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# Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Diana Akers Rhoads

Trying to avoid lending authority to any one culture over others, current advocates of multiculturalism generally emphasize the appreciation of difference among cultures. Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina today provide horrifying evidence that difference can have precisely the opposite impact. On the one hand, difference can be necessary to national self-confidence, but, on the other, it can stir destructive tribal or national pride. Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* represents the cultural roots of the Igbos in order to provide self-confidence, but at the same time he refers them to universal principles which vitiate their destructive potential. Seeing his duty as a writer in a new nation as showing his people the dignity that they lost during the colonial period, he sets out to illustrate that before the European colonial powers entered Africa, the Igbos "had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity" (1973, 8). Achebe, however, cannot achieve his goal merely by representing difference; rather he must depict an Igbo society which moderns can see as having dignity. What is remarkable about his Igbos is the degree to which they have achieved the foundations of what most people seek today—democratic institutions, tolerance of other cultures, a balance of male and female principles, capacity to change for the better or to meet new circumstances, a means of redistributing wealth, a viable system of morality, support for industriousness, an effective system of justice, striking and memorable poetry and art.<sup>1</sup> Achebe appears to have tested Igbo culture against the goals of modern liberal democracy and to have set out to show how the Igbo meet those standards.

Critics who have warned of the dangers of presenting a Eurocentric vision of Achebe's novel and/or have advised immersing students in African culture as a means of getting them to recognize and appreciate difference among cultures might object to the focus here (for example, Nichols, Traoré and Lubiano in Lindfors 1991). These critics are correct in noting that one of Achebe's aims is to present the peculiarities of the Igbo culture, especially the beauties and wisdom of its art and institutions, though, as argued below, Achebe also presents its weaknesses which require change and which aid in its destruction. A further aim, however, is the presentation of a common humanity which

transcends the European and the African, which belongs to both but is peculiar to neither. Achebe asserts in an essay on teaching *Things Fall Apart* that

one general point...is fundamental and essential to the appreciation of African issues by Americans. Africans are people in the same way that Americans, Europeans, Asians, and others are people.... Although the action of *Things Fall Apart* takes place in a setting with which most Americans are unfamiliar, the characters are normal people and their events are real human events. The necessity even to say this is part of a burden imposed on us by the customary denigration of Africa in the popular imagination of the West (Lindfors 1991, 21).

In addition to representing elements of common humanity, Achebe emphasizes certain basic political institutions which might form the foundation of a modern African state. Written at a time when Nigeria was about to achieve its independence from Britain, *Things Fall Apart* looks like the work of a founder of sorts. Achebe has often said that "art has a social purpose and can influence things" (Granqvist 1990, 28). Such statements suggest that Achebe is not trying simply to reproduce Igbo history or only to lend it dignity. If he were, he could have followed the pattern of other historians. As Dan Izevbaye has argued, African historians of the late 1950s and early 1960s focused on past African empires in order to improve the status of African history, and there is much evidence of common ethnic identity among the peoples of southern Nigeria. Achebe, however, writing *Things Fall Apart* in the late 1950s, chooses to ignore the evidence of what Izevbaye calls a "rich material civilization" in Africa in order to portray the Igbo as isolated and individual, evolving their own "humanistic civilization" (Lindfors 1991, 45-51). Achebe does not want to write about African empire, but about democratic roots in Igbo culture. He seems to write *Things Fall Apart* in part as a statement of what the future might be if Nigeria were to take advantage of the promising aspects of its past and to eliminate the unpromising ones.

That Achebe sees the best of Igbo village life as offering something of the ideal is suggested by an interview in 1988 with Raoul Granqvist. Achebe, talking of the importance of ideals, refers to the example of village life based on a kind of equality. "This," he says,

is what the Igbo people chose, the small village entity that was completely self-governing.... The reason why they chose it [this system] was because they wanted to be in control of their lives. So if the community says that we will have a meeting in the market place tomorrow, everybody should go there, or could go there. And everybody could speak (Granqvist 1990, 43).

