

Kermode's canon and connection to achebe essay

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Kermode's Canon and Connection to Achebe Frank Kermode's theories regarding the existence and treatment of a canon in literature are somewhat paradoxical. They are twofold and somewhat paradoxical in nature, but do express at least one summary thought: A canon does exist at all times in literature, and it represents the authority's views. The first part of his theory is that we know that an acknowledged canon exists because it is always being pursued by an insurgency. This rebel group is not satisfied by merely deconstructing the canon, but by capturing it and replacing it with its own works.

Therefore, by default, since this pursuit and replacement exists, then, too, by definition a canon always exists. The second part of Kermode's views is that the canon is always complicit with power. The current authority has the decision as to what is included and what is not. This control even extends to the use or creation of myths with which to protect works that are deemed fit. For example, if a writing is considered 'sacred' or 'inspired', then of course it must remain. Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is a novel's connection to this theory.

Its theme is custom and tradition - and what happens to these things when outside influences attempt to take their place. The culture of the Ibo people is the canon here in the story, and it represents Kermode's understanding. The people will not change their custom. To change the customs, then, the power structure must be altered ('captured', in Kermode's words). That is exactly what happens, and is what Okonkwo must do as well, to regain the earlier culture, or canon of his people. This is the working example of Kermode's theory of canon. Works Cited Achebe, Chinua.

Things Fall Apart. Oxford: Harcourt, 2000. Kermode, Frank. "Canon and Period.

" Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents. Ed. Dennis Walder.

Oxford: UP, 2003. 11-60.