



IHE AGHASAA - My Work on an Igbo Translation of Things Fall Apart

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Honestly speaking, the relevance of *Things Fall Apart* cannot be over emphasized. No wonder sixty three years after, the whole world is still celebrating the book. If you log in to Facebook for instance, you will find quite a number of pages that some individuals have created on their own where people from every nations of the world come to pour tributes to our very own Professor Chinua Achebe of blessed memory - the legendary author of the classic book, *Things Fall Apart*.

It is worthy of note also, that in the hierarchy of great works of literature, *Things Fall Apart* has continued to feature at the top. In fact, despite and in spite of the obvious bias of some literary bodies that often focus on writers who come from North America or Europe, and most times ignore accomplished writers and amazing works of literature from other parts of the world, especially those from Africa; the *Things Fall Apart*, published in 1958, has been able to gain a very powerful recognition worldwide. So far, the book has been listed as one of the twelve "greatest books ever written" as compiled by Encyclopedia Britannica. Such amazing feat is highly remarkable.

More so, *Things Fall Apart* has already been translated into sixty two different languages of the world. But sadly, it has no Igbo edition of yet. This unexplainable absence of the Igbo version of this great book has often caused me lots of worries. Not only that this very interesting novel was written by an Igbo man, the setting too is entirely an Igbo society. This is a book that contains our story - our true story. Yet we have not been able to domesticate and internalize it the same way that foreigners across over 60 ethnic nationalities have done. Even here in Nigeria, there's already a Yoruba version of *Things Fall Apart*, there's a Tiv version also, and perhaps more other translations, yet there's none in Igbo.

This irony of not having the Igbo equivalent of this great book was what actually bothered to the point where "unrest" urged me to action. It was at that point that I began the journey towards actualizing the long awaited

Igbo edition of *Things Fall Apart*. And to the glory of God, I have been able to come up with a translation - awaiting the actual publication.

In the mean time, I have decided to briefly share my translation here. And in doing so, I have euttracted a dozen and half interesting moments. And the aim is to share the feeling of how good *Things Fall Apart* would sound in Igbo.

The first eucerpt is the central theme of the novel. The neut is the opening paragraph, and then the rest, culled progressively from selected chapters. These euttracts are written in both English and Igbo languages so that readers can easily reconcile my translation with the original work of the author.

THE EIGHTEEN EUTRACTS

1. "THE white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."

"ONYE ọcha ahụ bụ nnọọ ebiliakọ. O jiri nwayọ na udo wee buru okpukpe ya bata. Anyị nọrọ na-achị ọchị na nzuzu ya wee kwere ka o were ọnọdụ. Ugbu a, o nwetala ụmụnne anyị, obodo anyị enweghikwa ike iji otu obi eme ihe. O tinyela mma n'ihe ndị ahụ jikọtara anyị ọnụ; anyị wee ghasaa."

(The advent of the European into our land was such a huge alteration in the first place. And to make matters worse, it took so long before we realized what portion of us we had carelessly offered to encroachment of these whites. A fight to push them back at that time was absolutely hopeless. We had imbibed their ways already, and they had won our MIND completely. It wasn't even about a physical fight. We would have won if it were to be by strength of arm alone. There were only a few of them after all; the rest of the people with them were our own brothers. But how do we begin to fight them when they have got these our brothers as their shield and tower of strength?)

2. OKONKWO was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would

never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights."

A maara Okonkwọ nkeoma gburugburu ógbè itoolu ahụ; ọbuna karịa. Owuwu ya gbadoro ụkwu n'okpurukpu ihe ndị o meputara n'onwe ya. Dịka nwokorobia dị afọ irinaasato, o weterelari ógbè ya úgwù site n'itụ Amalinze bụ Nwamba, n'ala. Amalinze bụ okamgba ahụ nke emerighi emeri n'afọ asaa, site n'Ụmuofia ruo na Mbaino. A na-akpọ ya Nwamba n'ihhi na azu ya enweghi ike imetu ala. O bu nwoke a ka Okonkwọ turu n'ala n'ogu nke ndi agadi nwoke kwekoritara na o bu otu n'ime ogu kacha sie ike kemgbe onye choputara obodo ha na otu mmuo lara ohia gbachara mgba ubochi asaa na abali asaa.

(The second extract above is the very beginning of the novel. We are introduced to the man Okonkwo - a true possessor of the manly and unstoppable spirit of an Igbo man. We are told that Okonkwo's fame rested on solid personal achievements. The adjective "personal" is very meaningful here: An Igbo man does not count on another man's worth, not even his father's. He diligently strives for his own and surpasses even that of his father. He is totally an independent minded being. In fact, Achebe had to stress this point again in the last paragraph of the same chapter where he wrote: "... Fortunately, among this people a man was judged according to his worth and not the worth of his father." Also in the same dense opening paragraph of just six concise sentences, Achebe in his unbeatable craftsmanship was able to create whole-mind pictures of what the precolonial Igbo society used to be. We could see clearly the unique structure and culture. The wrestling competition for instance, is a big proof of leadership and organization. And so we can see for ourselves that Africans weren't actually a people without form as some colonial authors did suggest. Thus, it was right from the very beginning of his first book that Achebe's intellectual rebuttal of bad colonial authors actually began)

3. AMONG the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.

N'etiti ndi Igbo, a na-ewe nka mkparitauka n'ogo di elu; ilu bu mmanu nri e ji eri okwu." (The use of proverbs is so important in Igbo communication such that; the more effective one is in the use of proverbs, the more proficient one is said to be the art of communication. A proverb best

conveys meaning and make it sink properly. In fact, where a plane statement may bring understanding, the use of proverb brings comprehension.

Proverbs are thus the palm oil with which words are eaten. However, the palm oil is not the only sauce for the eating of words. All manner of figures of speech (atumatuokwu), idioms (akpalaokwu), wellerisms (asiniilu) and riddles (agwugwa) are some of the other delicious sauces with which words can equally be eaten. And a true Igbo man is a master of them all. He is indeed a great speech maker)

4. ON a moonlight night it would be different. The happy voices of children playing in open fields would then be heard. And perhaps those not so young would be playing in pairs in less open places, and old men and women would remember their youth. As the Ibo say: "When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk."

Ọ na-adị iche n'oge egwu ọnwá. A ga na-anụ olu ọñụ ụmụaka na-egwu egwu n'ámá mgbe ahụ. Eleghịanya kwa, ndị emechabeghị agadi, onye na nwanne ya, ga na-egwukwa egwu n'ebe ndị zoturu ezo; ndị agadi nwoke na ndị agadi nwaanyị ga-echetazi mgbe ha nọ na ntorobia. Dika Igbo siri kwuo: "Ọnwá na-eti, agụụ ije ije agụwa ngworo." (This eutract from chapter two brings to us a wave of nostalgia for the cool and easy way of life of our forebears in a traditional society where people freely lived their lives to the fullest in utter simplicity and true brotherly love)

5. IN the morning the market place was full. There must have been about ten thousand men there, all talking in low voices. At last Ogbuefi Ezeugo stood up in the midst of them and bellowed four times, "Umuofia kwenu," and on each occasion he faced a different direction and seemed to push the air with a clenched fist. And ten thousand men answered "Yaa!" each time. Then there was perfect silence..... Many others spoke, and at the end it was decided to follow the normal course of action. An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation"

AHIA ahụ juru eju n'utu. Aghaghị inwe ihe di ka puku umunwoke iri ebe ahụ, ha dum wetuchara olu wee na-ekwu okwu. N'ikpeazu, Ogbuefi

Ezeugo kulitere n'etiti ha wee tie mkpu ugboro anọ, 'Ụmụọfịa kwenu;' o chere ihu oge ọbụla n'akukụ ọzọ ma dika onye ji aka apachiri apachi wee na-akwa aka n'ikuku. Ụmụnwoke puku iri zaghachikwara 'Yaa!' oge ọbụla. Emechaa ebe niile adaa jụụ n'ozuzuoke....

