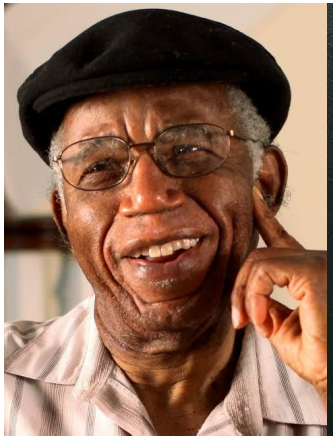
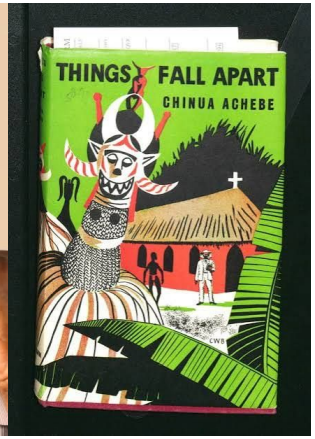
# Monday 16th November






As a schoolboy in British-ruled Nigeria, Chinua Achebe loved reading stories about heroic European explorers. He cheered them against the 'savages' they encountered, before one day he realised that those 'savages' were people like him. Born on this day in 1930 to Christian parents but other relatives had traditional Igbo beliefs and he heard the folktales of the Igbo people while growing up.

He attended Nigeria's first University in 1948 where he read *Mister Johnson* a British novel depicting Nigerians as foolish and he questioned why African culture was always presented through European eyes. So he began writing, at first for the university newspaper and then short stories.

His first novel *Things Fall Apart* is considered a groundbreaking work of African literature and Achebe's **magnum opus**. It follows Okonkwo, an Igbo man whose community is disrupted by European missionaries. Achebe portrayed a society with its own traditions, arguments and complex characters. It has been translated into more than 50 languages.

Achebe wrote in English rather than his native Igbo, arguing it could reach readers across Nigeria's many language communities and abroad. He wrote 4 other novels, helped develop the African Writers Series bringing other African authors to wider audiences. He died in 2013.

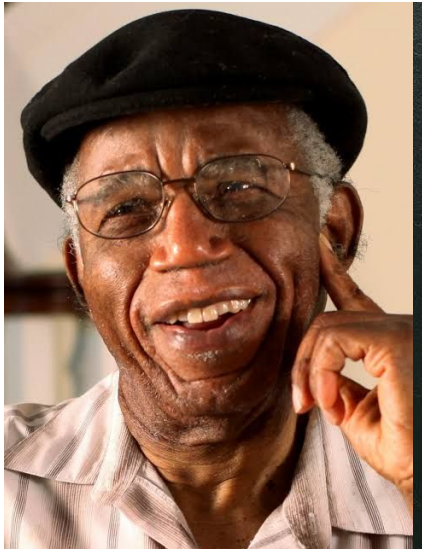
- What do you think of Achebe's decision to write in English rather than Igbo?
- How would you feel to read a story where your community was portrayed as the villains?
- What books have you read about other communities?

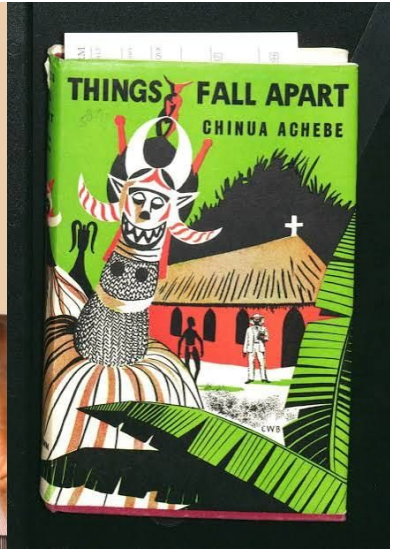
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- What do you think of Achebe’s decision to write in English rather than Igbo?
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