

Okonkwowas a famous man in his village and surrounding areas, for having defeated the most popular wrestler Amalinze the Cat, at the age of eighteen. Their fight was considered the fiercest since one of the village men had engaged a spirit in a duel for seven nights and days. Amalinze was crafty and deft as a cat but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish; Okonkwo had won the fight easily and now, twenty years later, he was still famous and respected. He was a tall man with bushy eyebrows and a spring in his step and a slight stutter; if angered, he used his fists more than his words and had no patience for unsuccessful men, such as his father. Okonkwos fatherUnokawas a lazy man who had many debts and only indulged in merrymaking and wine-drinking. Unlike his son, Unoka had a stoop and a haggard, tired look. Unoka was happiest during the harvest season, when his music band was invited to play for several villages. The weather was perfectneither too hot nor too cold and the sun would look at the sky and remember his childhoodsinging when he spotted a kite flying. He was a romantic man, very much in tune with nature. However, as an adult, Unoka was a failure who could barely provide square meals to his family and was perennially in debt. He was once visited by a neighbor called Okoye. The two men exchanged formalities over the breaking of the kola nut and alligator pepper. This was a traditional greeting in the Igbo societyto share a kola nut with a visiting guest. They spoke of the seasons harvest, heavy rains, and an impending local war. These topics depressed Unoka who began talking of music; it swelled his heart with joy to discuss music. Okoye was a musician too but he knew how to provide for his family and was going to take on theidemilititle the third highest in the land. This was an expensive ceremony and Okoye had come to collect his debts from Unoka. However, the Igbo people never spoke directly of delicate matterssuch things were discussed in proverbs. Unoka responded to his smaller ones. Unoka died in debt and this was a source of great misery to his son, Okonkwo. Fortunately, Igbo society judged the worth of a man on his own merit and not his ancestors. Okonkwo had risen to the ranks of a great man by being a famous wrestler, having shown his prowess in two intertribal wars, and a successful farmer, with three wives and two titles. On account of his early fame and respect, Okonkwo was given the responsibility of a young, ill-fated boy calledIkemefunawho was sacrificed to the village of Umuofia, lives Unoka the musician and his ambitious son Okonkwo. Unoka is a dreamer who is respectful yet cowardly and he dies in debt. His son Okonkwo is already very successful and is counted amongst the clans most respected men. While Unoka is fun-loving and simpleminded, Okonkwo is sharp and impatient. And on account of his position, Okonkwo is given the responsibility of the boy Ikemefuna Jump to ratings and reviewsA simple story of a "strong man" whose life is dominated by fear and anger, Things Fall Apart is written with remarkable economy and subtle irony. qualities common to men of all times and places. 11199 people are currently reading259829 people want to readWorks, including the novel Things Fall Apart (1958), of Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe describe traditional African life in conflict with colonial rule and westernization. This poet and critic served as professor at Brown University. People best know and most widely read his first book in modern African literature. Christian parents in the Igbo town of Ogidi in southeastern Nigeria reared Achebe, who excelled at school and won a scholarship for undergraduate studies. World religions and traditional African cultures fascinated him, who began stories as a university student. After graduation, he worked for the Nigerian broadcasting service and quickly moved to the metropolis of Lagos. He gained worldwide attention in the late 1950s; his later novels include No Longer at Ease (1960), Arrow of God (1964), A Man of the People (1966), and Anthills of the Savannah (1987). Achebe defended the use of English, a "language of colonizers," in African literature. In 1975, controversy focused on his lecture An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" for its criticism of Joseph Conrad as "a bloody racist." When the region of Biafra broke away from Nigeria in 1967, Achebe, a devoted supporter of independence, served as ambassador for the people of the new nation. The war ravaged the populace, and as starvation and violence took its toll, he appealed to the people of Europe and the Americas for aid. When the Vite in the United in the Uni States for several years in the 1970s, and after a car accident left him partially disabled, he returned to the United States in 1990. Novels of Achebe focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of values during and after the colonial era. His style relied heavily on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk stories, proverbs, and oratory. He also published a number of short stories, children's books, and essay collections. He served as the David and Marianna Fisher university professor of Africana studies at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, United States.ollowing a brief illness, Achebe died. Displaying 1 - 30 of 22,142 reviewsJuly 25, 2018My son and I had a long talk about this novel the other day, after he finished reading it for an English class. Over the course of the study unit, we had been talking about Chinua Achebe's fabulous juxtaposition of different layers of society, both within Okonkwo's tribe, and within the colonialist community. We had been reflecting on aspects of the tribe that we found hard to understand, being foreign and against certain human rights we take for granted, most notably parts of the strict hierarchy and the role of women. And we had been angry together at the inhumane arrogance and violence of the Europeans, who were only in charge based on their technological development level, not on cultural superiority. We had thought about the roles of men and women, and of individuals in their relation to their families and social environment. We had touched on the hypocrisy of religious missions. I had dwelt on the title and its beautiful context, the poem by Yeats, more relevant now than ever: "Turning and turning in the widening gyre The falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed, and everywhere The ceremony of innocence is drowned; The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity. "We had compared Okonkwo to the skilled falcon, and the ruthless Europeans to falconers killing and destroying without reason. And "The best lack all conviction..." - a sad truth in an era of a radicalised political climate. We agreed that the novel was excellent, timeless and universally important. And then came the last paragraph... If a novel can make a 14-year-old genuinely upset, angry, and frustrated to the point of wanting to slap a fictional character, then the author has managed to convey a message, I'd say. He got me engaged as well, and I could feel my nausea towards the Commissioner re-emerge instantly when reading his arrogant final thoughts, after the tragic showdown: "The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was so much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details. He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger. "The discussion between my son and myself focused on how the commissioner managed to marginalise a whole life, which we had breathlessly followed in the preceding pages, to a mere paragraph in a text of his own vain invention, with zero relation to the true circumstances. My son claimed it was one of the best endings he had ever read - for the sudden change of perspective that disrupted the story and made it stand out in sharp contrast. Then we continued talking. Best endings? Which ones could possibly compete? First one up was One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. Its last sentence also puts individual suffering into a wider perspective, in this case a time frame: The end of an unclouded day. Almost a happy one. Just one of the 3,653 days of his sentence, from bell to bell. The extra three were for leap years... Second up was All Quiet on the Western Front, in which the death of the narrator is reported in a last paragraph that indicates that the main character's life is of so little importance that newspapers wrote there was "Nothing New on the Western Front". His so-called heroic death drowned in the meaningless mass dying, his suffering was completely without purpose in the bigger machinations of politics on national level. And yet, he had been so incredibly alive and opinionated and experienced, just the day before... Then