... Ọtụtụ ndị ọzọ kwukwara okwu; n'ikpeazụ, e kpebie na-aga eme ihe n'usoro. E wee zigara Mbainọ ozi ozugbo na-agwa ha ka ha horo agha n'otu aka, maobu, n'aka nke ọzọ, iji otu nwokorobia na nwagboghobia amabeghi nwoke were akwughachi ugwo.

(The scenario above, also culled from chapter 2, is a perfect display of the age long democracy in Igbo land. There are lots of interesting lessons that come to mind, but I have chosen to emphasize the fact that the Igbo people have always had their democratic structures and principles long before the advent of the Europeans)

6. "UNOKA was an ill-fated man. He had a bad chi or personal god, and evil fortune followed him to the grave, or rather to his death, for he had no grave. He died of the swelling which was an abomination to the earth goddess. When a man was afflicted with swelling in the stomach and the limbs he was not allowed to die in the house. He was carried to the Evil Forest and left there to die. There was the story of a very stubborn man who staggered back to his house and had to be carried again to the forest and tied to a tree. The sickness was an abomination to the earth, and so the victim could not be buried in her bowels. He died and rotted away above the earth, and was not given the first or the second burial. Such was Unoka's fate. When they carried him away, he took with him his flute."

"UNOKA bu nwoke uwa ojoo. O nwere chi ojoo; chi ojoo sokwa ya ruo n'ili, mba, ruo n'onwu ya, maka na o nweghi ili. O nwuru n'oria afootutu nke bu nsala n'ebe chi nke ala no. Anaghi ekwe ka onye oria afootutu dakwasiri nwuo n'ulo. A na-eburu ya gaa n'ajo ohia wee hapu ya ka o nwuo ebe ahụ. Enwere akuko banyere otu nwoke isiike onye nke maara jijiji laghachi n'ulo ya; e wee buru ya gaghachi n'ohia ahụ ma kegide ya n'osisi. Oria ahụ bu nsala n'ebe ala no, n'ihia ya, agaghi eli onye obula o dakwasiri n'ime ya. O ga-anwu ma ree ure n'eluala; agaghi enye ya akwamozu nke mbu maobu nke abuo. Etu ahụ ka onodu Unoka di. O ji oja ya mgbe e buuru ya wee puo." (The coming of the white man wasn't entirely a disaster. It also has some benefits, one of which was the quick abolishment of certain cruel practices of our forebears. These bad

practices were actually rooted in ignorance. The height of it was to throw a helpless sick man into the thick arms of the most dreaded Evil Forest just because his type of sickness was believed to be an offense against the earth. Such was the fate of Okonkwo's father, Unoka. He was carried to the evil forest and left there to die. What a pity.

One other thing that got me hooked in this extract from chapter 3 was the last sentence: "When they carried him away, he took with him his flute." These eleven words actually led me into endless imaginings of how highly dedicated Unoka must have been to the making of music such that not even the harsh anxiety of the type of painful death he was about to undergo could make him forget his most cherished musical instrument - the flute. It was at this juncture that I came to the conclusion that Unoka was rather a very cool celebrity only that he existed before his own time. He wasn't actually lazy as being portrayed. Never. He only had strength for something different. Assuming he was born in my own generation, he would have most probably been in the ranks of the great Oliver de Coque, Chief Osita Osadebe, Dr. Sir Warrior, Favour N'abania, Tekno, Phyno Phyno etc. And apart from music, Unoka equally had a very high sense of humor. He would have excelled in comedy too if he were to belong to this generation. I couldn't stop laughing after reading the part in chapter 1 where he said to the man he owed some money: "...You see, I owe that man a thousand cowries. But he has not come to wake me up in the morning for it. I shall pay you, but not today. Our elders say that the sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them. I shall pay my big debts first." Then he took another pinch of snuff, as if that was paying the big debt first. (Unoka was indeed a character)

7. "... HE presented a kola nut and an alligator pepper, which were passed round for all to see and then returned to him. He broke the nut saying: "We shall all live. We pray for life, children, a good harvest and happiness. You will have what is good for you and I will have what is good for me. Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch too. If one says no to the other, let his wing break."

"O weputara oji na ose, nke e bughariri okirikiri ka onye obula hu; o mechaa loghachi n'aka ya. O wee waa ya, na-asị: 'Anyi niile ga adi ndu. Anyi na ario maka ndu, omumu, ezigbo owuwe ihe ubi na anuri. Ihe di gi mma ga-eru gi aka, ihe di m mma ga-erukwa m aka. Egbe bere, ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebena, nku kwaa ya." (The celebration of kola nut is one

important aspect of Igbo culture that wasn't destroyed by colonialism. Up to this day, the kola nut (OJI) has continued to be the OMENAALA JIKOTARA IGBO or the tradition that binds the Igbos)

8. "THAT boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death." Okonkwo was surprised, and was about to say something when the old man continued:

"Yes, Umuofia has decided to kill him. The Oracle of the Hills and the Caves has pronounced it. They will take him outside Umuofia as is the custom, and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it. He calls you his father."

.... The next day, the men returned with a pot of wine. They were all fully dressed as if they were going to a big clan meeting or to pay a visit to a neighboring village. They passed their cloths under the right arm-pit, and hung their goatskin bags and sheathed machetes over their left shoulders. Okonkwo got ready quickly and the party set out with Ikemefuna carrying the pot of wine. A deathly silence descended on Okonkwo's compound. Even the very little children seemed to know. Throughout that day Nwoye sat in his mother's hut and tears stood in his eyes...

.... Ikemefuna heard a whisper close behind him and turned round sharply. The man who had whispered now called out aloud, urging the others to hurry up.

"We still have a long way to go," he said. Then he and another man went before Ikemefuna and set a faster pace. Thus the men of Umuofia pursued their way, armed with sheathed machetes, and Ikemefuna, carrying a pot of palm-wine on his head, walked in their midst. Although he had felt uneasy at first, he was not afraid now. Okonkwo walked behind him....

... One of the men behind him cleared his throat. Ikemefuna looked back, and the man growled at him to go on and not stand looking back. The way he said it sent cold fear down Ikemefuna's back. His hands trembled vaguely on the black pot he carried. Why had Okonkwo withdrawn to the rear? Ikemefuna felt his legs melting under him. And he was afraid to look back.

As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the

sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, "My father, they have killed me!" as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak."

"NWATA nwoke ahụ na-akpọ gị nna. Etinyekwala aka n'ọnwu ya."

Okonkwọ jiri mgbagwojuanya wee chọọ ikwu okwu tupu agadi nwoke ahụ amalitekwa:

"Ee, Ụmụọfịa ekpebiela igbu ya. Agbala Ugwu na Ogbia ekwuputala ya. Ha ga-akporo ya pụọ n'Ụmụọfịa dika omenaala siri di, ma gbuo ya ebe ahụ. Mana achoro m ka i ghara itinye aka na ya. O na-akpọ gị nna."

