The impact of colonisation on African countries is often wrongly generalised, ignoring the significant differences between each country. Is there such a negligible difference in the effect of colonisation country by country that it is safe to generalise? An easy way to investigate this is to delve into the literature of different African countries and compare their accounts of the effects of colonisation on their societies. *Xala* is a movie directed by Ousmane Sembène, set in post-independence Senegal (Sembène, 1975). It follows the story of El Hadji Abdou Kader Beye, a wealthy businessman about to take his third wife. On the day of the ceremony, El Hadji is struck by a curse or *Xala*, rendering him impotent. His efforts to heal himself eventually end in his humiliation. The novel explores themes of corruption, greed, and the impact of colonialism on African society. The curse of *Xala* can be interpreted as a metaphor for the impotence of the post-independence African ruling class. *Things Fall Apart* is a novel by Chinua Achebe that tells the story of Umuofia, a village in pre-colonial Nigeria (Achebe, 1994). It follows the protagonist Okonkwo as he introduces the Igbo people's traditions, customs, and culture. In the final part, Okonkwo accidentally murders someone and is forced to flee the village, where he finds that the European colonial authorities have taken over Umuofia and destroyed the Igbo culture and way of life. The novel critiques colonialism and its effects on African society. By comparing these two texts, this essay will establish that there are significant differences between the impact of colonisation on different African countries.

*Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* were both intriguing due to the literary techniques employed in them. *Xala* explored the corruption of the postcolonial African bourgeoisie and the impact of European colonialism on Senegalese society. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe's vivid portrayal of Igbo culture before and after the arrival of European colonisers was informative and moving. The novel's exploration of cultural change and adaptation complexities was very insightful. Being part Igbo, I appreciated the level of detail in the description of Igbo societies and the authenticity of the writing.

The genre of a text is important for understanding its intentions and the cultural and historical context in which it was written. *Xala* is a satirical text. Satire is a genre that employs irony, sarcasm, and humour to criticise and expose societal flaws and vices (Elliott, 2023). In *Xala*, Sembène uses satire to portray the corrupt and hypocritical post-independence African bourgeoisie vividly. Through the character of El Hadji Abdou Kader Beye, the protagonist, Sembène satirises the African elite who have gained wealth and power through their collaboration with European colonialists. By utilising satire, Sembène critiques Senegal's political and social dynamics and highlights European colonialism's effects on African society. For example, the character of El Hadji Abdou Kader Beye, the protagonist, is portrayed as a foolish and pitiable figure despite his wealth. He is overly obsessed with his sexual prowess (Sembene, 1975, 48:55 – 49:00, 51:46 – 52:01). He constantly seeks to upgrade his lifestyle and impress his friends and associates. He takes a third wife, a decision he later regrets due to the financial burden it places on him. Through El Hadji's character, Sembène satirises the wealthy African elite who try to imitate Western culture and values, often at the expense of their traditions and heritage.

Moreover, *Xala* also satirises the political system in Senegal, which is shown to be corrupt and ineffective in addressing the needs of the people. The newly independent government is depicted as a group of hypocritical politicians more interested in their power and wealth than in serving the people. This is seen when the Chamber of Commerce only react to El Hadji's misappropriation of funds and rice when it begins to affect their credit scores and reputations (Sembene, 1975, 1:35:06 – 1:36:55). Another clever attack on the postcolonial political system is Mr Thielli replacing El Hadji in the Chamber of Commerce. Mr Thielli is introduced to the audience skilfully pickpocketing a man at the scene of a car accident (Sembene, 1975, 49:50 – 50:00). Mr Thielli then goes to a tailor and gets a nicely tailored suit, making him look prosperous (Sembene, 1975, 57:29 – 57:37). He is admitted to the Chamber to replace El Hadji – replacing one thief with another.

