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Block C

### Chinua Achebe's Statement

Chinua Achebe is the amazingly talented writer who wrote Things Fall Apart. This novel was published in 1958 and is about an Igbo clan in Nigeria being colonized. The story follows Okonkwo, who is a well known figure in Umuofia, and is about his life until colonization. Okonkwo crafted his success and seems to be destined for greatness, until his life slowly starts falling apart, and he eventually commits suicide. Chinua Achebe wrote Things Fall Apart to make a statement about how the Igbo culture has been repressed and to show how much more there is to the single story of Nigeria.

One way that Chinua Achebe shows that the Igbo culture was repressed is by using Igbo words in the text to describe cultural references. For example, Achebe uses the word *egwugwu*, which is essentially a person dresses as and acting as a spiritual ancestor of the clan. *Egwugwu* play big part in the religion of the Umuofian people; they act as judges and advisors to the ordinary people of the clan. Achebe uses this word because he wants to educate readers about the cultural language. He wants to make the reader's experience as genuine as possible, to further expand the amount you learn.

Another way that Chinua Achebe shows how Igbo culture was repressed is by writing the entire book from the perspective of the Igbo people. By doing this, he gives an example of the Igbo people's experience, which is the lesser known/heard of side if conversation. By showing

this side of colonization, he shows the negative effects it had on the clans of Nigeria. It educates readers on the single story of African people.

The last, and (to me) most memorable element of Chinua Achebe's novel, was how the colonists/missionaries deal with Okonkwo's death. Okonkwo realizes that his clan will do nothing to stop the missionaries, and commits suicide, not wanting to bear witness to the destruction of his clan. His clansmen and the colonists eventually find his body, and one of the colonists, the District Commissioner, finds the death "interesting". He walks away thinking that Okonkwo's death was merely another event and that "it would make an interesting chapter, or at least a paragraph" in his new book. The District Commissioner quickly dismisses Okonkwo's death and thinks that there is no significance to it. By including this in his book Chinua Achebe further underlines the arrogance of colonization, and of history-makers (which in this case would be the colonists). He provides an example of why there is not much knowledge about the African clans.

With all of these examples in Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe drives home the ignorance, and the lasting effects of colonization. He shows how the Igbo culture was repressed, and how uneducated the Western culture is to both sides of the experience.