... Ụmụnwoke ahụ bu ite mmanya wee biaghachi n'ubochi nke ozo. Ha niile jikechara nkeoma ka a ga-asị na ha na-aga nnukwu nzuko obodo maobu njem nlete n'ogbe ndi agbataobi. Ha sitere n'okpuru mkpaabu akanri wee wefeta akwa ha ma nyara akpa akpukpewu ha na mmà ha di n'obọ n'ubu akaekpe. Okonkwọ kwadoro ngwangwa, ha wee pụwa n'igwe, ha na Ikemefuna, onye nke bu ite mmanya ahụ n'isi. Ama Okonkwọ wee daa juu ka ebe mmadu nwuru. Obuna obere umuaka dikwazi ka a ga-asị na ha ma. Nwoye noduru ala n'uloakirika nne ya ubochi ahụ niile, anya mmiri wee ju ya anya....

... Ikemefuna nuru izu a gbara n'azu ya wee tugharia n'ike. Nwoke gbara izu ahụ wee welite olu ya elu na-agwa ndi ozo ka ha gasie ike. O si, 'Ebe anyi na-eje ka dikwa anya.' Mgbe ahụ ka ya na otu nwoke ozo jiziri gafere Ikemefuna ma meekwa ka ijeukwu ha dikwuo ngwangwa. Etu a ka umunwoke Ụmụọfịa ahụ si na-ewe ya bu ije, ya na mmà ha di n'obọ ha jicha, tinyekwara Ikemefuna bu ite mmanya n'isi wee na-aga n'etiti ha. N'agbanyeghi na obi erubughi ya ala, o naghizi atu egwu ugbu a. Okonkwọ na-abia n'azu ya...

Otu n'ime umunwoke no n'azu ya kwachara akpiri ya. Ikemefuna wee lee anya n'azu, nwoke ahụ wee jiri iwe gwa ya ka o na-aga, ghara iguzo na-ele anya n'azu. Etu o siri kwuo ya mere ka azu juo Ikemefuna oyi n'oke egwu. Aka ya wee maa jijiji n'elu ite ojii ahụ o bu. Gini mekwaranu Okonkwọ jiri laa azu? O wee dzie Ikemefuna ka a ga-asị na ukwu ya na-achizi igbaze agbaze n'okpuru ya. Egwu ekweghikwa ya ile anya n'azu.

Okonkwo lefuru anya dika nwoke ahụ kwachara akpiri ya miputachara ma welitekwa mmà ya elu. O nuru ụda ya. Itē wee daa ma gbawaa n'aja. O nuru mkpuakwa Ikemefuna, 'Nna m, ha egbuola m!' dika o na-agbakwute ya. Egwu enyeghi ya onu okwu, Okonkwo wee miputa mmà ya wee gbutopu ya. O na-atu egwu ka a ghara iche na o dighi ike. (I couldn't read further when I got to this part of chapter 7 where Okonkwo drew his machete and cut down Ikemefuna despite that sympathetic cry: "My father, they have killed me." In fact, I closed the book at that instant, and for two whole days, I was still mourning the poor boy. However, unlike Okonkwo, I tested food, and did not drink palm wine from morning till night. But for those two days and even beyond, I never stopped wondering why this Okonkwo of Umuofia of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* will be the one to kill the boy that called him father. He was even warned not to take any part in the killing, yet he ended up taking the whole part almost, all because of fear. What an unfortunate situation.

Okonkwo's killing of Ikemefuna has always generated strong reactions both in the book and in the movies. I was told that some Nigerians in those days would accost the Nollywood legend, Pete Edochie, on the road and challenge him for killing Ikemefuna. And even Pete Edochie himself who had perfectly played the role of Okonkwo in the NTA's adaptation of *Things Fall Apart* did confess that he was touched when a woman attacked him in Enugu for killing Ikemefuna. Thus the story of Ikemefuna has remained a very sympathetic story not only in Umuofia but in the whole world. However, it is very important to point out the fact that *Things Fall Apart* is actually not a factual work in essence. It is a frictional work instead, only that it was put together by the world best story teller himself. Shall we blame Achebe for being a master of his trade?)

9. AS the men drank, they talked about everything except the thing for which they had gathered. It was only after the pot had been emptied that the suitor's father cleared his voice and announced the object of their visit. Obierika then presented to him a small bundle of short broomsticks. Ukegbu counted them. "They are thirty?" he asked. Obierika nodded in agreement. "We are at last getting somewhere," Ukegbu said, and then turning to his brother and his son he said: "Let us go out and whisper together." The three rose and went outside. When they returned Ukegbu handed the bundle of sticks back to Obierika. He counted them; instead of

thirty there were now only fifteen. He passed them over to his eldest brother, Machi, who also counted them and said:

“We had not thought to go below thirty. But as the dog said, ‘If I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play’. Marriage should be a play and not a fight; so we are falling down again.” He then added ten sticks to the fifteen and gave the bundle to Ukegbu. In this way Akuke’s bride-price was finally settled at twenty bags of cowries. It was already dusk when the two parties came to this agreement.

DİKA ụmụnwoke ahụ nọ na-ahụ mmanya, ha kwuru okwu banyere ihe ndi ọzọ niile beluso ihe ha ji maka ya wee gbakoo. O bu naanị mgbe a nuchaziri mmanya ka nna onye na-achọ ilu nwaanyị kwachara akpịrị ya wee kwuwaputa isiokwu ha jiri bia.

Obierika wee nye ya otu obere mkpirisi ukwù azịza. Ukaegbu wee guo ya onu.

"O bu iriatọ ka ha di?" o juru. Obierika wee kwe n'isi. 'N'ikpeazu, anyi eruwela nso,' Ukegbu kwuru, wee tugharịa ebe nwanne ya na okpara ya nọ wee si: 'Ka anyi puonu n'ezi gaa gbaa izu.' Ha atọ wee kulie, puwa n'ezi. Mgbe ha loghachiri, Ukaegbu nyeghachiri Obierika ukwù azịza ahụ. O guru ha onu; kama iriatọ, enwezịe naanị irinaise. O wee nyefee ha n'aka diokparanne ya, Machi, onye nke gukwara ha onu wee si: 'Anyi echebughi echiche igbadata kari iriatọ. Mana dika nkita siri kwuo, "O buru na m daara gi, i daara m, o buru egwuregwu". Alimdi na nwunye kwesiri i bu egwuregwu, o bughi ogu; n'ihi ya, anyi na-agbadatakwa ala ọzọ.' O wee gbakwunyezịe mkpuru azịza iri n'ime irinaise ahụ wee nye Ukaegbu.

N'uzo di etu a ka e siri kpebie ugwo isi Akueke n'ikpeazu; o buruzie akpa egoayoro iriabu. Uhuruchi eruolari mgbe otu abuo ndi a nwetara ya bu mkpebi. (It feels good to know that the coming of the Europeans did not abolish the African Traditional marriage system. The only confusion is that most African couples now end up doing three different types of marriages whereas only one was actually required. Today, a typical Igbo couple for instance, will do the Traditional marriage and still proceed to the church for another marriage as if the first was incomplete. Sometimes they go ahead to also do a third - the court wedding. Just one couple, three different weddings. What an African wonder!)

10. "UMUOFIA kwenu!" roared Evil Forest, facing the elders and grandees of the clan.