Since Achebe is not the first to write of Africa, he must dispel old images in order to create a true sense of his people's dignity. Works such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* see Africans as primitives representing Europeans at an earlier stage of civilization (for example, Conrad 1988, 35-36) or imaging all humanity's primal urges which civilization hides (Conrad 1988, 49). Firsthand European accounts of the colonial period, such as the district commissioner's *Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* in *Things Fall Apart*, reduce the African experience to an anthropological study told from the white man's point of view (p. 191).<sup>2</sup> Achebe reveals that the Europeans' ideas of Africa are mistaken. Perhaps the most important mistake of the British is their belief that all civilization progresses, as theirs has, from the tribal stage through monarchy to parliamentary government. On first arriving in Mbanta, the missionaries expect to find a king (p. 138), and, discovering no functionaries to work with, the British set up their own hierarchical system which delegates power from the queen of England through district commissioners to native court messengers—foreigners who do not belong to the village government at all (p. 160). Since the natives from other parts of Nigeria feel no loyalty to the villages where they enact the commands of the district commissioners, the British have superimposed a system which leads to bribery and corruption rather than to progress.

The Igbos, on the other hand, have developed a democratic system of government. For great decisions the *ndichie*, or elders, gather together all of Umuofia (pp. 13, 180, 183). The clan rules all, and the collective will of the clan can be established only by the group. Further, as is appropriate in a democracy, each man is judged on his own merits, "according to his worth," not those of his father, as would be appropriate in an aristocracy or an oligarchy (p. 11).

Within this system the Igbos as a whole reveal themselves more tolerant of other cultures than the Europeans, who merely see the Igbos as uncivilized. In other words, the Igbo are in some ways superior to those who come to convert them. Uchendu, for example, is able to see that "what is good among one people is an abomination with others" (p. 129), but the white men tell the Igbos that Igbo customs are bad and that their gods are not true gods at all (pp. 135, 162). Unlike the Europeans, the Igbos believe that it "is good that a man should worship the gods and spirits of his fathers" even if these gods are not the Igbos' gods (p. 175). While the European tradition allows men to fight their brothers over religion, the Igbo tradition forbids them to kill each other: it is an abomination to kill a member of the clan. Further, the long history of Crusades and holy wars and of religious persecution in Europe occurs because men can fight for gods, but it is not the Igbo "custom to fight for [their] gods." Rather, heresy is a matter only between the man and the god (pp. 148, 150).

The Christian missionary in Mbanta objects to the Igbo gods on the belief that they tell the Igbos to kill each other (p. 135), and, in fact, the gods are invoked in the fighting of wars against another village—though not indiscriminately, only when the war is just. At times the oracle forbids the Umuofians to go to war (p. 16). The Europeans in *Things Fall Apart*, however, kill far more in the name of religion than the Igbos: the British, for example, wipe out the whole village of Abame in retaliation for the killing of one white man (p. 129).

The Igbos do not fight each other because they are primitive. Achebe implies the existence of the conditions in Nigeria which historically led to the need for war as a matter of survival. The land, consisting of rock underlying an almost nonexistent topsoil, was very poor and thus would not support large numbers of people. Planting soon depleted the soil, and so villagers were forced to move further and further afield to find land which would yield a crop to support them. Okonkwo's father, the lazy Unoka, has little success planting yams because he sows on "exhausted farms that take no labor to clear." Meanwhile, his neighbors, crossing "seven rivers to make their farms," plant the "virgin forests" (p. 20). As the population of Nigeria increased, land and food were insufficient to provide for everyone. The novel seems to make the turning point in the alteration from plenty to scarcity some time between the generation of Okonkwo's Uncle Uchendu and that of Okonkwo, for Uchendu speaks of "the good days when a man had friends in distant clans" (p. 127).<sup>3</sup> Although the state of constant warfare was hardly desirable, at least it provided a means for survival. In modern times, however, the villagers have no recourse when they are starving: in *Anthills of the Savannah* Achebe remarks that the starving people of Abazon cannot find sustenance by taking over the land of another village (1987, 30). Achebe implies here that the modern Nigerian government is not an improvement on the destroyed past culture. In *Anthills* the president spends lavishly on himself while refusing money to the Abazons because they did not vote for him.

