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**CHINUA ACHEBE BETWEEN THE UNIVERSALITY OF WRITING AND THE
INHERITANCES OF THE COLONIZATION**

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ABSTRACT

The present paper deals with the concept which describe Chinua Achebe between the Universality of Writing and the Inheritances of the Colonization Chinua Achebe analyses the impact British colonial system had on Igbo society in Nigeria. He discusses the culture-religion clashes between the two worlds: the English and the African. Achebe is not one-sided he shows both negative and positive sides of British colonization. When he describes the Igbo society, he uses true facts and his own experience as well to give readers as much real picture about this society as possible. He does not avoid the description of cruel methods and rituals the Igbo people performed and which were significantly limited after the coming of missionaries and their presence in Igbo land. On the other hand, Achebe tries to show that British colonial presence and changes they brought destroyed the original African culture for good the impact British colonizers had on the land was so huge that there will never be just unique African culture again.

Keywords: Universality, Inheritances Locality and Colonization

INTRODUCTION

This paper represents Chinua Achebe between the Universality of Writing and the Inheritances of the Colonization and to provide considerable information about him as one of the international authors in all over the world. He was born in Nigeria in 1930, Chinua Achebe attended the University of Ibadan. In 1958, his groundbreaking novel *Things Fall Apart* was published. It went on to sell more than 12 million copies and been translated into more than 50 languages. Achebe later served as the David and Marianna Fisher University professor and professor of Africana Studies at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. He died on March 21, 2013, at age 82, in Boston, Massachusetts. Famed writer and educator Chinua Achebe was born Albert Chinualumogu Achebe on November 16, 1930, in the Igbo town of Ogidi in eastern Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

As the first African writer to win broad critical acclaim in Europe and America and the most widely read African novelist, Chinua Achebe has shaped the world's understanding of Africa and its literature. Chinua Achebe arose as one of Nigeria's favored sons. Albert Chinualumogu was born in Ogidi, Nigeria, November 16, 1930, and later adopted Chinua Achebe (Ravenscroft, 1986, p. 5). His upbringing was privileged, his father Isaiah one of the early Christians in his Igbo village. A statesman, Kwame Nkrumah, also known as the "pride of Africa," represented the new African political leader and was an early influence upon Chinua Achebe, as Nkrumah's return from London to the Gold Coast (then a British colony) coincided with unrest throughout the colonial British Empire (Burns, 1995, p. 100; Couto, 1995, p. 103). Achebe's coming-of-age was during a time of great social unrest and his interest in fomenting political change rooted in these times. His career aspiration to be a political writer early was rooted in the nationalist state movement that swept Africa. After years of nationalist protest Achebe witnesses Nigeria's "resumption of independence" in 1960, thereafter serving as the first Director of external Broadcasting (Voice of Nigeria) in the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. During the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70), he was a government aide. (Ravenscroft, 1986, p. 5) A decade later he served as Deputy National President of the People Republican Party. Prior to the 1970s Achebe's writing, including *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *No Longer at Ease* (1960), focused upon clashes between traditionalists with African values and emergent leadership. The political writer's concerns, mainly with the quality of leadership in modern Ghana, produced *Anthills on the Savannah* (1988). The work shed light on how the resulting crisis in leadership brought on by ethnic strife, lack of patriotism and a false image deters progress in Nigeria. Beyond exploration of corruption, mediocrity, injustice and a lack of discipline Achebe identifies a "failure of leadership" as the foremost public policy issue in his homeland (Achebe, *Trouble with Nigeria*, 1983, p. 1). While Achebe's politics have been "concerned with universal human communication across racial and cultural boundaries as a means of fostering respect for all people," his role as a social change agent coupled with vibrant political interests led to his imprisonment (Ravenscroft, 1986, p. 6). The *Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.1, no.8, June 2007 In Achebe's earlier literary works—and *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe portrayed the conflict between the traditional Igbo way and modern society. In *Things Fall Apart* a tragic hero, Okonkwo, adapted poorly to societal changes as a result of Europeans' arrival. In Achebe's sequel, *No Longer At Ease*, Obi Okonkwo, the grandson of the tragic hero in *Things Fall Apart* again experienced internal conflict. As a practicing Christian, Obi viewed himself as above adherence to the caste system based upon superstition and remained oblivious of the consequences. Central to the