the last one we could think of (mirroring our shared reading experience), was the horrible case of a last sentence showing the victim's complete identification with the tyrant, the falcon loving the falconer, Orwell's closing line in 1984: "He loved Big Brother. "The brutality of the comparison made my son say:"At least Okonkwo made his final choice on his own."As sad as it is, we felt grateful for that. But what a brave new world, that has such people in it!Must-read. Must-talk-about!1001-books-to-read-before-you-die favorites so-good-it-hurts January 23, 2014The drums were still beating, persistent and unchanging. Their sound was no longer a separate thing from the living village. It was like the pulsation of its heart. It throbbed in the air, in the sunshine, and even in the trees, and filled the village with excitement. - Chinua Achebe, Things Fall ApartThis is a book of many contrasts; colonialism and traditional culture, animism and Christianity, the masculine and the feminine, and the ignorant and the aware (although who is one of the most intriguing characters in African fiction. He epitomizes so much I dislike; hes abusive, misogynist, has very little patience or tolerance for the weak, and is perhaps hes even over-ambitious. Despite all his faults, its impossible not to pity him a little because, after all, the life of his ancestors, is being taken from him quite cruelly by the British settlers. This book really takes the reader into the Igbo culture. Achebe shows the traditional culture very well, a culture which is rife with superstition but rich in context. I loved the inclusion of the African proverbs and folk tales, and the details of the Igbo clan system. Achebe also shows how tightknit precolonial African culture was and how, despite not having the so-called civilized institutions, things went pretty smoothly because of the community spirit and also the societal rules. The importance of ancestors in society is a part of this: The land of the living was not far removed from the domain of the ancestors. There was coming and going between them. Achebe managed to inject some humour into such bleak subject matter, although I think this feat is quite common among African writers: You grew your ears for decoration, not for hearing. What I found difficult to come to terms with, as an African Christian myself, is the horrific way Christianity was introduced to the African continent. However, despite the lack of respect the colonialists showed to the people, its hard to deny that there were some aspects of African tradition that were outdated and people had the option of leaving such tradition behind, especially if it was harmful. For example, in this book the outcasts and the parents of twin babies (who had to kill their babies to prevent evil from entering the village) obviously found it easier to abandon tradition. I think this book was the first one that made me realize the terrible impact of colonialism. Ive always been curious about how Chinese women with bound feet must have felt after that fashion was seen as barbaric and unfashionable, and in the same vein Ive also wondered about how those in African cultures who had lots of power and were accorded lots of respect might have felt when new values undermined everything they had worked towards. This book reminds me a lot of Ngugi wa Thiongos The River Between which focuses on similar subject matter, albeit on the other side of the continent (Kenya). I would highly recommend both of them. Adina (notifications back, log out, clear cache) October 14, 2024I read this novel in an almost constant state of rage. First of all, I disliked the main character for his behavior. In our modern society his husband and parenting skills would be considered appalling. I know, I know, the guy was a member of a Nigerian tribe some time ago but the abuse of women and the rage scale went through the roof. The novel is the story of Okonkwo and his tribe before and after the white people appeared. Okonkwo is a physically strong man in the village, he has many titles, land and authority. He losses no opportunity to show he is a real man, feelings and love are only weaknesses for him. He is domineering, sometimes beats his wives and is constantly tormenting his sons, pushing them to be men like him. An unlucky event puts his ambitions to become the most important person in the village on hold but the "falling apart" comes with the new religion and to remove the menace. Here, knowing what came next, I was on his side. A major part of the short novel can be read as a collection of African customs, traditions and stories. Most of the time there was no clear plot and I was fine with it. The dramatic events, the clash between the two cultures take place almost at the end but that aspect does not diminish the power of the book. I understand why the novel is a classic, Chinua Achebe being one of the first writers to show the the brutal colonialism of the Western world and its disguise as religious liberation.1001 classics nigeria April 1, 2022[Edited 4/1/22]Wiki calls the book the most widely read book in modern African literature. Written in 1958, this is the classic African novel about how colonialism impacted and undermined traditional African culture. Its set among the Igbo people of Nigeria (aka Ibos). A key phrase is found late in the book: He [the white man] has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. The main character is a strong man, the village wrestling champion. He has three wives and many children, although the wealthiest man in the village has nine wives, thirty children and three barns. The main character is not above beating his wives when the spirit moves him. He seems ruled by anger and fear. Theres not a lot of plot. We watch as the main character struggles at first to become established. There are some bad crop years but all in all, things go reasonably well. Then he accidentally kills a fellow tribesman and suffers the punishment imposed by the village elders of being banished from the village and everything has changed. The British have brought greater prosperity, a school and a clinic but at a tremendous cost, mainly by imposing their laws and legal system above the traditional rule by villagers are leaving the old gods and converting to the new religion, including one of the main characters sons councils, a priestess, crop cultivation, food preparation, and all the elaborate rituals around bride price negotiations, weddings, funerals and the traditional gods. I liked many of the idioms and proverbs scattered throughout the text: There must be a reason for it. A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing. An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb. Eneke the bird says that since men have learned how to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching. As a man danced, so the drums were beaten for him. The author (1930-2013) was raised as a Christian, went to college in Nigeria, became a journalist, and started writing. With his fame he eventually moved to the US as a professor at Brown University. He turned the book into a trilogy, adding No Longer at Ease in 1960 and then Arrow of God in 1964. The author is also known for a famous academic paper attacking Joseph Conrad as a thoroughgoing racist." A good read and classic. Top: old photo of the (also Igbos) from diaryofanegress.comModern-day family Igbo family from hometown.ng Photo of the author in 2008 from Wikipedia.africa african-authors anthropology March 27, 2017Achebes protagonist isnt a very nice man. In reality he is an asshole. I dont like him. I dont think anyone really does. He is ruthless and unsympathetic to his fellow man. He grew up in a warriors culture; the only way to be successful was to be completely uncompromising and remorseless. His father was weak and worthless, according to him, so he approached life with his overbearing masculinity. When Unoka died he had taken no title at all and he was heavy in debt. Any wonder then that his son Okonkwo was ashamed of him? Fortunately, among these people a man as judged according to his worth and not according to the white man. For all their supposed superiority, they cannot get this simple thing right. The African tribe here has a better system of promotion based on merit. The warrior Okonkwo has a chance to prove himself regardless of what occurs in the more civilisation. These men are not represented in an unjust way. He is directly responding to the ignorant trend in Victorian literature that represented the colonised as unintelligible and voiceless: they were shown to be savage. Achebe gives us the reality. This quote says it all: If you don't like my story, write your own. And thats exactly what he did himself. He holds no judgement. His protagonist is completely flawed. Okonkwo is