The Christian missionary, then, is mistaken about the perversity of the Igbo religion: some wars are inevitable if the clan is to survive, but war is not indiscriminate. Religion is a factor both in limiting war and in supporting it when it is just. In the latter case war might be seen as a deterrent to future crimes against Umuofia. Neighboring clans try to avoid war with Umuofia because it is "feared" as a village "powerful in war" (p. 15), and when someone in Mbaino kills a Umuofian woman, "[e]ven the enemy clan know that" the threatened war is "just" (p. 16).

In fact, the Igbo have a highly developed system of religion which works as effectively as Christianity. The Igbo religion and the

Christian religion are equally irrational, but both operate along similar lines to support morality. To the Christians it seems crazy to worship wooden idols, but to the Igbos it seems crazy to say that God has a son when he has no wife (p. 136). Both systems of religion look to only one supreme god, Chukwu for the Umuofians (p. 164). Both supreme gods have messengers on earth, Christ for the British and the wooden idols for the Igbos. Both religions support humility; the Igbos speak to Chukwu through messengers because they do not want to worry the master, but they deal with Chukwu directly if all else fails (p. 165). Both gods are vengeful only when disregarded. If a person disobeys Chukwu, the god is to be feared, but Chukwu "need not be feared by those who do his will" (p. 165).<sup>4</sup>

In addition to revealing that the original Igbo religion is not inferior to Christianity, Achebe makes it clear that the demoralizing current state of political affairs in Africa is the result of European interference rather than simply the natural outgrowth of the native culture. The Igbos have a well-established and effective system of justice which the British replace with the system of district commissioners and court messengers. Disputes in the tribe which cannot be resolved in other ways come before the *egwugwu*, the greatest masked spirits of the clan, played by titled villagers. Hearing witnesses on both sides, for example, the tribunal comes to a decision in the case of Uzowoli, who beat his wife, and his indignant in-laws, who took his wife and children away. In this dispute the *egwugwu* try to assuage each side. They warn Uzowoli that it "is not bravery when a man fights a woman" and tell him to take a pot of wine to his in-laws; they tell Oduke to return Uzowoli's wife if he comes with wine. The system helps to dispel hard feelings by refusing "to blame this man or to praise that"; rather the *egwugwu*'s duty is simply "to settle the dispute" (p. 88).

Although the conditions in Nigeria require warlike men for the survival of the village, the Igbos have realized the danger of such men to their own society. Warriors must be fierce to their enemies and gentle to their own people, yet spirited men can bring discord to their own societies. The tribe has institutions to control the anger of its own men. For instance, there is a Week of Peace sacred to the earth goddess. Moreover, as indicated earlier, killing members of one's own clan is forbidden, and even inadvertent death such as Okonkwo's killing of Ezeudu's son must be expiated. Recognizing the need for Okonkwo to distinguish between friends and enemies, Ogbuefi Ezeudu calls on Okonkwo to tell him to have nothing to do with the killing of Ikemefuna because the boy is too much like a family member: "He calls you his father" (p. 56).

The entire Igbo society is based upon the combining of the male and female principles.<sup>5</sup> The male is strong and warlike, and the female is tender and supportive in times of adversity. Uncle Uchendu explains

this balance in his explication of the saying "Mother is Supreme":

It's true that a child belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you (p. 124).

In the Igbo system the earth goddess acts as a counterbalance to male strength.

If the Igbos have not achieved the ideal balance of male and female, they do seek to limit a male's abuse of his control over the female, and there are even indications that elements in the society see their wives as equals. The tribe's saying that it is not bravery to fight with a woman recurs in *Things Fall Apart* (see the discussion of Uzowoli above) and *Arrow of God* (p. 64), and Achebe depicts in-laws as objecting to ill treatment of a wife and as acting to prevent it (*Things*, 86-89; *Arrow*, 11-12, 61-64).