"Yaa!" replied the thunderous crowd; then silence descended from the sky and swallowed the noise. Evil Forest began to speak and all the while he spoke everyone was silent. The eight other egwugwu were as still as statues. "We have heard both sides of the case," said Evil Forest. "Our duty is not to blame this man or to praise that, but to settle the dispute." He turned to Uzowulu's group and allowed a short pause.

"Uzowulu's body, I salute you," he said. "Our father, my hand has touched the ground," replied Uzowulu, touching the earth. "Uzowulu's body, do you know me?"

"How can I know you, father? You are beyond our knowledge," Uzowulu replied.

"I am Evil Forest. I kill a man on the day that his life is sweetest to him."

"That is true," replied Uzowulu. "Go to your in-laws with a pot of wine and beg your wife to return to you. It is not bravery when a man fights with a woman." He turned to Odukwe, and allowed a brief pause.

"Odukwe's body, I greet you," he said.

"My hand is on the ground," replied Odukwe.

"Do you know me?"

"No man can know you," replied Odukwe.

"I am Evil Forest, I am Dry-meat-that-fills-the-mouth, I am Fire-that-burns-without-faggots.

If your in-law brings wine to you, let your sister go with him. I salute you."

He pulled his staff from the hard earth and thrust it back.

"Umuofia kwenu!" he roared, and the crowd answered.

"UMUOFIA kwenu!" Ajofia tiri mkpu dika o chere ihu n'ebe ndi Ichie na ndi okenye obodo no.

Igwè mmadu wee tie 'Yaa!' ebe niile wee daa juu.

Ajofia malitere ikwu okwu, mmadu dum gbakwara nkiti mgbe niile ahụ o na-ekwu ya bu okwu. Mmanwu asato ndi nke ozo dara juu dika ihe a kpuru akpu.

"Anyi anula akuko abuo di n'ikpe a," Ajofia kwuru. "Oru anyi abughi ima nwoke nke a ikpe maobu ito nwoke nke ozo, kama, idozi esemokwu." O tughariri n'ebe ndi otu Uzowulu no wee gba nkiti obere oge.

"Ahụ Uzowulu i maara onye m bu?"

"Nna, kedukwanu ka m ga-esi ama gi? I kariri uche anyi na nghota." Uzowulu zagbachiri.

"Abụ m Ajoḡfia, ana m egbu mmadụ ụbọchị ndụ kacha atọ ya uto."

"Nke ahụ bụ eziokwu," Uzowulu zagbachiri.

"Buru ite mmanya gaa na be ndị ọgọ gị ma rịọ nwunye gị ka ọ lọghachi na be gị. Nwoke iluso nwaanyị ọgụ abụghị ikpa ike."

O wee tugharia ebe Odukwe nọ ma gba nkịtị obere oge.

O mechaa si, "Ahụ Odukwe ekelee m gị."

"Aka m di n'ala," Odukwe zagbachiri.

"Ị maara onye m bụ?"

"Mmadụ ọbụla apụghị imata gị." Odukwe zagbachiri.

"Abụ m Ajoḡfia, abụ m anụ kpọrọ nkụ na-eju ọnụ. Abụ m ọkụ na-ere ere nke adighi ahụ anya. Ọ bụrụ na ọgọ gị butere gị mmanya, kwere ka nwanne gị nwaanyị soro ya laa. Ekelee m gị."

O wee miputa mkpara ya ahụ di n'ala kpọrọ nkụ ma sọkwa ya n'ala ọzọ.

O mechaa tie mkpu, "Ụmuofia kwenu!"

Ìgwè mmadụ wee zagbachikwa. (This extract from chapter 10 shows what used to be the justice system in Igbo land. In those days, there were no lawyers, and there were no lairs. The Supreme Court in Ụmuofia was made up of nine masquerades, each of whom represented the nine villages of the clan. Ajoḡfia was the Chief Justice of the land. And to be honest, justice was truly administered without any atom of fear or favour. It was never like this colonial Court of Injustice that we now have where religious people would lay hands on either of the the Holy Books only to start telling all the lies in the world.

One other thing that can be taken from this extract is the composition of the Supreme Court of Ụmuofia. Every part of the clan was well represented. It is sadly not so today with our country Nigeria. Nepotism has ruined the country. Quite unfortunate)

11. ...EKWEFI and her daughter, Ezinma, sat on a mat on the floor. It was Ekwefi's turn to tell a story. "Once upon a time," she began, "all the birds were invited to a feast in the sky. They were very happy and began to prepare themselves for the great day. They painted their bodies with red cam wood and drew beautiful patterns on them with uli. "Tortoise saw all these preparations and soon discovered what it all meant. Nothing that happened in the world of the animals ever escaped his notice; he was full of cunning. As soon as he heard of the great feast in the sky his throat began to itch at the very thought. There was a famine in those days and Tortoise had not eaten a good meal for two moons. His body rattled like a

piece of dry stick in his empty shell. So he began to plan how he would go to the sky.”

“But he had no wings,” said Ezinma.

“Be patient,” replied her mother. “That is the story. Tortoise had no wings, but he went to the birds and asked to be allowed to go with them.

“‘We know you too well,’ said the birds when they had heard him. ‘You are full of cunning and you are ungrateful. If we allow you to come with us you will soon begin your mischief.’

“‘You do not know me,’ said Tortoise. ‘I am a changed man. I have learned that a man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself.’

“Tortoise had a sweet tongue, and within a short time all the birds agreed that he was a changed man, and they each gave him a feather, with which he made two wings.

“At last the great day came and Tortoise was the first to arrive at the meeting place. When all the birds had gathered together, they set off in a body. Tortoise was very happy and voluble as he flew among the birds, and he was soon chosen as the man to speak for the party because he was a great orator.

“‘There is one important thing which we must not forget,’ he said as they flew on their way. ‘When people are invited to a great feast like this, they take new names for the occasion.

Our hosts in the sky will expect us to honor this age-old custom.’

“None of the birds had heard of this custom but they knew that Tortoise, in spite of his failings in other directions, was a widely-traveled man who knew the customs of different peoples. And so they each took a new name. When they had all taken. Tortoise also took one. He was to be called All of you.

“At last the party arrived in the sky and their hosts were very happy to see them. Tortoise stood up in his many-colored plumage and thanked them for their invitation. His speech was so eloquent that all the birds were glad they had brought him, and nodded their heads in approval of all he said. Their hosts took him as the king of the birds, especially as he looked somewhat different from the others.

“After kola nuts had been presented and eaten, the people of the sky set before their guests the most delectable dishes Tortoise had even seen or dreamed of. The soup was brought out hot from the fire and in the very pot in which it had been cooked. It was full of meat and fish.

Tortoise began to sniff aloud. There was pounded yam and also yam pottage cooked with palm-oil and fresh fish. There were also pots of palm-wine. When everything had been set before the guests, one of the people of the sky came forward and tasted a little from each pot.

He then invited the birds to eat. But Tortoise jumped to his feet and asked: 'For whom have you prepared this feast?'

"For all of you," replied the man.

"Tortoise turned to the birds and said: 'You remember that my name is All of you. The custom here is to serve the spokesman first and the others later. They will serve you when I have eaten.'

"He began to eat and the birds grumbled angrily. The people of the sky thought it must be their custom to leave all the food for their king. And so Tortoise ate the best part of the food and then drank two pots of palm-wine, so that he was full of food and drink and his body filled out in his shell.

