

A rambling

Business



Chinua Achebe's book *Things Fall Apart* tells the simple story of the life of a tribesman in Africa. It contains stories of war, banishment, and crimes, all of which are interesting to read about. On first inspection, however, it seems odd that it should be exemplified as a great piece of literature rather than merely an adventure story with a moral mixed in. When, however, one considers the changes which take place within the characters, as well as how these changes are mirrored and initiated by the changes in society, it becomes clear why *Things Fall Apart* is considered a great piece of literature.

The main character, an African Native named Okonkwo, is the embodiment of all his culture's virtues. Early in his life, he gained the respect of all his contemporaries through his triumphs in wrestling. Later, after he took up farming, he raised many yams, through which he became wealthy. This wealth allowed him to take many titles, including some of the highest in the tribe, adding to his prestige. Moreover, he was triumphant in many inter-tribal battles, causing all to be indebted to him.

He was truly the paragon of his tribe. Oddly enough, however, his many accomplishments caused him to be an outsider, rather than a close. He was admired by all, but because he commanded reverence, he could not truly be an ordinary member of his tribe; and therefore an outsider. Perhaps not in a literal sense, as he is a fundamental part of the tribe; he gives law, protection, and order, not to mention live sustaining resources from his farm. He knows most of his fellow tribesmen's troubles, e. g.

hunger and death, but because of his wealth and prestige, he very rarely deeply feels the effects, and therefore cannot understand the day to day life

of the rest of this tribe. This is very similar to the plight of the colonials. They have never lived in Africa, or any place remotely like it. Because of this they cannot comprehend or sympathize with the life changing troubles experienced by the tribe. To the colonials, who are used to being served and living in comparative luxury, matters such as a fallen in roof seem small, causing them to think the natives naive and foolish.