural identity in colonial and postcolonial narratives, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* creates an intertextual dialogue between Western literary traditions and Igbo oral traditions. Although the book uses a straight Western framework, its linguistic texture, reliance on proverbs, and narrative techniques really point to Igbo epistemology. The conflict between colonial historiography and indigenous self-representation is summed up in the last paragraph, where the District Commissioner lowers Okonkwo's life to "a reasonable paragraph" in **The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger** (Achebe, p. 209). This moment crystallises what Biodun Jeyifo (2009) describes as "**a meta-literary response to colonial textual authority**" (p. 67), so orienting Achebe's work as an intervention in historical erasure. Achebe reveals the complexity of postcolonial identity by stressing Igbo voices inside a novelistic form that interacts with colonial literary frameworks, so exposing how literature functions as a battlefield for narrative sovereignty and cultural memory

V- CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH INTERTEXTUALITY:

While both Kourouma and Achebe use intertextuality for their work through shattered cultural identities, their methods differ according to literary technique and historical background. Writing after colonial rule, Achebe creates a story that affirms African epistemologies while balancing colonial literary forms with indigenous Igbo oral traditions. What **Simon Gikandi (1991)** refers to as "a narrative that balances indigenous and colonial literary traditions without privileging either" (Chinua Achebe, p. 45) his measured intertextuality is a sign. Nonetheless, Kourouma's chaotic, multilingual intertextuality reflects **JeanFrançois Lyotard's postmodern condition**, where fragmentary knowledge systems coexist without resolution and big narratives dissolve. **Abiola Irele** calls this dissonance "the crisis of cultural identity in modern African writing" (The African Imagination, 2001, p. 78), and it is highlighted by Birahima's numerous references to dictionaries, Islamic doctrines, Malinké oral traditions, and Western conceptions. While Kourouma's destabilised narrative reveals the disorienting effects of postcolonial violence and linguistic plurality, Achebe's approach preserves and legitimises indigenous knowledge within a structured literary form. This illustrates how intertextuality functions in African literature as both an exploration of cultural fragmentation and an assertion of identity.

Achebe's methodical intertextuality in *Things Fall Apart* catches the historical moment when separate cultural and textual traditions, Igbo oral legacy and colonial discourse directly collide. **Kwame Anthony Appiah** points out in *In My Father's House* (1992) "What gives Achebe's novel its universal resonance is its portrayal of the moment when one textual tradition must confront its potential erasure by another" (p. 149). Okonkwo's incapacity to fit the changing epistemological terrain brought about by colonial control reflects this confrontation. Rooted in oral traditions, his strict adherence to traditional Igbo values runs counter to the imposed colonial textual system that favours written records, Christianity, and administrative power. Achebe's intertextual approach guarantees that Igbo voices stay central even as colonial rhetoric tries to marginalise them. The sad ending of Okonkwo represents the results of cultural stagnation against disruptive historical changes, so supporting Achebe's more general criticism of imperialism and its erasure of indigenous knowledge systems. The idea of **decolonising the mind (1986)** by **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o** presents a convincing framework for understanding the intertextual techniques used by **Achebe** and **Kourouma** in their separate works. True cultural decolonisation, according to **Ngũgĩ**, requires their critical integration into an African-centered epistemology rather than their total rejection of foreign influences. With its depiction of the collision between Igbo oral traditions and forced Western literary and religious structures, **Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*** shows this process at the first moment of colonial disturbance. By means of intertextual interaction with indigenous proverbs, myths, and historical narratives, the novel challenges European erasure and so supports the validity of Igbo epistemology. Kourouma's *Allah is Not Obligated*, on the other hand, reflects the postcolonial aftermath in which linguistic, cultural, and ideological fragments coexist in tense, usually contradictory relationships. Birahima's disorganised multilingual narrative, sprinkling French colonial vocabulary, Islamic references, and Malinké proverbs, shows the consequences of colonialism and the challenge of combining several traditions into a cohesive identity. This fractured story reflects the instability of postcolonial African countries, so echoing **Ngũgĩ's** claim that decolonisation is not a one-time event but a continuous intellectual and cultural negotiation. From colonial disturbance to postcolonial hybridity, **Achebe** and **Kourouma** show the changing dynamics of cultural identity by using intertextuality in several forms.

By means of their subtle interaction with intertextuality, **Achebe** and **Kourouma** question Western ideas of African cultural identity as fixed or monolithic, so presenting identity as a fluid, changing process moulded by historical and textual contacts. **Stuart Hall's** concept of identity as created through "**routes rather than roots**" emphasises this point of view by stressing ongoing cultural negotiation over a return to an imagined, pure origin. By means of Igbo oral traditions and colonial textual structures, Achebe presents a historical moment of rupture whereby indigenous knowledge challenges imposed narratives. Conversely, Kourouma reflects the turbulent reality of modern African identity by combining postcolonial fragmentation Malinké oral traditions, Islamic teachings, and French language influences—into one another. Both writers create stories that challenge essentialist conceptions by interacting with indigenous, global, colonial, and hybrid forms of life. Their works eventually highlight how movement, interaction, and adaptation rather than strict historical continuity form African identities.

VI- CONCLUSION:

By means of intertextuality, Achebe and Kourouma expose how dynamic interactions among indigenous traditions, colonial narratives, and global influences shape cultural identification in African literature. In *Things Fall Apart*, **Achebe's** methodical intertextuality captures a historical moment of rupture as Igbo oral traditions challenge the textual power of colonialism. **Stuart Hall's** claim that identity is created through "**routes rather than roots**" is reinforced by his careful interaction with proverbs, mythology, and Christian discourse, which emphasises a process of negotiation rather than a return to fixed origins. Conversely, **Kourouma's *Allah Is Not Obligated*** captures the fractured postcolonial condition in which language hybridity reflects the ongoing effects of colonial disturbance. "**The crisis of cultural identity in modern African literature,**" **Abiola Irele** says, "**is shown by his disorganised interaction between Malinké oral traditions, Islamic teachings, and the French language.**" These pieces together show how literature becomes a site of resistance, reclamation, and adaptation, thereby subverting Western presumptions

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of African identity as fixed. By means of their intertextual strategies, Achebe and Kourouma assert that identity is not singular but rather fluid, an always-changing dialogue between the past and present, tradition, and transformation. Their stories confirm the richness and complexity of postcolonial identity building as well as the need for recovering African voices inside literary debate.

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