On the other hand, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe belongs to the historical fiction genre. Historical fiction combines elements of both history and fiction, intertwining factual events and details with fictional characters and narratives (Johnson, 2009). Achebe's novel is set in pre-colonial Nigeria and chronicles the arrival of European colonisers and their impact on Igbo society. While the characters and events in *Things Fall Apart* are fictional, Achebe draws on historical and cultural references to create a rich and realistic portrayal of pre-colonial Nigerian society. For example, Umuofia is a fictional town whose name loosely resembles Umuahia, a city in Abia, an Igbo state. However, the local names of the deities and masquerades are accurate. Also, the depiction of the traditional Igbo justice system is accurate. This is notable because the British drastically overwrote this system in the book. Through the genre of historical fiction, Achebe provides a nuanced exploration of the effects of European colonialism on African culture and the clash between traditional values and the encroachment of Western influence.

By comparing the genres of *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart*, we can observe the different narrative approaches employed by Sembène and Achebe in exploring the impact of colonialism on African societies. These different approaches demonstrate the importance of examining each African country's unique historical and cultural context to fully understand colonisation's impact on its society. The comparison between the genres of *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* highlights the importance of recognising the diversity of experiences within African countries. Sembène's satirical approach enables him to critique the postcolonial African bourgeoisie. In contrast, Achebe's historical fiction approach allows for a more historically grounded examination of the effects of European colonisation on Igbo society. By understanding each country's unique historical and cultural contexts, we can better understand the multifaceted impact of colonisation on African cultures. Examining these two texts showcases different countries' distinct experiences and responses to European colonialism.

Mimicry is a postcolonial concept that refers to how colonised societies adapt and imitates their colonisers' cultural practices and behaviours (Godiwala, 2007). In both *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart*, we see examples of how African cultures adapted to European colonialism through mimicry.

In *Xala*, Sembène uses mimicry to highlight the corruption and humiliation brought about by colonialism. The main character, El Hadji Abdou Kader Beye, a wealthy businessman, is obsessed with imitating French customs and traditions to the extent that he alienates himself from his own culture. For instance, he insists on speaking French even with his fellow Senegalese. When his daughter, Rama, visits him to remind him of his first wife's obligations to Astou, he flares up when she replies to him in Wolof (their local tongue) instead of French (Sembene, 1975, 1:25:05 – 1:25:10). Additionally, he spends exorbitant money on French luxury goods, eventually leading him to bankruptcy and disrepute. In his conversation with Ahmed Fall, just before he is summoned to the Chamber of Commerce (Sembene, 1975, 1:26:25 – 1:26:50), he says, "You know me. I import directly from Europe…Even my drinking water comes from Europe."

On the other hand, Achebe uses mimicry in *Things Fall Apart* to show how colonialism leads to violence and tragedy. The protagonist, Okonkwo, is a proud and respected leader in his Igbo community, but he struggles to adapt to the changes brought about by the arrival of the Europeans (Achebe, 1994, p. 147). He views the Europeans as weak and effeminate and insists on following his traditional customs and practices. Unlike his friend Obierika who is more open-minded to change, Okonkwo is derisive of the new religion and traditions. This leads to him disowning his first son, Nwoye (Achebe, 1994, p. 140). This also motivates him and the other masquerades to burn down the church in retaliation for unmasking an ancestral spirit instead of seeking redress from the district commissioner (Achebe, 1994, p. 171 – p. 173). This leads to events that conclude with Okonkwo committing murder and suicide (Achebe, 1994, p. 185 – p. 187). His stubbornness and refusal to adapt lead to tragic consequences, such as his eventual death.

Mimicry in *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* reveals the impact of colonialism on African societies. In *Xala*, the mimicry of French customs and traditions leads to the corruption and humiliation of El Hadji Abdou Kader Beye. It highlights how colonialism can erode cultural identity and values. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's mimicry of traditional customs and practices shows the tragic consequences of refusing to adapt to new ways of life and the devastating effects of colonialism on African societies. While both works use this technique to reveal the adverse effects of colonialism, they differ in their portrayal of colonialism. *Xala* portrays colonialism as a source of corruption and humiliation, while *Things Fall Apart* shows it as a cause of violence and tragedy. This reinforces that there were significant differences in the impact of colonisation on different African countries.