"The birds gathered round to eat what was left and to peck at the bones he had thrown all about the floor. Some of them were too angry to eat. They chose to fly home on an empty stomach. But before they left each took back the feather he had lent to Tortoise. And there he stood in his hard shell full of food and wine but without any wings to fly home. He asked the birds to take a message for his wife, but they all refused. In the end Parrot, who had felt more angry than the others, suddenly changed his mind and agreed to take the message.

"Tell my wife," said Tortoise, 'to bring out all the soft things in my house and cover the compound with them so that I can jump down from the sky without very great danger.'

"Parrot promised to deliver the message, and then flew away. But when he reached Tortoise's house he told his wife to bring out all the hard things in the house. And so she brought out her husband's hoes, machetes, spears, guns and even his cannon. Tortoise looked down from the sky and saw his wife bringing things out, but it was too far to see what they were. When all seemed ready he let himself go. He fell and fell and fell until he began to fear that he would never stop falling. And then like the sound of his cannon he crashed on the compound."

"Did he die?" asked Ezinma.

"No," replied Ekwefi. "His shell broke into pieces. But there was a great medicine man in the neighborhood. Tortoise's wife sent for him and he gathered all the bits of shell and stuck them together. That is why Tortoise's shell is not smooth."

....EKWEFI na ada ya, Ezinma, nọduru ala n'ute di n'ala. Ekwe fi ka o ruturu ifo ifo.

O wee malite. "O nwere otu mgbe a kpọrọ nnunu dum oriri na mbaraigwe. Ha dum nwere nnukwu onu wee malite ikwado onwe ha maka nnukwu ubochi ahụ. Ha jiri akara uhie na uli wee chọchaa ahụ ha mma nkeoma."

"Mbe huru nkwardo ndi a niile wee choputa ihe o putara n'oge adighi anya. Onweghi ihe obula mere n'obodo umu anumanu na-ehie ya anya; o juputara n'aghugho. Ngwangwa o nuru maka nnukwu oriri ahụ ga-adị na mbaraigwe ka akpiri malitere ikọ ya ukọ na echiche banyere ya. E nwere unwu n'oge ahụ; Mbe eribeghi ezigbo nri n'onwa abuo. Ahu ya wee na-ayogharị dika osisi kpọrọ nku n'ime okpokoro ya togbo n'efu. O wee malite ikwado etu o ga-esi eje na mbaraigwe."

"Mana o nweghi nku," Ezinma kwuru.

"Nwee ndidi," nne ya zagbachiri. "O bu ya bu akuko m ji abia. Mbe enweghi nku, mana o gakwuru umunnunu wee gwa ha ka ha kwere ka o soro ha jee.

"Anyi maara onye i bu nkeoma," umunnunu kwuru mgbe ha nuchara ihe o kwuru. "I juputara n'aghugho, i nweghikwa obi ekele. O buru na anyi kwere ka i soro anyi jee, i ghaghi igosiputa ajo omume gi n'oge adighi anya."

"Unu amaghi onye m bu," Mbe kwuru. "Abu m nwoke gbanwerela agbanwe. Achoputala m na nwoke obula na-enye ndi ozo nsogbu sokwazi enye onwe ya nsogbu."

"Mbe nwere ire uto, n'oge adighi anya, nnunu dum ekwekorita na o burula nwoke gbanwere agbanwe, ha wee nye ya mgbele n'otu n'otu, nke o jiri meputa nku abuo."

"N'ikpeazu, nnukwu ubochi ahụ ruru, Mbe wee buru onye izizi putara n'ebe ogbakọ ha. Mgbe nnunu dum gbakotachara ka ha puziri n'igwe. Mbe nwere nnukwu onu wee na-ekwu naani ekwurekwe dika o na-eke n'etiti umunnunu; a hoputakwara ya n'oge adighi ka o buru nwoke ga-ekwuru ha okwu maka na o bu ezigbo okwokwu."

"E nwere otu ihe di mkpa anyi agaghi echefu," o kwuru dika ha na-eke n'uzo ha. "Mgbe obula a kpọrọ ndi mmadu na nnukwu oriri dika nke a, ha na-ewere aha ohuru maka ya bu emume. Ndi kpọrọ anyi oriri na mbaraigwe ga-atu anya na anyi ga-emejuputakwa omenaala a diwara na gboo."

"Onweghi nnunụ ọbụla nūrula banyere ụdị omenaala a, mana ha dum maara na n'agbanyeghi na Mbe adichaghi ike n'ihe ndi ọzọ, na ọ bụ nwoke merela nnukwu njem, onye nke maara banyere omenaala mba di ichiiche. Ya mere ha niile jiri were aha ọhuru n'otu, n'otu. Mgbe ha niile werechaara, Mbe weere otu. Aha a ga-akpo ya bu 'Unu niile.'

"N'ikpeazu, otu ahụ ruru na mbaraigwe, ndi kporo ha oku nwere nukwu obi uto ihu ha. Mbe kulitere na nku ya ahụ nwere otutu agba wee kelee ha maka oku ha kporo. Okwu ya di ezigbo mma nke na nnunụ dum nwere onu na ha kpotara ya, ha kwere n'isi iji kwadoo ihe niile o kwuru. Ndi kporo ha oku chere na ọ bụ eze umunnunụ, okacha dika o siri ditu ichi n'ebe ndi ọzọ nọ."

"Mgbe e weputachara ma tachaa oji, ndi mbaraigwe chere ndi obia ha nri kachasi uto Mbe huturula n'anya maobu rotatu na nro. E si n'oku wee buputa ofe na-ekpo ezigbo oku n'ime otu ite ahụ e jiri sie ya. Anu na azu juputara n'ime ya. Mbe wee malitezie isi n'imi n'imi. E nwere utara ji na eterete ji e jiri mmanu na azu ndu wee sie. Enwegasikwara ite mmanya nkwa. Mgbe e buputachara ihe niile n'ihu ndi obia, otu onye n'ime ndi mbaraigwe biara rituchaa ite nri nke obula. O wee kpozie umunnunụ ka ha rie nri. Mana Mbe wuliri elu n'ukwu ya abuo wee juo: "Kedu onye unu kwadoro oriri a maka ya?"

"Maka unu niile," nwoke ahụ zagbachiri.

"Mbe wee tugharia n'ebe umunnunụ nọ wee si: "Unu chetara na aha m bu unu niile. Omenaala ebe a bu ibu uto nye okwuruoha nri, emechaa, e nyezie ndi ọzọ. A ga-enye unu nri ma m richaa."

O wee malite iri nri, umunnunụ wee na-atamu ntamu na mwute. Ndi mbaraigwe chere na ọ ghaghi ibu omenaala ha ihapuru eze ha nri dum. N'ihi ya, Mbe riri nri ndi kacha mma ma mechara nuo ite mmanya nkwa abuo, nke mere o jiri juputa na nri na mmanya, ahuya wee juzie eju n'ime okpokoro ya ahụ.

Umunnunụ mechara gbakota ka ha rie ihe foduru ma gwukwaa onu n'elu okpukpu ndi nke ọ tupuchara n'ala. Ufodu n'ime ha were oké iwe nke na ha ekweghi eri. Ha nabatara ibu onu wee fere lawa. Mana tupu ha lawa, onye obula wegbara mgbele o nyere Mbe. O wee guzoro ebe ahụ n'okpokoro ya ahụ kporo nku, juputa na nri na mmanya, na-enweghi nku obula ọ ga-eji fere lawa. O gwara umunnunụ ka ha zigara nwunye ya ozi, mana ha niile

juru aju. N'ikpeazu ka Icheku, onye nke weburu iwe kariya ndi ozo, gbanweziri obi ya na mberede wee kwere inara ya bu ozi.