without mercy; he has earnt his fame and respect, so when an untitled youngster speaks out he is immediately roused to anger. This is his hamartia, his tragic flaw, he must overcome this and treat his fellow tribesmen with a degree of dignity. But, he is a slow learner. And who can blame him? For all his brutality and misogyny, this is till his culture. This is all he has ever known, whether its right or wrong doesnt matter. Granted, not all the men are as extreme as him. He uses his position to extract violence more than most. His wives are often the focal point for his rage, much to their misfortune. He sounds like a bad man; hes certainly not a nice man, but thats not the point. Achebes meaning, and the power of this story is revealed at the end. I found this very unusual, but it was also very effective. The point of this novel is to show how uncompromising the white man is. Thats an obvious point, though what I mean to say is that its full effect is revealed at the end. The Nigerian culture, the way of life for the tribe folk in this novel, is forced to change because if it doesnt it will be destroyed in its entirety. The protagonist represents this; he has to deal with the crisis. He had a choice: he could either accept the white mans way, and be changed forever, or he could stick to his own customs and, ultimately, fall. -Language is the key: Among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten. Africa does not possess a silent culture. Conrads Heart of Darkness was wrong. African language is formal, developed and intelligent. Here in Nigeria is the conduit for the Igbo culture. It is rich in oral tradition. Achebe recognises that to accept a new language is to shun the original culture. Achebe shows that Igbo tradition is dependent on storytelling and language, to accept English would destroy the Igbo traditions. It would alienate the Africans form their culture; thus, resistance, however futile, is the natural and just response. Okonkwos reactions are deeply symbolic of a culture that is about to collapse. I think what Achebe is trying to portray here is the quietness of the African voice. It had no say. It doesnt matter if the colonisers were kind or brutal; it doesnt matter what the Nigerian culture was like in terms of ethics. What matters is that it was taken away or shaped into something else entirely. This was not progress but assimilation. All culture has its flaws, thats true for any society, but the white one, for all its self-aggrandisement, was nothing but imposing. And for Achebe this is the ruination of the voice he was trying to channel. The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.4-star-reads contemporary-lit postcolonialDecember 12, 2019In this region of nine villages. At age 18 he beat the reigning wrestling champion and has been an industrious worker all his life, a reaction to his lazy, drunkard father. He lives his life within the cultural confines of his surroundings, acting on both, even when those actions would seem, to us in the modern west, an abomination. While he may succeed and fail within the confines of his societys laws, what he is unable to do is adapt himself to the world when it goes through a dramatic transformation. In this case, his home town is revolutionized when white missionaries set up a base and bring along with them the firepower of western weapons. Unable to cope, unable to channel his justifiable rage into constructive actions, he is led inexorably to his doom. Chinua Achebe - from the Salon article noted belowWhat is this book about? It is a simple tale. The details of Okonkwos experiences accumulate to give us a picture of his times, his culture, so we have a sense of what is at stake when change arrives. Is this a warning to us of our own inability to see beyond the confines of our culture? How will we cope with change when it comes, in whatever form? I found it difficult keeping track of the characters. This is a case in which a diagram of a family tree would probably come in handy. Yet, ultimately, this is not so important. What matters is that we get a sense of Okonkowos world. And the impact of the West arriving in an book as well. Have at it.In 2013, Salon republished a wonderful 2010 essay, Chinua Achebe: The man who rediscovered Africa, on news of his passing. February 15, 2023LE COSE CAMBIANO, CROLLANO impossibile circoscrivere il ruolo di Achebe nella letteratura africana. come cercare di definire in che modo Shakespeare ha influenzato gli scrittori inglesi o Pukin quelli russi.Il crollo, o anche Le cose crollano, (1958) il primo romanzo di una trilogia che include Non pi tranquilli del 1960 e il celebre La freccia di dio apparso quattro anni dopo (1964). Questo primo ha venduto oltre dieci milioni di copie, stato tradotto in 50 lingue, ed libro di testo in molte scuole del continente nero. Effetti delle locuste. Tre romanzi fondamentali per raccontare lincontro delluomo bianco con luomo nero: pi nello specifico, quello dei bianchi colonizzatori inglesi con la comunit Igbo, il popolo di Achebe. La stessa gente che abbiamo visto nelle foto e i reportage sul Biafra (1966), forse le prime immagini di bambini denutriti con gli occhi sbarrati e la pancia gonfia giunte in Occidente.Qui, il fiero Okonkwo rifiuta fino alla morte di scendere a patti con linvasore, luomo bianco. E la sua storia ambientata allinizio del secolo in cui si svolse la breve epopea del Biafra, e quindi, nel primo Novecento.La conquista della terra, che sostanzialmente consiste nello strapparla a quelli che hanno la pelle diversa dalla nostra o il naso leggermente pi schiacciato, non una cosa tanto bella da vedere, quando la si guarda troppo da vicino.Parole di Marlow in Cuore di tenebra di Joseph Conrad.Achebe non mette in scena il buon selvaggio che incontra il vile invasore. Il suo Okonkwo un vero selvaggio, governato da regole e leggi lontanissime da quelle dei bianchi, ma anche da quelle che i bianchi possono solo concepire. Eppure, anche i bianchi nel passato sono stati legati al ciclo della terra e delle stagioniMa Achebe non divide il suo universo in buoni neri e cattivi bianchi: Okonkwo violento con le sue mogli, ama i suoi figli ma non si sottrae al sacrificio rituale del figlio adottivo Ikemefuna, impaziente, giudica lindolenza maschile un aspetto di personalit femminile, non va daccordo col suo clan, un guerriero bellicoso, vince ogni gara di lotta, beve il vino di palma dal teschio della sua prima vittima luomo nero non avrebbe potuto restare cos primitivo in eternoLinvasore bianco non si presenta con le armi, ma ben pi subdolamente chiedendo un po di terreno per costruire la sua chiesa: dalla chiesa dei bianchi che parte la conquista (colonizzazione).L'uomo bianco molto astuto. venuto adagio e in pace con la sua religione. Noi ridevamo della sua follia e gli abbiamo permesso di restare. Adesso ha conquistato i nostri fratelli e il nostro clan non pu pi essere quello di prima. Ha messo un coltello tra le cose che ci tenevano uniti e noi siamo crollati gi.Achebe adotta la lingua dellinvasore, linglese: ma alla sua dorigine lascia ampio spazio introducendo termini, proverbi, metafore, tanto da necessitare un glossario finale.La colpa delluomo bianco nota, ma mai abbastanza sottolineata e riconosciuta: aver deciso che la sua cultura superiore alle altre. Quella delluomo nero di essersi piegato a una nuova religione e avere accolto nuove regole che non gli appartenevano. Di essere lasciato dominare dalle locuste, i bianchi. E forsanche, dessersi fidato troppo della sua magia. Sulla copertina delledizione pi recente. June 6, 2016 The act of writing is strangely powerful, almost magical: to take ideas and put them into a lasting, physical form that can persist outside of the mind. For a culture without a written tradition, a libraries are not great structures of stone full of objects--instead, stories are curated within flesh, locked up in a cage of bone. To know the story, you must go to the storyteller. In order for that story to persist through time, it must be retold and rememorized by successive generations. A book, scroll, or tablet, on the other hand, can be rediscovered thousands of years later, after all those who were familiar with the story are long dead--and miraculously, the stories within it can be delivered to modern man in the very same words the ancients used. If, in Qumran cave, we had found the dry bones of the scribe who copied the dead sea scrolls instead of the scrolls themselves, we would have no access to any of his knowledge. Any library can be destroyed, whether the tales are stored in the mind of a bard or on the skins of animals, but unwritten history is much more fragile--after all, speech is nothing more than wind, which cannot be dug up from the earth a century later. All lands have their own histories, but sadly, we only get