Both *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* were set in different times during the European colonisation and decolonisation of Africa, a period characterised by the imposition of foreign rule and the exploitation of African peoples and resources. This leads to a discussion of neocolonialism. Neocolonialism involves a country using economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries (Sartre, 2001).

In *Xala*, Senegal has just won their independence. The lingering impact of European colonialism is shown through the portrayal of the Senegalese elite and their struggles for power and wealth. The opening scene perfectly shows this dilemma when a conversation occurs in the Chamber of Commerce at the film's beginning (Sembene, 1975, 00:25 – 2:27). When the black men are ejecting the white men, they are dressed in Senegalese attire. At the same time, a serious voice proclaims Senegal's independence and new African socialism. However, by the time the men take their seats in the Chamber, they have changed into black tie eschewing their Africanity (Sembene, 1975, 03:46 – 04:01). Also, when the president asks El Hadji's street to be cleared, a white man leads the policemen there (Sembene, 1975, 56:11). This also happened at the movie's start when the roads were cleared by policemen led by a white man (Sembene, 1975, 03:46).

Another clever indication of the pervasiveness of French influence is Dupont-Durand, the president's advisor. He is present at every critical discussion, and though he hardly speaks, his facial expressions suggest that he is opinionated. For example, when El Hadji is summoned to the president's office to discuss his spending, Dupont-Durant has a very knowing look. At the same time, he fetches the file for the president (Sembene, 1975, 1:29:16 – 1:29:33). He may have been the assistant, but he might as well have been the boss here. This is clear in the scene where the dignitaries are walking out of the Chamber of Commerce on the red carpet laid for them. Dupont is taller than the president, and the president must constantly look up at him when speaking, indicative of who was in power (Sembene, 1975, 08:25 – 08:36). These incidents highlight the continuing influence of France on Senegal's societies despite their independence highlighting the continuing impact of the old colonial powers on the new African rulers directly and indirectly.

In *Things Fall Apart*, however, the colonisation of Nigeria is in its early stages. In *Things Fall Apart*, neocolonialism is characterised by the imposition of a market economy and the colonisers' creation of social welfare projects. The conversion of the Igbo society into a market-oriented system ensures that the people of Umuofia are very amenable to the white man's rule: "The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also brought a trading store…and much money flowed into Umuofia. (Achebe, 1994, p. 162)" In a later section of the book, Mr Brown, the Christian missionary, after learning about the culture of Umuofia, concludes that a head-on approach to converting Umuofia to Christianity would be futile, so he builds a school and a hospital and convinces respected people to send their children to school so that they are not left disenfranchised in the administration of their lands (Achebe, 1994, p. 164). His sideways assault works by playing on Umuofia's pride in managing their affairs. These incidences highlight a deliberate attempt to gradually infiltrate and dominate the Igbo society by overwriting their cultures and making them more amenable to this wearing away.

The portrayal of neocolonialism in *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* highlights how Britain and France treated their colonies. In *Things Fall Apart*, the British administration is insidious, with their colonial policy aiming to upend the existing structures and traditions of the Igbo society. This is demonstrated in their imposition of Christianity, which is used to undermine the Igbo people's traditional religious practices. The British also instilled a sense of shame and inferiority in the Igbo people, as they were made to believe that their culture was primitive and backward.

In contrast, the portrayal of neocolonialism in *Xala* shows how France's approach to its colonies was more subtle but also insidious. France maintained a façade of respecting the cultural identities of its territories while at the same time exploiting their resources and markets (Paul Melly, 2021). The Senegalese administration in *Xala* is depicted as corrupt and self-serving, with the neocolonial economic policies it imposed on Senegal leading to widespread poverty and unemployment. The French also perpetuated a sense of inferiority among the African people by creating a culture of dependency and subservience (Salhi, 2004).