While the tribe does denigrate the womanly by derisively calling fear and sensitivity *agbala*, or "woman," it also includes men like Ndulue who treat their wives as equals: Ndulue and his wife were always said to be of "one mind," and Ndulue "could not do anything without telling her" (p. 66). Achebe suggests that not only does Ndulue's example exist, but it is also passed on in a song about this great warrior whom the rest of the tribe can admire (p. 66).<sup>6</sup>

Okonkwo's ability in war makes him dangerous in peace, for he is harsh with his wives and children and even kills Ikemefuna because he is afraid of being thought weak like his father. His harshness becomes sacrilege. During the Week of Peace he will not stop beating his wife, "not even for fear of a goddess" (p. 31). And Obierika sees Okonkwo's part in Ikemefuna's death as a crime against the Earth: "it is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families" (p. 64). Ultimately, Okonkwo's destruction is tragic because, although it is brought about by the unjust system of the white man, Okonkwo is responsible in part because of his defiance of the sacred laws of the clan.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to supplying a workable system of government and institutions supporting moderation and morality, the Igbos have an economic system which redistributes wealth in a manner preventing any one tribesman from becoming supreme. As Robert Wren asserts, *ozo* requires that every ambitious man of wealth periodically distribute his excess (1980, 78). In order to take any of the titles of the clan, a man has to give up a portion of his wealth to the clan. Okoye, in *Things Fall Apart*, is gathering all his resources in preparation for the "very expensive" ceremony required to take the Idemili title, the third highest in

the land (p. 10). As Achebe explains in *Arrow of God*, long ago there had been a fifth title among the Igbos of Umuaro—the title of king:

But the conditions for its attainment had been so severe that no man had ever taken it, one of the conditions being that the man aspiring to be king must first pay the debts of every man and every woman in Umuaro (1969, 209).

Along with the representation of the viability of Igbo institutions in a world without Europeans, Achebe gives a sense of the beauty of Igbo art, poetry and music by showing how it is interwoven with the most important institutions of the clan and by creating a sense of the Igbo language through his own use of English. The decorating of walls and bodies or the shaving of hair in "beautiful patterns" recurs in various ceremonies. Music and dancing are a part of Igbo rituals which call for talent such as that of Obiozo Ezikolo, king of all the drums. Stories become the means of inciting men to strength, of teaching about the gods, and of generally passing on the culture. Okonkwo tells "masculine stories of violence and bloodshed," but the mothers talk of the tortoise's "wily ways," the techniques available to the weak, and of the pity of the gods (pp. 52, 94). To show how conversation is respected, Achebe throughout illustrates how careful the Igbos are in their choice of words so that they can make a point without offending their listener or listeners. As Achebe says, for the Igbos "proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (p. 10). Thus, for example, Unoka refuses to pay Okoye by asserting that "the sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them"—in other words, Unoka will pay his large debts before his small ones (p. 11). Achebe himself uses proverbs to explain his culture: "As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings." This proverb embodies tribal recognition that through hard work even a person such as Okonkwo can overcome his father's ill repute to make himself "one of the greatest men of his time" (p. 12). And the proverbs help to establish the morality on which the tribe depends. Most villagers, for example, though respecting industry and success, dislike the pride which causes a man like Okonkwo to deal brusquely with other men: "'Looking at a king's mouth,' said an old man, 'one would think he never sucked at his mother's mouth'" (p. 28).

In addition to portraying the dignity of Igbo village life, Achebe makes it clear that the Igbos did not need the white man to carry them into the modern world. Within the Igbo system change and progress were possible. When old customs were ineffective, they were gradually discarded. Formerly the punishment for breaking the Week of Peace was not so mild as that meted out to Okonkwo, an offering to Ani. In the past "a man who broke the peace was dragged on the ground through

the village until he died. But after a while this custom was stopped because it spoiled the peace which it was meant to preserve" (p. 33). Such changes were likely to be brought about by men who, like Obierika, "thought about things," such as why a man should suffer for an inadvertent offense or why twins should be thrown away (pp. 117-18).

Although Achebe has the Igbo culture meet certain standards, he does not idealize the past. Probably the most troubling aspect of Igbo culture for modern democrats is the law that requires the killing of Ikemefuna for the sins of his clan. Achebe's description of Ikemefuna makes him a sympathetic character, and it is difficult not to side with Nwoye in rebelling against this act. Nevertheless, Igbo history does not seem so different from that of the British who think they are civilizing the natives. A form of the principle of an eye for an eye is involved in Mbaino's giving Mbanta a young virgin and a young man to replace the "daughter of Mbanta" killed in Mbaino. It is the Old Testament principle cast in a more flexible and gentler mold, for the killing of Ikemefuna is dependent on the Oracle and thus is not, like the Old Testament law, inevitable. Further, the sacrifices of the virgin to replace the lost wife and of the young boy become a way to "avoid war and bloodshed" while still protecting one's tribe from injustices against it (p. 12). Achebe, then, seems to depict this episode in terms which relate it to the development of the British, while also sympathizing with the impulses to change in Obierika and with the revulsion of Nwoye against the sacrifice which to him is so like the abandonment of twins in the Evil Forest (pp. 59-60). The sacrifice of the virgin, of course, is also a reminder of the sacrifices of young virgins in the classical literature which is so basic a part of the British heritage.