"Gwa nwunye m," Mbe kwuru, "ka o buputachaa ihe niile di nro di n'ulo m ma were ha kpuchie mbaraezi, ka m wee nwee ike isite na mbaraigwe wutuo na-enweghi nnukwu ihe egwu."

"Icheku kwere nkwa izi ozi ahụ, wee fepu. Mana mgbe o ruru n'ulo Mbe, o gwara nwunye ya ka o buputachaa ihe niile siri ike di n'ulo. O wee buputa ogo di ya, mma, ube, egbe, na obuna mkponala. Mbe siri na mbaraigwe ledata anya wee hu ka nwunye ya si ebuputagasi ihe, mana o di oké anya imata ihe ha bu. Mgbe o chere na ihe niile ezuola oke, o hapuzie onwe ya. O wee dagide ada, dagide, dagide ruo mgbe o malitere itu egwu na o gaghizi enwe ike ikwusi ida. O mechaa gbarie na na mbaraezi, dika uda mkponala ya."

"O nwuru?" Ezinma juru.

"Mba," Ekwefi zaghachiri. "Okpokoro ya kwara n'ibe n'ibe. Mana e nwere otu nnukwu dibia n'agbataobi ha. Nwunye Mbe ziri ozi ka a kpo ya, o wee chikota iberibe okpokoro Mbe ma kwachikota ha onu. O bu ya mere okpokoro Mbe jiri ghara idi rari."

(This particular extract from chapter 11, is one of the most popular stories of the tortoise and his wily ways.

In Igbo land, the act of story telling is an art - an art that passes from one generation to another, with each generation adding more and more flavors towards making improved stories. In general, story telling is a very important aspect of the Igbo society. And the good thing about story telling is that every story come with lots of moral lessons in the end. There is no doubt that the accumulated effect of these stories contributed immensely in making the Igbos one of the smartest set of people in the world.)

12. ALL this anthill activity was going smoothly when a sudden interruption came. It was a cry in the distance: Oji odu achu ijiji-o-o! (The one that uses its tail to drive flies away!) Every woman immediately abandoned whatever she was doing and rushed out in the direction of the cry.

"We cannot all rush out like that, leaving what we are cooking to burn in the fire," shouted Chielo, the priestess. "Three or four of us should stay behind."

"It is true," said another woman. "We will allow three or four women to stay behind."

Five women stayed behind to look after the cooking-pots, and all the rest rushed away to see the cow that had been let loose. When they saw it they drove it back to its owner, who at once paid the heavy fine which the village imposed on anyone whose cow was let loose on his neighbors' crops. When the women had exacted the penalty they checked among themselves to see if any woman had failed to come out when the cry had been raised.

"Where is Mgbogo?" asked one of them.

"She is ill in bed," said Mgbogo's next-door neighbor. "She has iba."

"The only other person is Udenkwo," said another woman, "and her child is not twenty eight days yet. "

NNUKWU ọrụ a niile nọ na-aga ziriri werere ruo mgbe otu ihe mmegharịanya daputara na mberede. O bụ olu mkpu dara n'oteaka: "Oji ọdụ achụ ijiji-o-o!" Nwaanyị ọbụla wee hapụ ihe niile o na-eme ozugbo ahụ wee gbaga n'ụzọ ebe mkpu ahụ si ada.

"Anyị niile agaghị agbapụcha ọsọ etu ahụ wee hapụ ihe anyị na-esi ka o ree ọkụ," Chielo, onyenchụàjànwaanyị, kwuru n'olu ike. "Mmadụ atọ maọbụ anọ n'ime anyị kwesiri inọ n'ụlọ."

"O bụ eziokwu," nwaanyị ọzọ kwuru. "Anyị ga-ahapụ mmadụ atọ maọbụ anọ ka ha nọrọ n'ụlọ."

Ụmụnwaanyị ise mechara nọrọ n'ụlọ iji lekọta ite ndị ahụ dị n'ọkụ, ndị ọzọ wee gbapụ ka ha gaa mara onye ehi ya topurụ n'ogbụ. Mgbe ha hụrụ ya, ha chughachiri ya na be onye nwe ya, onye nke kwurụ nnukwu ugwo ahụ e debere n'iwu maka onye ọbụla ehi ya topurụ wee banye n'ubi onye agbataobi ya. Mgbe ụmụnwaanyị ahụ natachara ego iwu ahụ, ha leghariri anya n'etiti onwe ha iji mara ma o nwere nwaanyị ọbụla na-aputaghị mgbe e tiri mkpu ahụ.

"Ebee ka Mgbogo nọ?" otu n'ime ha jụrụ.

"O nọ n'akwa ọrịa," onye agbataobi ya kwuru. "Iba na-eme ya."

"Naanị Udenkwo bụ onye ọzọ," nwaanyị ọzọ kwuru; "nwa ya erubeghi mkpurụ ụbọchị irinaasatọ."

(The lines above point to the contributions of women in the society. Up to this day, the womenfolk, popularly called Daughters or *Ụmụada*, form one of the strongest local authorities in the various communities in Igbo land.)

13. OBIERIKA was a man who thought about things. When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend's calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offense he had committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offense on the land and must be destroyed. And if the clan did not exact punishment for an offense against the great goddess, her wrath was loosed on all the land and not just on the offender. As the elders said, if one finger brought oil it soiled the others.

OBIERIKA bụ nwoke chere echiche banyere ọtụtụ ihe. Mgbe e mejuputachara ebumnuche ya bụ chi ka ọ nọdurụ ala n'obí ya wee ruu ụjụ banyere ọdachi dakwasara enyi ya. Gịnị mere nwoke ga-eji ata nnukwu ahụhụ dị etu a maka mmehie o mere n'amaghị ama? Mana n'agbanyeghị na o chere echiche ogologo oge, o nwetaghị ọsịsa. O dubakwuru ya naanị n'ime nnukwu mgbagwojuanya. O chetara ụmụ ejima nwunye ya, ndị nke ọ tufuru atufu. Kedu árụ ha mere? Ala ekwuputala na ha bụ mmehie n'ebe chi nke ala nọ; a gaghịkwanụ ịla ha n'iyi. O bụrụ na ndị obodo emejuputaghịkwanụ ntaramahụhụ dijiri mmehie ọbụla megidere nnukwu chi ahụ, iwe ya ga-adakwasị ọha obodo dum, ọbughịzi naanị onye ahụ mejorọnụ. Dịka ndị okenye siri kwuo, "otu mkpụrụ aka rụta mmanụ, o rutu ndị ọzọ."

14. THEN listen to me,' he said and cleared his throat. '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. She is buried there. And that is why we say that mother is supreme. Is it right that you, Okonkwo, should bring your mother a heavy face and refuse to be comforted? Be careful or you may displease the dead. Your duty is to comfort your wives and children and take them back to your fatherland after seven years. But if

you allow sorrow to weigh you down and kill you, they will all die in exile.

