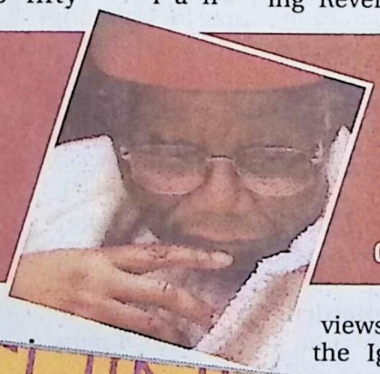
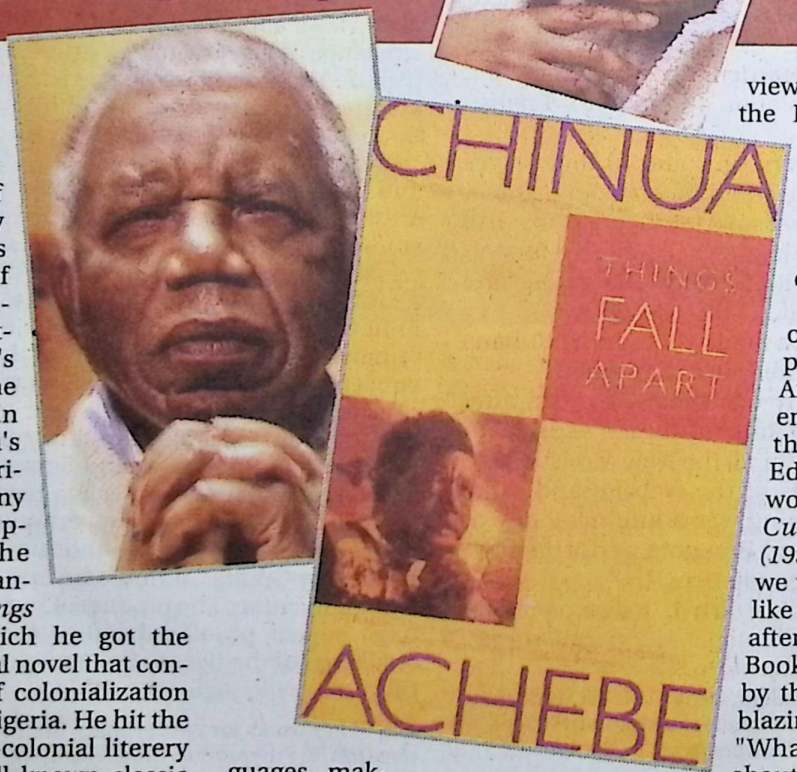
Booker-2007 Winner Nigerian Novelist Chinua Achebe and his magnum opus Things Fall Apart



Compiled by : Rukan Uddin

DODGING writers like Ian McEwan and Salman Rushdie, The Man Booker International Prize of the year 2007 went to the 76-year-old paralyzed Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe for his debut novel and landmark masterpiece *Things Fall Apart (1958)*. The Booker authority declared the name of Chinua Achebe for this prestigious prize on June 12, last week. By giving this internationally celebrated recognition in the field of literature to Achebe, the Man Booker Prize authority has honoured the glowing literary career of Achebe and side by side mitigated his anguish born out of the Swedish Academy's glaring inattention to Achebe's contribution to the world literature in representing Africa's arts, culture and heritage which, for many years, were suppressed under the British colonial blanket. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for which he got the Booker, is a historical novel that considers the effects of colonialization on Igbo society of Nigeria. He hit the world of the Post -colonial literery criticism by his well known classic critical text on Joseph Conrad, *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"*, 1975. Achebe's *Home and Exile(2001)* reiterated his long-standing belief that Africa and Africans were being unfairly marginalized and dismissed by European and Western-oriented intellectuals.



Albert Chinualumogu Achebe was born in Ogidi, , Nigeria in 1930, the son of Protestant converts Isaiah Okafo and Janet N. Iloegbunam Achebe. He attended University of Ibadan Achebe studied English, history and theology.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart,* was published in 1958 and is often considered among the finest novels ever written. Having sold over 10 millions copies around the world, it has been translated into fifty languages, making Achebe the most translated African writer of all time. Set in the midst of the Nigerian renaissance the novel tells the story of an Ibo village of the late 1800's and one of its great men, Okonkwo, who has achieved much in his life.

The most impressive achievement of *Things Fall Apart* is the vivid picture it provides of Ibo society of Nigeria at the end of the nineteenth century. Achebe, writing in 1959, had the benefit of retrospection in depicting Nigerian society and British colonialism in the 1890s.

One of the important themes of the novel is the clash of cultures. This collision of cultures occurs at the individual and societal levels, and the cultural misunderstanding cuts both ways: Just as the uncompromising Reverend Smith, in the novel, views Africans as "heathens," the Igbo initially criticize the Christians and the missionaries as "foolish." Achebe achieves, in the novel, a balance in recreating the tragic consequences of the clash of two cultures.

Things Fall Apart remains one of the most influential post -colonial novels by an African writer who experienced the bitterest *horrors* of the British Colonization. Edward Said's electrifying work *Orientalism (1978) and Culture and Imperialism (1993) will* make a best study if we want to appreciate a novel like *Things Fall Apart.* Right after being nominated for the Booker 2007, when interviewed by the BBC, Achebe spoke the blazing truth behind his writing: "What African literature set about to do was to broaden the conception of literature in the world - to include Africa, which wasn't there,". This is what the life long literary sojourn of Chinua Achebe, "the father of modern African literature", aimed at.

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