Achebe presents the past as admirable, but not without flaws which can be eliminated. He does so both because he holds his own art to a standard of truth and because he sees that the history he is trying to re-create to give his people dignity will be credible only if it includes faults:

This is where the writer's integrity comes in. Will he be strong enough to overcome the temptation to select only those facts which flatter him? If he succumbs he will have branded himself as an untrustworthy witness. But it is not only his personal integrity as an artist which is involved. The credibility of the world he is attempting to re-create will be called to question and he will defeat his own purpose if he is suspected of glossing over inconvenient facts. We cannot pretend that our past was one long, technicolour idyll. We have to admit that like other people's pasts ours had its good as well as its bad sides (1973, 9).

Further, these faults explain in part why the British are able to destroy the old Igbo culture.

Those who initially convert to Christianity are members of the clan who have not been fully incorporated into clan life. The first woman convert in Mbanta has had four sets of twins who have been thrown away. Once the *osu*, the outcasts, see that the church accepts twins and other matters seen by the clan as abominations, they join the new church. Nwoye, the gentle son who cannot accept Okonkwo's harshness and especially his killing of Ikemefuna, finds in the poetry of Christianity the promise of brotherhood. Achebe makes it clear that the poetry rather than the rationality of Christianity wins Nwoye's "callow mind" (p. 137).

The British also control the people through fear, trade, education and treachery. The Igbos fear the whites because the massacre at Abame and the ability to survive in the Evil Forest in Mbanta suggest that the white man's medicine is strong. Further, soldiers back up the rule of the district commissioners and the word of the court messengers. Another incentive to accept the British is the desire for wealth: the Igbos find that learning the white man's language soon makes one a court messenger or a town clerk in the trading stores set up by the British. Finally, many come to believe Mr. Brown's argument that the leaders of the land will be those who learn to read and write. If the British cannot achieve their goals in a straightforward manner, they sometimes stoop to treachery: Okonkwo and the other key leaders in his village suffer their worst humiliation because the district commissioner tricks them into a palaver where they leave their weapons outside, a British practice which Robert Wren finds reported in A. E. Afigbo's investigations of local traditions (Wren 1981, 16).

Even the Igbos' virtues tell against them in the breaking of the clan. Their tolerance of the missionaries allows the Christians to get a foothold in the villages. Their law against killing another member of the clan prevents them from killing the converts to Christianity.

Although Achebe depicts the treachery and ignorance and intolerance of the British, he does not represent the Europeans as wholly evil. Both the Igbo and the British cultures are for Achebe a mixture of types of human beings. Okonkwo and Mr. Smith are warrior types who will not compromise when their own cultures are threatened. Okonkwo favors fighting the Christians when in Abame one of them kills the sacred python, and he favors war with the Christians in Umuofia. In the end he cuts down the court messengers who come to disband the meeting in Umuofia. Likewise, the Reverend James Smith is against compromise: "He saw the world as a battlefield in which the children of light were locked in mortal conflict with the sons of darkness" (p. 169).

Mr. Brown, on the other hand, is more like Akunna or Obierika. He and Akunna are willing to learn about the other's beliefs even if they are not converted to them. He and Obierika are thoughtful defenders of their own cultures. Mr. Brown recognizes the difficulty with

a frontal attack on the Igbos' religion, and so he favors compromise and accommodation. Obierika realizes that if Umuofia kills the Christians, the soldiers from Umuru will annihilate the village.