to hear a scant few in their own words. We know that Africa had empires as complex and powerful as those of Europe-beyond the well-known examples of Egypt and Carthage, the Romans give us secondary evidence of the great Central African empires from which they got their salt and gold, alongside many subsequent references--but in the end, these amount to little more than myths and legends. Carthage itself was so thoroughly destroyed that Rome basically erased their true history, replacing it with Roman propaganda and rumor-mongering, until in The Aeneid, Carthage becomes nothing more than Romes jealous, jilted lover--instead of what she truly was: the template of naval dominance and mercantile power that Rome copied and built her empire upon. The African continent is just as full of ruins and archaeological treasures as Europe or Asia, but due to rampant social and economic instability caused by multinationals squabbling over resources and profits in the power vacuum left in the wake of post-colonialism, its not currently safe or supportable to research these sites and rediscover the cultures they represent. Hopefully someday, we will be able to uncover this wealth of knowledge, but until then, we can only imagine all that we have missed: the great loves and wars of Africa, the dark-skinned Caesars and Helens, the Subotais and Musashis of the savanna. But not all is lost to us. We still have pieces of the puzzle: the fact that fractal math, on which we base our computer languages, comes from North African divination (which is why Fibonacci had to go there to learn it), or the fact that most of the Greek and Roman texts upon which the Western literary tradition is based were passed down to us not from Christian monks, but Islamic scholars (this is why Averroes appears in Raphael's School of Athens, and why he and Avicenna appear alongside Plato and Aristotle in the works of Dante). The glory of Benin City, the wealth of Mansa Musa--all these await the student of African histories. Plus, there are still storytellers in Africa--the lineages through which their histories have been too-long obscured. Knowing all of this, I thirsted for depth and complexity from Achebe--to get a view into one of the innumerable cultures of Africa. The power of a story from a different culture is in defamiliarization. Though all cultures of Africa. The power of a story from a different culture is in defamiliarization. opening. So, they are capable of showing us familiar things, but making them feel new, making us look at them in a fresh way.Yet, that's not what I got from this book--indeed, everything in it felt immediately recognizable and familiar, not merely in the sense of 'universal human experience', but in almost every detail of expression and structure. I have read modern stories by fellow American authors which were stranger and produced more culture shock, more defamiliarization than this--but perhaps that was for an African author to publish a novel at all--that no one assumed an African would want to write their own story, and the manuscript was almost lost because the typing agency just didn't take it seriously. Back then, the very notion that Africa might have a history outside of Egypt was controversial-even though it seems simple and obvious to us now that of course every people in every nation has their own history, and the desire for their unique voices to be heard.So, perhaps it would have been impossible to write a more complex book, that it just wouldn't have been received--Achebe was among the first generation of his people to be college educated, in a branch of a London University opened in Nigeria taught by White, English teachers. More than that, he may have been trying to show that his own culture was just like the culture of his teachers--to stress the similarities instead of the differences. So then, it makes sense that Achebe is not writing a primer of his culture, but is rather reflecting European culture back at itself, from the mouth of an Igbo man (a brave and revolutionary act!). After all, he was the consummate Western man of letters, by his education, and everything about his book's form reflects that. It is written, not oral, it is in English, it aligns neatly to the Greek tragic structure and the form of the novel--and even the title is taken from one of the most famous poems in the English language. Achebe is hardly being coy with his inspirations here--he wants us to know that he is adopting Western forms, he wants us to recognize them, to mark them. He is aware that this is a post-colonial work, a work from a culture that has already been colonization. This is not a voice from the center of the storm. The central theme is the onset of colonization, the conflict between the tribe and the European forces just beginning to encroach upon them. Like his most notable lecture, this book is a deliberate response to writers like Conrad, Kipling, and Haggard. I'm not trying to suggest that it's a problem that Achebe is writing in the Western style, or that he's somehow 'too Western'--because it's any author's prerogative if they want to study and explore Western themes. Indeed, as Said observed, it's vital that writers write the female experience' --because that's observed, it's vital that writers write the Asian experience'. just racial determinism: due to the culture you're born in, you can only every write one thing (unless you're a White man, and then you can write whatever you like). Indeed, one cannot confront colonialism without understanding it, adopting its forms, and turning them against the power structure. Achebe himself recognized that an oppressed individual has to use every tool to his advantage to fight back-even those tools brought in by the oppressors, such as the English language, which Achebe realized would allow him to communicate with colonized peoples from countries around the world. Authors from all sorts of national and cultural background have taken on the Western style in this every tool to way, and proven that they can write just as ably as any Westerner. Unfortunately, that's not the case with this book. As a traditionally Western tale, there just isn't a lot to it. It is a tale of personal disintegration representing the loss of culture, and of purpose. It is an existential mode seen in Arthur Miller, Joseph Heller, and J.D. Salinger--but by trying to make the story more universal, Achebe has watered it down too much, so that it lacks depth, sympathetic, nor wholly vile. There is no culture or point of view which is either elevated or vilified. Achebe is extremely fair, presenting the story more universal, and possibility. flaws of all men, and of the organizations under which they live, be they Western or African in origin. Like Heller or Miller, his representation of mankind is almost unfailingly negative. Small moments of beauty, joy, or innocence are always mitigated. They exist only in the inflated egos of the characters, or the moralizing ideals of the culture. Unlike Miller, he does not give us the chance to sympathize. There are not those quiet moments of introspection that make Death of a Salesman so personally tragic. Unlike Heller, Achebe does not contrast the overwhelming weight of loss with sardonic and wry humor. This is not the hyperbole of Belinda's lock, nor the mad passion of Hamlet. Achebe's characters are not able to find their own meaning in hopelessness--nor do they even struggle to find it and fail, they cannot even laugh at themselves. They persist only despondence and delusion. The constant reminder of this disappointment makes the book difficult to connect with. Since all the hope we are given is almost immediately false, there is little dynamic possibility. Everything is already lost, we only wait on the characters to realize it. It is difficult to court the reader's sympathy when there is nothing left to be hopeful for. With no counterpoint to despondence--not even a false one--it is hard to create narrative depth, to reveal, or to surprise. Trying to write a climax through such a pervasive depression is like trying to raise a mountain in a valley. No matter how hard they try, there is no visible path to success. Nothing is certain, and the odds against are often overwhelming. Achebe felt this doubly, as an author and a colonized citizen. He succeeds in presenting hopelessness, sometimes reaching Sysiphean Absurdism, but with too few grains to weigh in the scale against it, his tale presents only a part of the human experience. Though we may know that others suffer, this is not the same as comprehending their suffering. The mother who says 'eat your peas, kids are starving hopelessness. in Africa' succeeds more through misdirection than by revealing the inequalities of politics and the human state. Achebe presents suffering to us, but it is not