

Chinua Achebe

By: Kj Johnson, Erica Veri, Connor Macias, Emma Kunkel, and Jacob Ploeger

Background Information

Chinua Achebe (1930–2013) was an author, political crusader, and professor who was inspired to write an African novel that correctly portrayed African people. His first novel, Things Fall Apart gave Achebe international recognition along with his other works, focusing on life in an African society. While writing, he taught at many American universities and University of Nigeria. He is remembered for African literature internationally.



Early Life

- Chinua Achebe was born November 15, 1930 in the Igbo town of Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria, which was a territory of Great Britain in the early years of his life.
- Since Achebe learned English later in life, he appreciated his home country and culture more than one would if they had learned English before the native tongue.
- He attended University College to study medicine, but then changed his degree to liberal arts.
- His writing career started with writing stories in the University's newspaper about the clash of western and eastern culture.



Life Experience



- Joined NBC (Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation) in 1958.
- Publishing his first novel *“Things fall apart”*.
- During the 1960’s Achebe was in a creative phase of his life writing multiple novels such as *“No Longer at Ease”*, *“Arrow of God”*, and *“A Man of People”*.
- In 1961, Achebe got married to Christie Chinwe Okoli.
- When Achebe returned from the United States he became a professor at the University of Nigeria from 1976–1981.
- After his short teaching career, Achebe started writing children’s novels like *“How the Leopard got his claws”* and *“Soul-Brother”*.

Education



- Chinua Achebe attended Church Missionary Society's school where he learned to speak English at the age of 8. As an adult he came back and became an educator at the same school.
- At the age of 14, Achebe got accepted to attend the Government College in Umuahia which at the time was considered to be the best school in West Africa.
- Achebe graduated at the age of 18 and was expected to study medicine at the University of Ibadan but was attending the University of London at the time.
- Achebe later decided to switch his degree to liberal arts which included history, religion, and English.

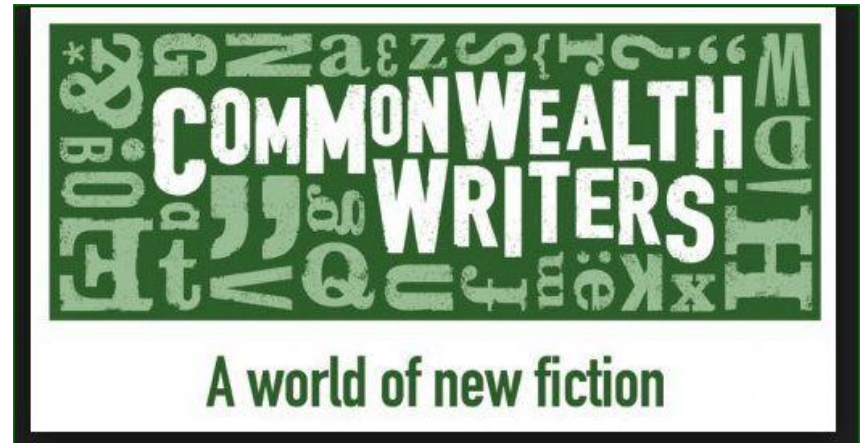
Career

- He was a known author, but he was also a known publisher.
- Was working with Christopher Okigbo until he was killed in the civil war.
- This made him become the only one trying to help African children.
- He accomplished his goals while still writing.
- Before any of his creative writing and publishing
He worked for NBC as a news broadcaster which introduced him to the Western world.



Literary Accomplishments

- He was awarded the title of “the father of modern African writing”.
- Among many other awards he earned he achieved:
 - Man Booker International Prize in 2007
 - Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1982
 - Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 2007
 - St. Louis Literary Award 1995



Criticism

- People think it should have been written in the traditional African language.
- Some people say the book has a feminist perspective.
- The perspective could be taken as too easily biased and sexist.
- Highlights some negative aspects of the society and characters.
- Tends to ignore men's perspective.
- Can turn too political and theoretical.



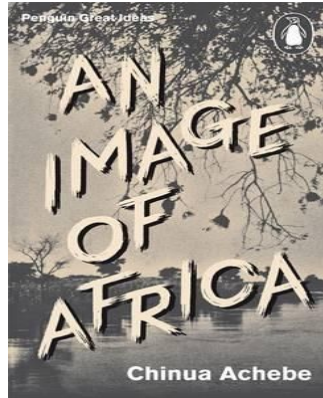
Purpose of His Work

Achebe wanted to capture the voice of the indigenous African culture and show people that the common stereotypes of Africa are not true. He disproved the notion that Africans were “uncivilized” and showed people the real and modern side of Africa. Through his work, Achebe shows an accurate representation of African culture and defends the modern ideals of the people living there.