narratives was social conflict rooted in changing values and societal norms and tragic heroes, unable to respond to social transformation. In both *No Longer At Ease* and *Things Fall Apart* African leaders, who were unable to adapt to new social dynamics and operated outside the realm of what was the culturally acceptable, experienced tragic consequences. The Nigerian Civil War left an indelible mark of the writer, as reflected by a more pronounced interest in political matters. During the War Achebe, an Igbo chief, served in the secessionist government and personally witnessed the death of many kinsmen. In *Anthills on the Savannah* leadership attempted to run a government without agreement of the working people, to the detriment of everyone. While Achebe offered discourse among the stakeholders as a solution to build bridges to unity across ethnic origins tribalism and other social divisions, he refrained from inviting peasants to the table, reflecting his own personal bias--the exclusion of peasants from dialogue perhaps being noted--as an intellectual. Notwithstanding, he offered an inclusive vision pointed toward expanded dialogue for Africa's response to future challenges. Achebe's literary works examined the effect of social change upon leadership in Africa. After becoming educated in English at the University of Ibadan and a subsequent teaching stint, in 1961, Achebe joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation as director of external broadcasting. He would serve in that position until 1966. Prior to joining NBC, in 1958, Achebe published his first novel: *Things Fall Apart*. The groundbreaking novel centers on the cultural clash between native African culture and the traditional white culture of missionaries and the colonial government in place in Nigeria. An unflinching look at the discord, the book was a startling success and has become required reading in many schools across the world. (*Anthills of the Savannah* [1987] took on a similar theme.) In a related endeavor, in 1967, Chinua Achebe and Christopher Okigbo, a renowned poet, co-founded a publishing company, the Citadel Press, which they intended to run as an outlet for a new kind of African-oriented children's books. Okigbo was soon killed, however, in the Nigerian civil war. Two years later, Achebe toured the United States with Gabriel Okara and Cyprian Ekwensi, fellow writers, giving lectures at various universities. The 1960s also marked Achebe's wedding to Christie Chinwe Okoli in 1961, and they went on to have four children. When he returned to Nigeria from the United States, Achebe became a research fellow and later a professor of English (1976–81) at the University of Nigeria. During this time, he also served as director of two Nigerian publishing houses, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. and Nwankwo-Ifejika Ltd. On the writing front, the 1970s proved equally productive, and Achebe published several collections of short stories and a children's book: *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (1973). Also released around this time were the poetry collections *Beware, Soul-Brother* (1971) and *Christmas in Biafra* (1973), and Achebe's first book of essays, *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975). While back in the United States in 1975, at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Achebe gave a lecture called "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," in which he asserted that Joseph Conrad's famous novel dehumanizes Africans. The work referred to Conrad as a "thoroughgoing racist," and, when published in essay form, it went on to become a seminal postcolonial African work. Achebe joined the faculty at the University of Connecticut that same year, returning to the University of Nigeria in 1976. The year 1987 would mark the release of Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, which was shortlisted for the Booker McConnell Prize. The following year, he published *Hopes and Impediments* (1988). The 1990s began with tragedy: Achebe was in a car accident in Nigeria that left him paralyzed from the waist down and would confine him to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Soon after, he moved to the United States and taught at Bard College, just north of New York City, where he remained for 15 years. In 2009, Achebe left Bard to join the faculty of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, serving as professor of Africana Studies as well as the David and Marianna Fisher University professor. Chinua Achebe won several awards over the course of his writing career, including the Man Booker International Prize (2007) and the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize (2010). He also received honorary degrees from more than 30 universities around the world.

CONCLUSION

In many ways Chinua Achebe's early fiction defined modern African literature, and it is not possible to underestimate the importance of his example. More than any other African author writing in English, Achebe has helped the world understand the value of African culture without ignoring the difficult problems that African nations face in the post-colonialist era. Despite its admirable qualities in some important areas of human experience, the world that Achebe presents is one that is closed in upon itself, limited in its capacities and hobbled in certain crucial respects by its vision of the world. We have already remarked upon the way in which Achebe's Western education and Christian background determine a narrative point of view marked by a certain detachment, so that his narrator stands back sufficiently to indicate an external regard upon this world, for it is not seldom that he adopts an angle of vision that lifts a veil upon the grave disabilities by which tribal life is afflicted. For the image that Chinua Achebe presents in his novel is that of a primary society, one whose low level of technicity leaves it with few resources beyond the purely muscular for dealing with the exigencies of the natural world. Because it is confronted with what is nothing less than a precarious material situation, it has perforce to accord primacy to manliness, as a manifestation of being at its most physical, elevated into a norm of personal worth and social value.

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