sympathetic; we see it, but are not invited to feel it. His world loses depth and dimension, becomes scattered, and while this does show us the way that things may fall apart, particularly all things human, this work is more an exercise in nihilism than a representation of the human experience. So, it ends up being one of those books that it more notable for its place in the canon than its quality. It was certainly a brave and revolutionary act for Achebe to write it, and to persist with it, but the book itself is less impressive than the gesture that produced it. For me, it becomes prototypical of a whole movement of books by people of non-Western descent who get praised and published precisely because they parrot back Western values at us and avoid confronting us with actual cultural differences, while at the same time using a thin patina of 'foreignness' to feel suitably exotic, so that the average Western reader can feel more worldly for having read them. It's flat works like The Kite Runner or House Made of Dawn which are just exotic enough to titillate without actually requiring that the reader learn anything about the culture in order to appreciate it-because of course every guilt-ridden Liberal Westerner wants to read about other cultures, but as Stewart Lee put it: "... not like that, Stew, not where you have to know anything ..."In the most extreme cases you get something like The Education of Little Tree, where a racist KKK member pretends to be a Native American and writes a book so saccharine, so apologetic and appeasing of White guilt that it can't help but become a best-seller-because it turns out that no one is better at predicting what comforting things Middle America wants to hear about race than a member of the KKK. Of course, I'm not suggesting that Achebe is anywhere near that-just that it makes obvious the problem with judging a book by its historical place rather than the actual words on the page. Indeed, it's downright insulting to the author and the culture. It's the same response people would have to hearing that a dog wrote a book; 'Wow! I've got to read that!"--which has nothing to do with the quality of the book, and everything to do with the fact that we have very low expectations of dogs. To treat a person the same way because they are from another culture is pure condescension. Just because someone is born into a culture, that does not make them representative of that culture-authenticity is not an in-born trait, which is the problem of the illusion of the 'pure voice', because there is no pure cultural voice, and to imagine there is is to reduce that culture to a stereotype. A woman can be a misogynist, an African American can hate his own people. To suggest that somehow, a person's views and perspective are in-born and unchangeable is simply racism--and it doesn't matter if the trait you are assigning to that race is positive or negative, it's still a limitation you're putting on that person. Non-Westerners are just as capable of creating great works of art as Westerners--but they are also just as capable of writing cliche tripe. Like any other human being, they run the gamut from staid to imaginative. As such, there's no reason to grade non-Western authors on some kind of sliding scale, to expect less from them, or to be any less disappointed when their works fall short. Of course, we shouldn't judge their work by Western standards, either--to blame a Japanese fairytale for not being Hamlet--unless like Achebe they are writing in a recognizable Western style and deliberately drawing that comparison. While there's certainly something to be said for 'getting your foot in the said for 'getting's and the said for 'g door', that isn't a defense of the book itself--of its plot, characters, or themes. It's also too much to place Africa on Achebe's shoulders--to pretend as if there aren't thousands of unique cultures, histories, and traditions there--and yet that is what we do. We make Achebe into a point of entry to a whole continent, which is a massive burden to place on anyone. Much better to look at the book itself-its words and images--than to try to make it into something that it is not. A book that lasts can't just be its place and time, it needs to have a deeper vein that successive generations can return to over and over, and I didn't find that here. Indeed, I find it ironic that Achebe has so attacked Conrad, because deeper vein that successive generations can return to over and over, and I didn't find that here. like Achebes work, Heart of Darkness is remarkable because it does take a stand against colonialism and racism. It is admittedly an early stand, and an incomplete presentation, just like Achebes. It works only because it is situated in that certain way, transgressive but not too transgressive to alienate its audience--not guite able to escape being a product of its time, but still managing to point the way to the future.But Conrad is not merely revolutionary by his stance, he has also written a fascinating and fraught book, complex and many-layered, which succeeds despite its shortfalls. Things Fall Apart, in contrast, is a book that only works because of its positioning, and has little further depth to recommend it. I cannot say that the book was not effective, in its place and time--because it certainly was--or that it hasn't been inspirational, but in the end, Achebe's revolutionary gesture far outshines the meager story beneath it.africa contemporary-fiction novel June 22, 2019How to attempt a balanced review of Things Fall Apart: 1. The book is serious. Themes and issues dealt in the book are far more serious than many other books written by the contemporary authors of Achebe. 2. The colonised the land and properties but also the minds and hearts of the native people. 3. Racism has been dealt very aptly and also religious hypocrisy - different churches for the people who have converted. 4. The plot might seem relaxed and lazy (almost) if you ignore the themes and issues. However, the plot is more than enough to keep the 'readers' engaged. DO I recommend the book - yes, of course! April 1, 2024Okonkwo achieved success at an early age . 18, the wrestling champ of his tribe the Ibo in colonial Nigeria, fame did not bring riches the hard work on his farm accomplished that . His lazy flute playing father Unoka embarrasses him, neglects his wives and children (the son Okonkwo determines never to be poor) dying with a vast amount of debts . He prospers on the other hand and becomes an important man. ( in spite of his many obvious deficits and failings) but... still in the village marries three women, having numerous children, however times are slowly vanishing like a poot of smoke on a windy day. Still many resist, trouble brews as it a pot or not corree, rea by a pot of smoke on a windy day. Still many resist, the old gods and customs are slowly vanishing like a poot of smoke on a windy day. Okonkwo...why can't things stay the same? The fierce warrior has killed many in the tribal wars, they have to be respected and their rivals can be punished severely, the pride of the Ibo must and will be maintained. A quite unfortunate occurrence, an accident causes the unbeaten rambunctious thoroughly unafraid former brave wrestling yet knowns his limitations, the fierce not anymore champ to flee his native village exiled for seven years to his mother's home, the disaster humiliated his whole family , he has to begin again with his children and wives. Years pass not very fast yet finally back goes Okonkwo , nevertheless the clock doesn't stand still, the atmosphere flows with a strange current... However the missionaries build a church on an evil spot in the village where the spirits of the cursed thrive, an infestation is known to the frightened people even so the Christians aren't. Converts begin to flock to the building in Umuofia, a Mr. Brown the head missionary a white man a gentle soul gets many new members even Nwoye, Okonkwo's troubled son, a weak person with little ambition this shames the great man. If only he thinks his favorite child the dynamic, always faithful and beautiful daughter, clever Ezinma was male everything would be different nature is not fair, she is such a facsimile. Strife is about to commence and death as inevitable as rain follows, but what will the British soldiers do their harsh rule is well known and the survivors will learn for a while at least. The most popular book in modern Africa selling over twenty million copies and I see the reasons, it tells the story of the continent's warts and all, the good the bad, the history. This is better than a history book for the facts are dry but the human experiences are not, blood is messy...October 29, 2014Y'know when you read a novel that is just so stark and bare and depraved that you know it's going to stay with you for a very long time? Yep, it's happened guys. It's happened. This novel ruined me. Ugh it's so great and so horrible. It's what Yeats would describe as a "terrible beauty". Read it, let it wreck you, and bathe in its importance. 