NGWA gezienụ m ntị,' o kwuru ma kwachaa akpịrị ya. "Ọ bụ eziokwu na nna nwe nwa. Mana nna tie nwa ya ihe, ọ chọwa nkasi obi n'imeulo nne ya. Nwoke na-abụ onye ala nna ya mgbe ihe dị mma, ndụ na-atọ ụtọ. Mana mgbe e nwere ihe mwute na ihe ilu, ọ chọwa ebe mgbaba n'ikwunne ya. Ebe ahụ ka nne gị nọ iji chekwaba gị. Ebe ahụ ka e liri ya. Ya mere anyị ji asi na Nne ka. Ọ bụ ihe ziri ezi na gị bụ Okonkwo ga na-eburu nne gị ihu ma jụ inara nkasiobi? Kpacharakwa anya ka ị ghara ikpasu onye nwurụ anwụ iwe. Ọrụ gị bụ ikasi ndị nwunye gị na ụmụaka gị obi, ma kpoghashi ha azụ n'ala nna gị mgbe afọ asaa gachara. Mana i kwerezie ka mwute butere gị mmụọ ida mbà na ọnwụ, ha dum ga-anwụkwa n'ụzọ ije."

(This was probably Achebe's most favorite passage in *Things Fall Apart*. According to him, it was years later after writing the *Things Fall Apart*, that he discovered something interesting in this passage that he never thought of when he was writing it. Indeed, *Mother is Supreme* (Nne ka) There's no other love like a mother's love for her child. And this unique love that wells from the mother is somewhat found in the mother's kinsmen too. In my maternal home for instance, as indeed the other surrounding communities, there's a kind of customized style of greeting for mothers' kinsmen. These simple words of greetings "De nne" and "De nnaa" (for the women and the men respectively) are enough to win one a Castle. The more beautiful thing is the excitement with which they respond to the greetings, singing your praise and calling you "Nwa diala" (son of the soil) in a very special way. And even if there's no castle to be won, they hardly leave you without some amount of money called "ego mgbara ihe" with which you can buy for yourself whatever you wish. Recall in chapter 5, Achebe had told us how excitedly Okonkwo's wives talked about their relations who had been invited for The New Yam Festival, and how "... the children revelled in the thoughts of being spoilt by these visitors from mother-land." Frankly speaking, up to this day, people from mother-land have never ceased to support in the most extraordinary ways the children born to other people by their sisters. So when we say Nneka, we mean what we say.

15. "YOU do not understand," the convert maintained. "You are our teacher, and you can teach us the things of the new faith. But this is a

matter which we know.” And he told him what an osu was. He was a person dedicated to a god, a thing set apart—a taboo for ever, and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the freeborn. He was in fact an outcast, living in a special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Wherever he went he carried with him the mark of his forbidden caste—long, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was taboo to him. An osu could not attend an assembly of the freeborn, and they, in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he died he was buried by his kind in the Evil Forest. How could such a man be a follower of Christ?

"Ì gaghi aghota," onye ahụ a toghatara atoghata kwudosiri ike n'ihe ọ na-ekwu. "Ì bụ onye nkuzi anyị; i nwere ike ikuziri anyị ihe gbasara okwukwe ọhụrụ a. Mana okwu nke a bụ ihe anyị onwe anyị maara." O wee gwa ya ihe bụ osu.

Ọ bụ onye a gorọ nye Arusi, ihe e wezugara ewezuga - ihe árudị ebighi ebi, ma ụmụ ya ndị na-esote. Onweghi ike ilu dila, nke dila na-enwekwanu ike ilu ya. N'ezie, ọ bụ onye a chupuru achupu, nke bi na mpaghara diiri onwe ya iche n'ime ogbè, ebe di nso na nnukwu ebenujaja. Ebe ọ bula ọ na-aga, ọ na-ebu akara mmachibido ndi otu ya - ntutu isi toro ogologo, gbakuchara agbaku ma ruo unyi. Aguba bu ihe aru n'ebe ọ no. Osu apughi iga nzuko dila, nke ha onwe ha na-enwekwanu ike ibanye n'ebe obibi ya. Ọ pughi iwere echichi obula n'ime echichi anọ ahụ di n'obodo; ọ nwuo, ndi otu ya elie ya n'Ajo Ohia. Kedu ka onye di etu a ga-esi abu onye otu Kristi?

16 “YOU say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth,” said Akunna on one of Mr. Brown’s visits. “We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods.” “There are no other gods,” said Mr. Brown. “Chukwu is the only God and all others are false. You carve a piece of wood—like that one” (he pointed at the rafters from which Akunna’s carved Ikenga hung), “and you call it a god. But it is still a piece of wood.” “Yes,” said Akunna. “It is indeed a piece of wood. The tree from which it came was made by Chukwu, as indeed all minor gods were. But He made them for His messengers so that we could approach Him through them. It is like yourself. You are the head of your church.” “No,” protested Mr. Brown. “The head of my church is God Himself.” “I know,” said Akunna, “but there must be a head in this world

among men. Somebody like yourself must be the head here.” “The head of my church in that sense is in England.” “That is exactly what I am saying. The head of your church is in your country. He has sent you here as his messenger. And you have also appointed your own messengers and servants. Or let me take another example, the District Commissioner. He is sent by your king.” “They have a queen,” said the interpreter on his own account. “Your queen sends her messenger, the District Commissioner. He finds that he cannot do the work alone and so he appoints kotma to help him. It is the same with God, or Chukwu. He appoints the smaller gods to help Him because His work is too great for one person.” “You should not think of Him as a person,” said Mr. Brown. “It is because you do so that you imagine He must need helpers. And the worst thing about it is that you give all the worship to the false gods you have created.” “That is not so. We make sacrifices to the little gods, but when they fail and there is no one else to turn to we go to Chukwu. It is right to do so. We approach a great man through his servants. But when his servants fail to help us, then we go to the last source of hope. We appear to pay greater attention to the little gods but that is not so. We worry them more because we are afraid to worry their Master. Our fathers knew that Chukwu was the Overlord and that is why many of them gave their children the name Chukwuka—“Chukwu is Supreme.” “You said one interesting thing,” said Mr. Brown. “You are afraid of Chukwu. In my religion Chukwu is a loving Father and need not be feared by those who do His will.” “But we must fear Him when we are not doing His will,” said Akunna. “And who is to tell His will? It is too great to be known. *Sị na e nwere otu Chukwu onye kere eluigwe na ala,* Akunna kwuru n'otu ụbọchị Mazi Brown biara ileta ya. *'Anyị kwenyekwara na ya ma na-akpọ ya Chukwu. O kere eluūwa dum na chi ndị ọzọ.'*

'Enweghị chi ndị ọzọ,' Mazi Brown kwuru. Chukwu bụ naanị otu Chukwu, ndị nke ọzọ bụ ụgha. I na-apị ibé osisi - dika nke nūhū' (o wee tūọ aka n'eluūlọ, ebe e kowere Ikenga Akunna), 'i na-akpọ ya chi. Mana ọ ka bụkwa ibé osisi.'

'Ee,' Akunna kwuru. 'Ọ bụ ibé osisi n'ezie. Osi o si na ya pụta bụ Chukwu kere ya; n'ezie, dika e siri kee chi ndị ọzọ niile. Mana o kere ha ka ha bụrụ ndị ozi ya, ka anyị nwee ike isi n'aka ha wee na-abiakwute ya. Ọ dika gi onwe gi. I bụ onyeisi nke ụka gi.'

