



[Things Fall Apart](#), by Chinua Achebe

In A Nutshell

Originally written in English and published in 1958, *Things Fall Apart* was one of the first novels by an African author to garner worldwide acclaim. Though mostly fictional, Nigerian author Chinua Achebe claims that the book documents Africa's spiritual history - the civilized and rich life the Igbo lived before the arrival of Europeans and the ruinous social and cultural consequences that the arrival of European missionaries brought. Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart* as a sharp criticism of imperialism, or the European colonization of countries outside of the European continent (especially Africa and the Americas). The novel also critiques Joseph Conrad's famous novel, *Heart of Darkness*, which documented the African natives from an imperialist's (or white colonizer's) point of view. Achebe followed *Things Fall Apart* with two other novels, *No Longer At Ease* and *Arrow of God*, both of which also depict the African experience with Europeans.

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Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 Who was Achebe's intended audience? Who did he write *Things Fall Apart* for? What was he trying to communicate his audience?

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- 2 What does the opening epigraph by Yeats tell us about the novel? What themes does it introduce?
- 3 Is Okonkwo destined for tragedy or did his choices (made of his own free will) lead him to his tragic end?

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