20th-century read-in-2014 June 28, 2014 !! !! . (). 1958. . (). 0-favorites 7-reread fiction-africaMay 8, 2022 (Book 472 from 1001 books) - Things Fall Apart is a novel written by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. Published in 1958. Its story chronicles the pre-colonial life in Nigeria and the arrival of the Europeans during the late nineteenth century. It is seen as the archetypal modern Africa novel in English, one of the first to receive global critical acclaim. It is a staple book in schools throughout Africa and is widely read and studied in English-speaking countries around the world. The title of the novel was borrowed from W. B. Yeats' 1919 poem "The Second Coming". :: (): 2012: :: 1368 232 - - 20: :: 1377 240 1388 9789643767419: :: 1391 224 9786009092024: :: 1380 231 9646115012: :: 1390 208 9789642435906 (1930 2013) 1958 20/04/1399 17/02/1401. June 26, 2020In a word, I disliked this book. But before my criticisms I should start with some positives. Achebe is a solid writer. As a result, Things Fall Apart is never painful to readat least in terms of prose. And it must be said that there are occasional moments in this book that are exciting, engaging, and stay with you. Yet if Achebe is good at vignettes, he is a weak storyteller. This book hardly has a plot. Things happen, then more things happen, and then it ends. It is a series of episodes whose sum is less than the individual parts. There is no conflict, goal, or struggle that unifies this string of events. Now, some authors do this intentionally, and plotless novels can be wonderful; but I got the impression that this was the result of a lack of technique or vision, rather than an artistic choice. The plot is haphazard. Except for Okonkwo, the protagonist, the cast is ever-revolving. Every time Achebe wants something to happen all at once with no warning and with short-lived consequences. The result is not compelling: merely a deflationary string of anticlimaxes. The ending of the book is exemplary in this respect. No buildup, no warning, no pathos, just an out-of-the-blue event which seems contrived as a way to end the book. A bit of well-placed foreshadowing could have substantially improved Things Fall Apart. That would have unified the story and allowed Achebe to build expectations. Instead, since the story is so chaotic, the audience has no expectations at all. And it is impossible to be surprised without expectations. Okonkwoan example of toxic masculinity if there ever was oneas the storys hero. There is nothing likable about him. He is not a tragic hero, because a tragic he saves this one is its brevity. Even so, apart from whatever aesthetic merits or demerits one can findlargely a matter of taste and judgment think that the message of the book was extremely muddled. At the very least, the moral seems rather different than how it is normally portraved. Specifically, if Achebe was trying to show the evils of colonialism. I think that he did an awful job. Again, the protagonist, Okonkwo, is a dreadful, disturbed, and depressing picture of the culture. What things are supposed to be falling apart? The general impression one gets of the precolonial villages is of an unpredictable chaos; when the colonialists arrive there is just chaos of a different sort. More then that, Achebe seems to be fascinated by the violent side of the large majority of the first half bringing this home to the reader. In particular, there is an event near the beginning which seems deliberately aimed at making the reader disgusted at Okonkwo and the people of his villages. The episode plays no other role in the plot. Meanwhile, both of the white missionaries are depicted as violent, incompetent, and confused. And since Okonkwo is against the Christians, I was inclined to root for them, as I wanted nothing more than for him to lose. As an anti-colonial work, then, I found this book to be ludicrously ineffective. To sum up, this book is a quick and relatively painless read. There are some undeveloped germs of good ideas. But on the whole, it is poorly executed and poorly conceived.africana colonial novels-novellas-shortstoriesMay 15, 2019I 'finally' read this book - the 50th Anniversary Edition- THANK YOU for the book Loretta!!! I'm sorry it took me so long to read it!!!Interesting timing for me, too, having just read "NW" by Zadie Smith, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie- and a couple of James Baldwin books recently---plus, yesterday was Martin Luther King's day. African identity, nationalism, decolonization, racism, sexism, competing cultural systems, languages -and dialogue, social political issues have been in my space!! I didn't know what to expect...."may be African fiction" ----by Kwame Anthony Appiah. After I read this book -- joining thousands and thousands of others around the world feeling disturbed & conflicted when I read lines like this: "I will not have a son who cannot hold up his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hands. And if you stand staring at me like that, he swore, Amadiora will break your head for you". ..... I wanted to 'also' read more about Kwame Anthony Appiah.... Who taught philosophy and African American studies at Yale and Harvard. He helped give me a broader understanding of this book. He studied ethics around the world. Things he had to say about "kindness to strangers", made sense to me. It is not for 'us' to save the poor and starving, but up to their own governments. Nation-states must assume responsibility for their citizens. In "Things Fall Apart", western civilization. With so much sadness and tragedy in his culture, growing up as he did in ... China Achebe (who wrote in English), was amazing!!!! He continues to have influence on other African novelists today..... inspiring writers around the world. Readers too!Never too late to read "Things Fall Apart"July 18, 20204,5/5Buf, me ha encantado este libro. Ha sido una autotica sorpresa porque no esperaba que fuera a gustarme tanto, pero Que bien escribe Achebe! Esta es la historia de Okonkwo y cmo su sociedad se desmorona tras la colonizacin del hombre blanco. Okonkwo es un personaje realmente odioso en muchos aspectos, representa la parte ms extrema de su sociedad, el guerrero perfecto que cumple todas las normas a rajatabla y desprecia todo lo que no encaja con su estandar de lo que debe ser un hombre. Cmo el autor logra que termines empatizando con Okonkwo y sintiendo verdadera pena y lstima por todo lo que es la cada de una civilizacin. El libro est plagado de costumbres, refranes, leves, detalles de una sociedad que en pocos aos cambi drsticamente y fue desterrada. Un libro que ha ido creciendo en mi segn iba avanzando la lectura y que me ha impresionado mucho ms de lo que esperaba. Sin duda seguir con la Triloga Africana de Achebe. January 19, 2020El relato tiene un claro carcter documental. Un narrador asptico, aunque con licencia para poetizar, nos detalla la vida tribal en el frica occidental de finales del siglo XIX utilizando como elemento novelizador la vida de Okonkwo, gran guerrero y hombre prominente de la tribu que asiste al desmoronamiento del total y brutal desmoronamiento del mundo en el que vive. Lo primero y lo que ms llama la atencin es la forma cruda en la que la novela rompe con esa visin un tanto paternalista del buen salvaje y s muchas razones para su reprobacin. Fuertemente jeraraquizada, la sociedad que describe Achebe no tiene nada de salvaje y s muchas razones para su reprobacin. Fuertemente jeraraquizada, la sociedad que describe Achebe no tiene nada de salvaje y s muchas razones para su reprobacin. muchas veces eran de dudosa eficacia y con frecuencia claramente censurables. Hasta el ms respetuoso con la diferenciacin cultural no puede sino llevarse las manos a la cabeza ante costumbres como la de sacrificar a los nacimientos gemelares o que ciertos delitos sean compensados con la entrega de familiares, generalmente jvenes, al miembro damnificado de la tribu, y que a veces acababan siendo sacrificados en beneficio de la comunidad de acogida, o el estado de esclavitud en el que vivan las mujeres o el trascendental papel que jugaban sacerdotes, sacerdotisas, hechiceros o adivinadores en la observancia de las estrictas normas de cumplimiento establecidas casi para cada acto por cotidiano que este sea. Tampoco reinaba la fraternidad en las relaciones intertribales, no siendo raras las guerras en las que llevaban a sus casas como trofeos y que llegaban a ser utilizadas como recipientes para sus bebidas. Y aun as, las tribus llevaban siglos manteniendo una armona social