These portrayals of neocolonialism in *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* demonstrate how Britain and France treated their colonies. Britain's approach was more direct and forceful, with its colonial policy aimed at destroying the colonised societies' existing cultural and social structures (Britannica, 2023). On the other hand, France maintained a façade of respect for the cultural identities of its colonies while at the same time exploiting their resources and markets (Melly, 2021). This difference in approach had significant implications for the postcolonial societies of these countries, with the British policy leading to a more complete cultural rupture. In contrast, the French policy perpetuated a culture of dependency and subservience. The portrayal of neocolonialism in *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* highlights the significant differences in the impact of colonisation on the countries that the books were set in and, by extension, Africa. These differences can be attributed to the different approaches taken by Britain and France in their colonial policies, further emphasising that the impact of colonisation on Africa is unique country by country.

One of the key themes of both *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* is the power dynamics between colonisers and colonised peoples. In *Xala*, Sembène portrays a postcolonial Senegal struggling to establish its identity and power structure. The film's opening shot depicts a statue of a French colonial figure being taken down, symbolising the end of colonial rule (Sembene, 1975, 00:58). However, this new era of independence was short-lived as the African elite who took over soon adopted the same exploitative practices of their former colonisers, such as diverting resources for their personal gain and ignoring marginalised communities such as the disabled beggars (Sembene, 1975, 56:19 – 56:40). The film's political and economic power dynamics are complex, with the African elite jostling for power and position in a society still dominated by European influence. This was admitted by El Hadji in his address to the Chamber of Commerce, where he said they [the members of the Chamber] were all "pathetic messenger boys fighting for scraps" (Sembene, 1975, 1:37:44).

In contrast, *Things Fall Apart* depicts the pre-colonial Igbo society in Nigeria, with a well-established power structure based on kinship ties and communal decision-making (Achebe, 1994, p. 15). The protagonist, Okonkwo, embodies the power dynamics of his community, rising to a position of authority through his strength and hard work (Achebe, 1994, p. 29). However, the arrival of the Europeans disrupted the existing power dynamics and created a new dynamic based on colonial rule and exploitation. The *kotma* embody this. They are men from a foreign town that have gained power over the residents of Umuofia due to their association with the British, disrupting the traditional power systems (Achebe, 1994, p. 159).

Comparing the two works, the power dynamics in *Xala* are shaped by the legacy of colonialism and the struggle for postcolonial power. In *Things Fall Apart*, the arrival of the colonisers disrupts the power dynamics. The representation of relational power in *Xala* is complex, with the liberated Senegalese vying for power and control. On the other hand, by the end of *Things Fall Apart*, the colonisers hold much of the power, with the Igbo people fighting to maintain their autonomy.

Furthermore, the differences in the impact of colonisation on Senegal and Nigeria are reflected in the power dynamics depicted in the two works. Senegal was a French colony, while Nigeria was colonised by the British. The French had a more centralised colonial administration, often favouring assimilation into French culture (Melly, 2021) . At the same time, the British allowed for more local autonomy of colonial governors who had no view to assimilating Nigerian culture but instead imposed British culture (Britannica, 2023). These differences in colonial policy can be seen reflected in the power dynamics of *Xala*, and *Things Fall Apart*.

The power dynamics depicted in *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* reflect the differences in the impact of colonisation on Senegal and Nigeria. The complexity of the power dynamics in *Xala* demonstrates the struggle for postcolonial power in Senegal. In contrast, the disruption of the existing power structure in *Things Fall Apart* reflects the impact of colonialism on pre-colonial Igbo society in Nigeria. This applies to Africa, by extension, supporting the idea that colonisation's effects are unique to each African country.

The impact of colonisation on African countries cannot be generalised easily and should not be. Each country experienced colonisation differently, leading to different outcomes and effects. The literary works of *Xala* and *Things Fall Apart* highlight this concept, with the different portrayals of colonialism in the two works revealing the significant differences in the effects of colonisation on different African countries. While *Xala* portrays colonialism as a source of corruption and humiliation, *Things Fall Apart* shows it as a source of violence and tragedy. Therefore, it is important to recognise the unique experiences of each African country during the colonisation period and not to generalise its impact.

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