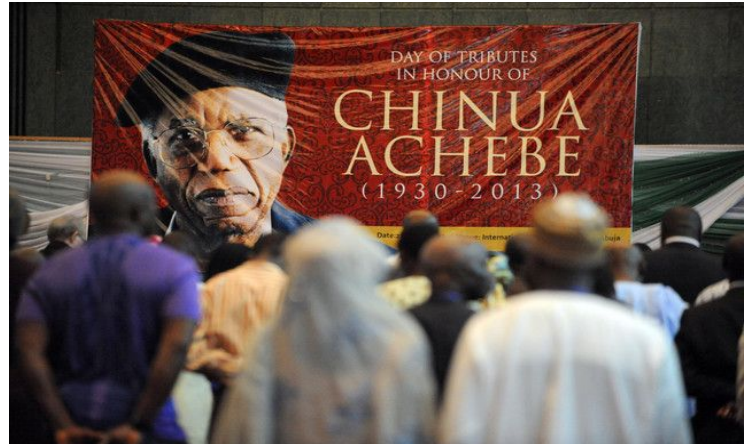
The Image of Africa: The Racial Picture

The Image of Africa was an essay written by Chinua Achebe about the racial stereotypes a person thought about when he thought about Africa. Achebe's novel *Heart of Darkness* portrays damaging stereotypes about Africa and Conrad (the guy Achebe is speaking with in the essay) is ignorant to the truth of Africa. This essay is known worldwide and is taught in schools around the world.



Death

- Achebe lived a long and fulfilling life before dying at the age of 82 in Boston, Massachusetts on March 21, 2013.
- Mr. Achebe had a brief illness but the main cause of death was old age.
- Hundreds of Nigerians came to Achebe's funeral, including the former president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan.



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Nigeria's Pre-Colonial History (before 1890's)

Jessica Rodriguez, Jin Jin Lu, Peyton Thulin, Matthew Garcia
Period 3rd

Early Nigeria Pre-Colonial

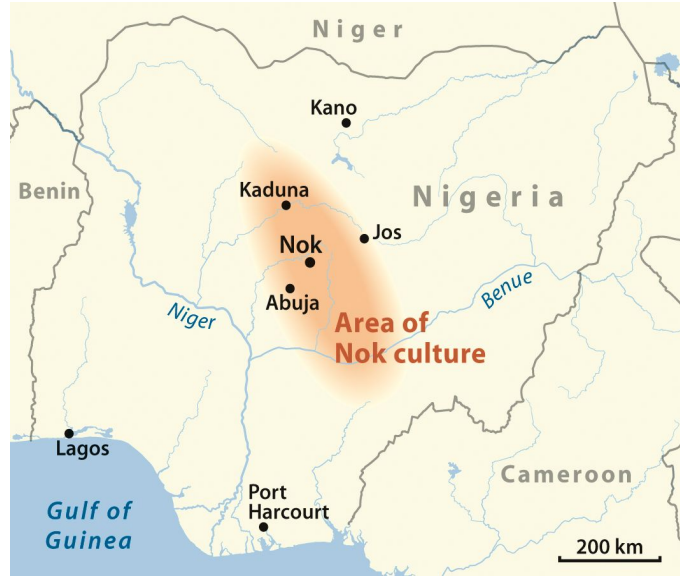
- 500 BCE- Archeological evidence indicates human habitation in the region.
 - In 1943 archaeologist Bernard Fagg discovered domestic pottery, stone axes, and clay shreds dated back to 500 BCE settlements.
- 800 BCE- The Nok, first civilization, develops in the Jos Plateau.
 - The Nok civilization began at the end of Neolithic Age and the start of the Iron Age.
 - Was a complex society with permanent settlements and centres for farming and manufacturing.
 - It is known for its unique culture and art such as the terracotta sculptures.



Images & Maps



<http://www.dayofarchaeology.com/author/crees/>



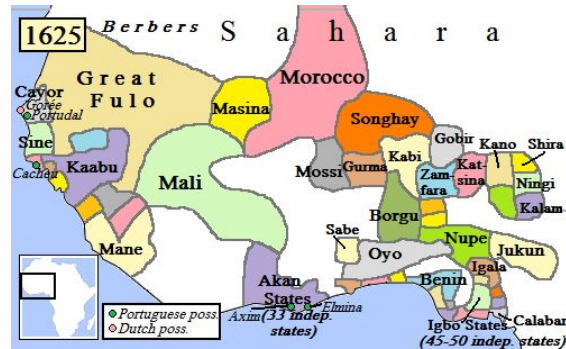
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File_talk:Nok-map.png