solo alterada por algunos pocos individuos incapaces de atenerse a las normas o de prosperar en ellas. Estos miembros marginales fueron los dbiles eslabones de la cadena que misioneros y colonizadores rompieron mediante su evangelizacin iniciando as el desmoronamiento social de sus tribus. Aunque no pueda decir que la novela me haya seducido literariamente hablando, es indudable que es una narracin muy interesante por su contenido. Ms all de todo lo dicho sobre el choque cultural quiero terminar haciendo mencin de esos pequeos y esplndidos cuentos que el autor va intercalando en la historia a modo de fbulas morales que eran transmitidos oralmente de padres a hijos.March 14, 2019 ..... December 6, 2018A real tour de force; but a plain tale simply told. Achebe illustrates and explains rather than judges and provides a moving and very human story of change and disintegration. Set in Nigeria in the nineteenth century it tells the story of Okonkwo and his family and community. He is a man tied to his culture and tradition and fighting to be different to his father. He is strong and proud and unable to show his feelings. His community and traditions. The book also charts the coming of Christian missionaries to the area and the effects they had; especially in attrating those who were outcast and of low status. Okonwko's fate is tragic and is representative of the destruction of his culture. I have been puzzled to read some of the negative reviews that just don't seem to get it; saying it is too alien(??), too simple, badly written and so on. Part of Achebe's genius is that he tells the tale like all good writers; he explains when he has too and creates nuanced characters. The white missionaries are not unthinking or one-dimensional; just convinced they are right. Okonwko is also nuanced; unable to show the feelings he clearly has (especially to his daughter) and so eager to be strong and to lead that he is unable to be compassionate like his peers. Achebe does not judge; he charts the decline of a culture. He is not saying one side is entirely good or bad and there are elements to shock (the treatment of twins) and areas of great strength. The brilliance is in the capturing of a period of change and cataclysm in the Ibo culture; but it is also a simple father/son relationship story. Achebe powerfully shows that like many of the greatest authors, he has the ability to put complex ideas across simply. December 31, 20184 Stars from what I remembered from reading lists. I can understand that as it gives a fictional glimpse into the Westernization of Africa. A topic like this is very heavy, controversial, and important because of this, a tale in this genre is going to have a big impact and will easily make its way to must read status. When I read it in high school, I think I enjoyed it more than now because the style of writing and subject matter were different than the typical high school reading. Also, back then I was much more interested in politics in our current world, while I know stories like this are important, I tend to immediately shy away from being deeply interested in politically controversial stories. That doesn't lessen the quality of writing or the message! When I read it this time, it felt very clinical and not very riveting. I know that some of the story was to lay the background of the people and how they lived, but it had trouble holding my interest. The book is only about 200 pages but it felt like it took forever to read. A couple of times I got done with a chapter feeling like I must have put a huge dent in it for the day, but when I went to update my status, I had only read 10 pages!Interesting side note: I remember the project I had to do for this book in high school was to write my own Clif Notes for the book. It was and enjoyable project, but I dont think I did very good!2017 classic completist-book-club May 10, 20121959. Love it or hate it, Achebe's tale of a flawed tribal patriarch is a powerful and important contribution to twentieth century literature. Think back to 1959. Liberation from colonial masters had not yet swept the African continent when this book appeared, but the pressures were in motion. Communism and capitalism were fighting a pitched battle for control of hearts and minds, for bodies and land, around the world. Africans would suffer under the proxy wars waged there to keep the Cold War cold. Achebe tells the tale of Okonkwo, a young man of some fame throughout the nine villages and beyond, for his wrestling prowess. He is a product of his land, his culture, his religion, and his people. He represents a way of life which admires and rewards strength, loyalty, hard work, a strong hand, and strict adherence to a social code. He builds his life, takes wives, works his land, produces boys and girls to honor and carry on his legacy. When duty to the tribe makes demands, he must respond even if that response requires great personal sacrifice. You can't read this book through the prism of your own experience. Part of the mystery of fiction from cultures far afield from your own is the chance it affords to consider how men and women of a certain time and place grappled with the very human issue of living within an exotic social group. Consider your own social group, and imagine how you would explain your daily and exceptional actions to someone from another religion, from another country, from another century. Where would you start? Perhaps by considering how you spend a normal day, then how you arrived at the great choices that formed your life. That's a helluva task to set yourself. In my humble opinion, that was the

task Achebe set for himself in writing this book. February 17, 2023 The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others. If you don't like my story, write your own. Things Fall Apart, published in 1958, has the reputation of being the first great African novel. Set in the late 1800s, the story revolves around Okonkwo, a prominent farmer and community leader who has worked hard since he was forced to fend for himself at an early age after his deadbeat father died young. But Okonkwo worries that the next generation does not respect tradition. Worse, British Missionaries have arrived, threatening to destroy village life as they know it. There are some timeless themes explored in this novel. And the writing is technically strong, subtle and full of symbolism (yams, anyone?). That said, Things Fall Apart is a tough read in 2019. First, at least half the book is a rather detailed account of daily village life that, candidly, did not interest me very much (so many yams). In this respect, it reminded me of the exhaustive sections on island life in Robinson Crusoe. Far more importantly, the book suffers because Okonkwo is a rather reprehensible character. Because of his fear of being weak like his father, he cultivates a fiery temper. He regularly beats his wives; his family is afraid of him. He can think of no greater insult for a man than to call him a woman. Things Fall Apart is not the type of novel I typical read, as I generally opt for a bit lighter fare. I read it because I'm working my way through the Pop Chart 100 Essential Novels, which is the point: to force myself to read classics, but this book just did not work for me. I understand its the first of a trilogy, but I dont plan to read the rest of the series.2019 from-library pc-100-essential-readFebruary 9, 2017Achebe's classic is a quick and interesting read albeit with a depressingly realistic end. My curiosity will most likely lead me to more of his work and I enjoyed the narrative style. The ambiguities of cultural clash with an obvious misbalance of power and the two different kinda of brutality in the conflict were thought-provoking and painful to read because they were surely even worse in real life.african-lit fiction nigerian-20th-c June 17, 2021Oh boy, where do I start? I read Things Fall Apart (the entire African Trilogy acutally) this year for Black History Month. So quite a bit of time has passed already and I am unhappy to report that the story hasnt really left a lasting impression on me. I have forgotten many plot points and had to consult many secondary sources in order to write this review. I definitely want to reread Things Fall Apart when I am older, I think its one of those books that, to put it into Calvinos words, has never exhausted what it has to say; it is definitely a most important document in the history of African literature, and I think Ill appreciate it even more later in life.Before Things Fall Apart was released, most of the novels about African been written by European authors, portraying Africans as savages who were in need of Western enlightenment. Achebe, who had studied English literature at university, quickly realised that there was a gap in his bookshelf where African