Achebe's novel, then, depicts for both Africans and Americans the actual and potential sources of modern Nigerian dignity. *Things Fall Apart* suggests that the perpetual human types recur in all cultures and that all effective civilizations must learn to deal with those types. Revealing the Igbo ability in precolonial times to incorporate the variety of humans in a well-functioning culture, Achebe refers his Igbo society to a series of standards which both Africans and Americans can seek as goals—a degree of redistribution of wealth, a combining of male and female principles, compelling art and poetry and music, tolerance, democracy, morality, a sound system of justice and, perhaps most important, the capacity for meaningful change. Lending veracity to his depiction of Igbo history by remaining clear-sighted about cultural weaknesses which need correction, Achebe depicts a worthy precursor of a healthy and just modern civilization.

## Notes

1. Eustace Palmer has noted the elaborate nature of the religious, social, administrative, and judicial systems in Africa, but his concern has been mainly to describe how Achebe demonstrates "the beauty and autonomy of African culture" rather than to show how that culture meets the same ideals which modern Europeans would hold dear. Critics such as Wren and Ravenscroft have noted the democratic elements and the balance of male and female, but again their concern has been to reveal the value of village culture rather than to relate that value to transcultural standards.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, page numbers refer to *Things Fall Apart* (New York, 1959).
3. Wren places overpopulation simply in precolonial times. He describes the reduction of forests, and with them, the loss of the wild game, which would have been a source of protein. He sees the killing of twins as a population-control device (1981, 17-18).
4. Carroll argues that Chukwu is a god of power while Christianity's God is a god of love (1990, 53), but this argument ignores several elements of the text. The missionaries introduce the Christian god not as loving, but as punishing heathens by throwing them "into a fire that burn[s] like palm-oil" (p. 135). Later the hymn about a loving god attracts Nwoye, who cannot understand the cruelty of exposing twins or of Ikemefuna's death as retribution for the crime of Mbaino. Still, Nwoye's response is "callow" in that he does not see that the Christian religion makes no more sense than his own or that its cruelty is just differently directed, for example, towards the people of Abame in retribution for their killing of a white man (pp. 137, 127-30). Further, as Carroll himself sees, the Igbo see the need to balance the cruelty of the male with the love and gentleness of the female (1990, 50).
5. For a series of perspectives and greater elaboration on the combining of masculine and feminine see especially the essays by Stock, Iyasere, Innes, Weinstock and Ramadan, and Jabbi in the Innes and Lindfors anthology (1978); also see Killam (1977, 20ff.); and Ackley (1974).

## Culture in Achebe's Things Fall Apart

6. Some feminist critics have not been satisfied with Achebe's treatment of women: Rhonda Cobham, for instance, argues that he chooses to ignore the historical contribution of Igbo women to the political and thereby reinforces a typically Western sexist attitude towards women (in Lindfors 1991, 91-100). But such attacks seem unfair to me on the grounds that Achebe is trying not to depict so much the historical situation of women as to make a point about the dignity of Igbo culture; in effect, he suggests that Igbo culture is as civilized as the colonial culture which usurped it. Further, he seems to be providing the foundation for effective political institutions at the time when Nigeria was about to achieve independence. In line with his presentation of Igbo tradition, he sees such institutions as combining both feminine and masculine principles. In fact, *Things Fall Apart* presents the best men as combining the masculine and feminine. Okonkwo is defective in his rejection of the feminine, but the tribal norms combine the masculine and feminine. Obierika, for instance, helps to burn Okonkwo's compound, but succors him by taking care of his yams when he is in exile. Or Uchendu reports the need to kill Ikemefuna, but advises Okonkwo not to participate. Further, certain key elements of society are governed by the women, for example, the arts or the morality represented by the goddess Ani.

On a different note, Iris Andreski's *Old Wives' Tales* (1970) argues that the British colonists improved the situation of Igbo women. In a 1988 lecture Achebe responds to this book by drawing parallels between the Western and Igbo denigration of women. He relates the Biblical myth blaming Eve to the Igbo myth blaming Earth (Woman) for producing its distance from Sky (Man) and the New Testament myth which makes man feel generous in making his spouse the mother of God to the Igbo myth that Mother is supreme. And he points to the political actions of Igbo women in "The Women's Riot" of 1929 and the women's revolt of 1958, suggesting that Igbo women do not need to learn feminism from the West (Granqvist 11-18).

7. Killam discusses Okonkwo as both flawed and representative of a type which must give way before the "irrepressible forces which determine historical change" (1977, 15-32).

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