'Mba,' Mazi Brown dūrū n'ubu. Onyeisi nke ụka m bụ Chukwu n'onwe ya.' *'Ama m,' Akunna kwuru, 'mana a ga-enwerịrị onyeisi n'ụwa a, n'etiti ndi mmadụ. Mmadu di ka gi onwe gi aghaghị ibụ onyeisi n'ebe a.'*

'A bịa na nke ahụ, onyeisi ụka m nọ n'England.'

'Nke ahụ bụ ihe m na-ekwu kpomkwem. Onyeisi ụka gị nọ n'ala ụnu. O wee zite gị ebe a dika onye ozi ya. Gị onwe gị ahoputakwarala onwe gị ndi ozi na ndi odibo. Maobu, ka m nye gị omumatu ozo, nwa DC. Eze unu zitere ya.'

'Ezenwaanyi ka ha nwere,' onye nkowaokwu kwuru n'onwe ya.

'Ezenwaanyi unu zitere onye ozi ya, nwa DC. O wee choputa na o gaghi enwe ike irucha oru ahụ naani ya; o wee hoputa kotma ga na-enyere ya aka. Etu ahụ ka o di n'ebe Chukwu nọ. O na-ahoro umu obere chi ka ha na-enyere ya aka, maka na oru ya kariri oru otu onye.'

'I kwesighi i na-ahuta ya ka otu onye,' Mazi Brown kwuru. O bu ya mere i ji na-eche na o ghaghi icho onye enyemaka. Ihe kacha njo na ya bu na i na-akpo isiala enye chi igha ndi i jiri aka gi mee.'

'O bughị ya. Anyi na achuru umu obere chi aja, mana mgbe obula ha haripuru; mgbe a na-enweghizi onye ozo anyi nwere ike igbakwuru, anyi agazie n'ebe Chukwu nọ. O ziri ezi ime etu a. Anyi na-agakwuru oké mmadu site n'aka umuodibo ya. Mana mgbe umuodibo ya ekweghi enyere anyi aka, anyi agazie n'ebe ikpeazu ahụ nchekwube anyi di. O di ka anyi na-etinye uche n'umu obere chi kara, mana o bughị etu ahụ. Anyi na-enye ha nsogbu kara maka na anyi na-atu egwu inye nna ha ukwu nsogbu. Ndi nna anyi ha maara na Chukwu bu Dinwenu nke ihe niile, ya mere otutu n'ime ha jiri kpo umu ha Chukwuka.'

'I kwuru otu okwu putara ihe,' Mazi Brown kwuru. 'I na-atu Chukwu egwu. N'okpukpe nke m, Chukwu bu nna huru umu ya n'anya, o kwesighi ekwesi ka ndi na-eme uche ya na-atu ya egwu.'

'Mana anyi ga-atunu ya egwu mgbe anyi hapuru ime uche ya,' Akunna kwuru. 'Onye kwanu ga-agwa anyi uche ya? O kariri uche mmadu na nghota.'

(Those were conversations between the white missionary, Brown, and one influential Umuofia man, Akunna.

Akunna made it clear to the white man that the Igbo people already knew the Almighty God even before the advent of Christianity.

'Our fathers knew that Chukwu was the Overlord and that is why many of them gave their children the name Chukwuka - "God is Supreme" ')

17. THE white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store and for the first time palm-oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia.

N'ezie, onye ọcha ewetala okpukpe isimgbaka, mana o wukwaziri ụlọ azumahịa, o wee buru mgbe izizi mmanu nri na akị jiri dịzie oké ọnụahịa; nnukwu ego wee batawa Umuofia.

(This marked another Era of the Igbo entrepreneurial spirit.

The Igbos are probably the most experienced and successful set of traders in the world. Today, it is a clear fact that the Igbo apprenticeship system popularly called "igba odibo" has become the largest business incubator in the whole world.)

18. Then they came to the tree from which Okonkwo's body was dangling, and they stopped dead.

"Perhaps your men can help us bring him down and bury him," said Obierika. "We have sent for strangers from another village to do it for us, but they may be a long time coming."

The District Commissioner changed instantaneously. The resolute administrator in him gave way to the student of primitive customs.

"Why can't you take him down yourselves?" he asked.

"It is against our custom," said one of the men. "It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offense against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it. That is why we ask your people to bring him down, because you are strangers."

"Will you bury him like any other man?" asked the Commissioner.

"We cannot bury him. Only strangers can. We shall pay your men to do it. When he has been buried we will then do our duty by him. We shall make sacrifices to cleanse the desecrated land."

Obierika, who had been gazing steadily at his friend's dangling body, turned suddenly to the District Commissioner and said ferociously: "That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog...." He could not say any more. His voice trembled and choked his words.

Ha rutere n'ụkwù osisi ahụ ebe ahụ Okonkwọ nọ na-ayoghari, ụkwù wee tozie ha n'ala.

'Eleghianya, ndị òtù gị ga-enyere anyị aka butuo ozu ya ma lie ya,' Obierika kwuru. 'Anyị eziela ozi ka a kpọrọ anyị ndị mba si n'ògbè ọzọ ka ha bịa meere anyị ya, mana enwere ike ọ buru na ha ka nọ ebe dị anya.'

Nwa DC wee gbanwezie ozugbo. Ike ọchịchị ahụ di n'ime ya wee nye ohere, o wee bụrụzie nwata akwukwọ na-amụ banyere omenaala mgbe ochie.

O juru si, 'Gini mere unu onwe unu agaghị ebutu ya?'

'O megidere omenaala anyi,' otu n'ime umunwoke ahụ kwuru. Nwoke iji aka ya egbu onwe ya bu nsọala. O bu mmehie megidere ala, umunna anaghị eji aka ha eli onye ọbula mere ya. Ahụya bu ajọ ihe, naanị ndị ọbia nwere ike imetu ya aka. Ya mere anyi jiri gwa ndi otu gi ka ha butuo ya maka na unu bu ndi ọbia.'

'Unu aga-eli ya etu e si eli ndi ọzọ?' Nwa DC juru.

'Anyi enweghi ike ili ya. Naanị ndi ọbia nwere ike. Anyi ga-akwu ndi oru gi ugwo ka ha mee ya. E lichazie ya, anyi emeere ya omenaala anyi. Anyi ga-achụ aja iji sachaa ala e meruru emeru.'

Obierika, onye nke anya ya toro n'ahụ enyi ya ahụ nọ na-ayogharị tughariri na mberede n'ebe nwa DC nọ, wee kwuo okwu n'oké mwute na-asị: 'Nwoke a bu otu n'ime ndi bu okaibe n'Umufia. O bu unu mere o jiri gbuo onwe ya; ugbo a, a ga-elizi ya ka nkita...' Okwu ekweghizi ya okwukwu. Olu ya mara jijiji, okwu wee to ya n'onu.

In conclusion, I recommend that we all should always go back to our history. And the good news is that Prof Chinua Achebe had masterfully recorded our history in the purest, undiluted and truest form of it in this *Things Fall Apart*. This book is where the true story of the African people was clearly told from the perspective of the colonized rather than that of the colonizers. That being said, it is expected that every African, especially the Igbos, should always have a copy of *Things Fall Apart* as a hand book to rely on. And more interestingly, Achebe always has something new to teach us each time we return to the novel.

Finally, it is very important that the Igbo Translation of *Things Fall Apart* joins the list of other translations. Therefore, I humbly beseech the support and cooperation of our well to do Igbo men and women in the actualization of this very important Igbo edition of *THINGS FALL APART*.