literature should have been. Thus far, novels of the caliber of Joseph Conrads Heart of Darkness were the custom when it came to descriptions of Africa in literature and we all know what Achebe thought of Conrad and his notion of Africans as rudimentary souls. So, I think we can all agree with Achebe, that he and all the other African writers of the time were incredibly brave and needed to finally fill that gap. Things Fall Apart was written in 1958 as the colonial system was falling apart in Africa. Its story chronicles pre-colonial life in the south-eastern part of Nigeria and the arrival of the Europeans during the late nineteenth century. It is seen as the archetypal modern African novel in English, one of the first to receive global critical acclaim. It is a staple book in schools throughout Africa and is widely read and studied in English-speaking countries around the world. The novel follows the life of Okonkwo, an Igbo man and local wrestling champion in the fictional Nigerian clan of Umuofia. The work is split into three parts, with the first describing his family, personal history, and the customs and society of the Igbo, and the restore of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on the Igbo community. Does the white man understand our custom about land? How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad; and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. I have to admit that I found it incredibly hard, at first, to keep track of what was happening in the story. I might be at fault here because I definitely didnt read it as attentively as I could have, but the reader has to get through a large portion of info dumbs and various introductions of characters in the first few chapters of this novel. It is very palpable that Achebe wrote Things Fall Apart with a Western audience in mind. He explains to us certain festivities and traditions in a very straightforward way. He introduces us to the Ancestral religion and different gods, he explains how a bride price is decided, how certain pieces of clothing are worn and how certain pieces of clothing are worn are worn and how certain pieces of clothing are worn are w the story and more often than not pulled me out of it. Having read the remainder of The African Trilogy, I can attest that those info dumbs became less and less as the books move along, and thus made a much more enjoyable overall reading experience for me possible, since most things are somewhat understandable through context. Achebe wrote his novels in English because the written standard Igbo language was created by combining various dialects, creating a stilted written form. In a 1994 interview with the English language. There is a problem with the Igbo language. It suffers from a very serious inheritance which it received at the beginning of this century from the Anglican mission. They sent out a missionary by the name of Dennis. He was a scholar. He had this notion that the Igbo languagewhich had very many different dialects. Because the missionaries were powerful, what they wanted to do they did. This became the law. But the standard version cannot sing. It's heavy. It's wooden. It doesn't go anywhere. Achebe's choice to write in English has caused controversy. While both African and non-African critics agree that Achebe modelled Things Fall Apart on classic European literature, they disagree about whether his novel upholds a Western model, or, in fact, subverts or confronts it. Personally, I also remain undecided on this issue. Achebe continued to defend his decision: "English is something you spend your lifetime acquiring, so it would be foolish not to use it. Also, in the logic of colonization and decolonization it is actually a very powerful weapon in the fight to regain what was yours. And I definitely cant fault him for that logic, I actually quite agree with it. Nonetheless, throughout the book it also becomes clear that Achebe tried to adhere to the Western standard, in all probability to be respected as a serious author, and I cant fault him for that either. Turning and turning in the widening gyreThe falconer; Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. He admits himself that the usage of the opening stanza of William Butler Yeatss poem. as an epigraph to Things Fall Apart, was purely done for show. He says: Actually, I wouldnt make too much of that. I was showing off more than anything else. As I told you, I took a general degree, with English as part of it, and you had to show some evidence of that. Apart from that, Things Fall Apart suffer from the unlikeable characters-syndrome. There are simply not many people to root for in this novel. Okonkwo is strong, hard-working, and strives to show no weakness, but he is also obsessed with his masculinity. He sees (and treats) his wives as inferior. As a result, he often beats his wives and children, and is unkind to his neighbours. I was quite prepared for Achebe to show the patriarchal structures of village life, and dont fault him for showing it how it was, nonetheless, that prevented me from showing to much empathy toward Okonkwo. Unfortunately, the female characters truly take the backseat in this novel and I never really got a sense for their personality and therefore didnt root form them either. Achebe doesnt deem them important enough to make the according place for them within this narrative. It seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for a great evil that was comingits own death. One thing I absolutely adored about this book, however, was its ending. I know it might come across as quite gimmicky and in-yo-face but I think that Achebe achieved what he wanted to show in the most straightforward way. At the end, when the local leader of the white government, Gregory Irwin, comes to Okonkwo's house to take him to court, he finds that Okonkwo has hanged himself to avoid being tried in a colonial court. Among his own people, Okonkwo's actions have tarnished his reputation and status, as it is strictly against the teachings of the Igbo to commit suicide. A researcher comments that the story of Okonkwo will make for a good page in his book, or at least a paragraph. This sentence, which concludes the novel, satirizes the entire tradition of Western ethnography and imperialism itself as a cultural project, and it suggests that the professor, and critic. His first novel Things Fall Apart (1958) was considered his magnum opus, and is the most widely read book in modern African literature. Raised by his parents in the Igbo town of Ogidi in South-Eastern Nigeria, Achebe excelled at school and won a scholarship for undergraduate studies. He became fascinated with world religions and traditional African cultures, and began writing stories as a university student. After graduation, he worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) and soon moved to the metropolis of Lagos. He gained worldwide attention for Things Fall Apart in the late 1950s; his later novels include No Longer at Ease (1960), Arrow of God (1964), A Man of the People (1966), and Anthills of the Savannah (1987). Achebe wrote his novels in English, a "language of colonisers", in African literature. In 1975, his lecture An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" featured a famous criticism of Joseph Conrad as "a thoroughgoing racist"; it was later published in The Massachusetts Review amid some controversy. When the region of Biafra broke away from Nigeria in 1967, Achebe became a supporter of Biafra broke away from Nigeria in 1967, Achebe became a supporter of Biafra broke away from the people of the new nation. The war ravaged the populace, and as starvation and violence took its toll, he appealed to the people of Europe and the Americas for aid. When the Nigerian government retook the region in 1970, he involved himself in political parties but soon resigned due to frustration over the corruption and elitism he witnessed. He lived in the United States for several years in the 1970s, and returned to the U.S. in 1990 after a car accident left him partially disabled. A titled Igbo chieftain himself, Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of Western and tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk stories, proverbs, and oratory. He also published a number of short stories, children's books, and essay collections. From 2009 until his death, he served as David and Marianna Fisher University Professor of Africana Studies at Brown. Bio from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Photo by Stuart C. Shapiro [GFDL (, CC-BY-SA-3.0 ( or CC BY 3.0-2.5-2.0-1.0 ( ], via Wikimedia Commons.

What happened in chapter 11 of things fall apart. What happened in things fall apart chapter 1. What happened in chapter 22 of things fall apart. What happened in chapter 3 of things fall apart.