

Chinua Achebe

Biography

Early Life

- Achebe was born in Nigeria, West African
- Named Albert Chinualumogu Achebe in the Igbo village on November 16, 1930
- “stood at a crossroads of traditional culture and Christian influence”
- Storytelling was a common practice of his family and Igbo community
- Participated in traditional village ceremonies

Achebe's Education and Career


- educated in English at the University of Ibadan
- taught for a short time before joining the staff of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Lagos
- Achebe was central to a new Nigerian Literary movement(1950s) that drew on the oral traditions of Nigeria's indigenous tribes
- writes in English but attempts to incorporate Igbo vocabulary and narratives


Things Fall Apart

- *Things Fall Apart*, his first novel was published in 1958
- It has been translated into at least forty-five different languages
- has sold about eight million copies worldwide

Achebe's Education and Career

- left his broadcasting career in radio in 1966, during the national unrest and violence that led to the Biafran War
- narrowly escaped harm at the hands of soldiers who believed that his novel, *A Man of the People*, implicated him in the country's first military coup.

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- 1971-became an editor for Okike, a prestigious Nigerian literary magazine
 - 1984-founded Iwa ndi Ibo, a bilingual publication dedicated to Igbo cultural life
 - 1985- made Emeritus Professor at the University of Nigeria
 - has taught at the University of Massachusetts, the University of Connecticut, and Bard College.
 - has received over **twenty honorary doctorates** from universities around the world.
 - 1987-received Nigeria's highest honor for intellectual achievement, the Nigerian National Merit Award

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- His novel *Anthills of the Savannah* was shortlisted for the Booker McConnell Prize that same year.
 - Achebe was active in Nigerian politics since the 1960s.
 - Before his death at the age of 83, he was married and had four children.

Writer's Main Concern

- Many of his novels deal with the social and political problems facing his country, including the difficulty of the post-colonial legacy.

Common Themes

- Culture and modernism
- Culture and colonialism
- Gender
- Fallibility
- Change
- Loneliness
- Abandonment
- Fear

Chinua Achebe and W.B. Yeats

W. B. Yeats

- Author of “The Second Coming”
- attracted to the spiritual and occult world Yeats fashioned for himself an elaborate mythology to explain human experience
- Written after the catastrophe of World War I and with communism/fascism rising, Yeats depicts a demonic civilization about to be born
- believed civilization changes after 2,000 years
- Christian civilization is about to be replaced by a gloomy one represented by the emerging beast

Chinua Achebe

- Author of *Things Fall Apart*
- Took his title from Yeats’ poem, “The Second Coming”
- Created a sympathetic and complex portrait of Igbo culture-at the crossroads of colonialism and modernism