<http://www.studioanmol.com/terracotta-sculpture>

The Era of Cities, States, and Empires

- 1000-1500 CE- Tribal villages in forest of Western Africa strengthen into powerful kingdoms.
 - Oyo empire becomes prosperous through its favourable trading position, natural resources, and industry of inhabitants.
 - Edo empire becomes prosperous through the trade of slaves with the Europeans.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oyo_Empire

Major Events in Nigeria's Pre-Colonial History

500 B.C.- Nok culture flourishes such as their terracotta sculptures.

- Sculptures of large human and animal heads made out of clay and finished with a glossy coat.
- Clay figures are found in a village in Nigeria called Nok.
- Discovered during work in a tin mine.

1472- Portuguese settlers become the first Europeans to live in Nigeria.

- Began to purchase slaves and were followed by British, Dutch, And French traders

1800s- Fulani empire takes control over regions of Nigeria.



The Slave Trade

1472- Portuguese settlers began slave-trading.

- Slaves were captured by coastal middlemen

16th century- Europeans engage in slave trade.

- Millions of Nigerians are being sent into slavery over the next three centuries.

1700s- Britain leads the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

- 15,000 slaves are being shipped each year.

Individuals who were apart of the slave trade became wealthy.

- Many city-states were established.
- 

The Expedition

1854- William Balfour Baikie became in command of the expedition when Fernando Po died.

March 1857- He concludes a treaty with Nupa and builds a small town on the Niger river.

- Missionary stations were established and they explored over 250 miles of the Benue river that became explored and charted.
- Williams stayed on the rivers for 118 days proving survival.



The British influence

1861- British stopped slave trade.

1885- Oil river protectorate was declared by Britain.

- British had a anti-slavery policy that involved boosting the trade in palm oil
- The policy set up trade stations.

1886- They are ensuring local kings accept British rule.

1893- British defeat the Ibadan Empire.

- Yourab people agree to british protectorate.

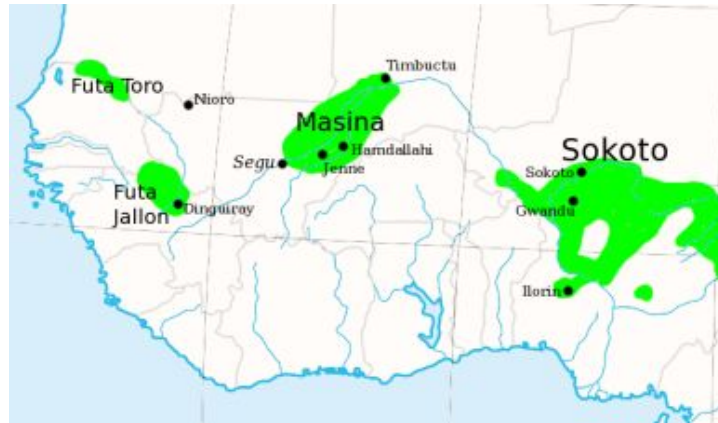


Kingdom Hardships

1810- Sokoto Caliphate begins *jihad* against non-muslims religion.

- 1812-The Kanem-Bornu Empire never fully recovers from devastation of war.

1836- Oya Empire collapses. Ibadan Empire emerges.



Discoveries Geographically

February 17, 1823- Hugh Clapperton and his assistant Richard Lemon Lander reach Kuka, where they are the first Europeans to see Lake Chad.

22 March 1830- Richard Lemon Lander and his brother John begin a new journey of exploration along Niger River.



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Colonization of Nigeria

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By: Zachary Houdek, Jackson Moore, Scott Marker, Gavin Farner

Map



Timeline 1861-2002

1861-1914 - Britain consolidates its hold over the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, governs by "indirect rule" through local leaders.

1960 - Independence, with Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa leading a coalition government.

1967 - Three eastern states secede as the Republic of Biafra, sparking bloody civil war.

1979 - Elections bring Alhaji Shehu Shagari to power.

1983 January - The government expels more than one million foreigners, mostly Ghanaians, saying they had overstayed their visas and were taking jobs from Nigerians. This is condemned abroad but very popular in Nigeria.

1995 - Ken Saro-Wiwa, writer and campaigner against oil industry damage to Ogoni homeland, is executed after a hasty trial. EU imposes sanctions until 1998, Commonwealth suspends Nigeria's membership until 1998.

2000 - Adoption of Islamic/Sharia law by several northern states because of opposition from Christians. Clashes between Christians and Muslims cause hundreds of deaths.

2001 - Tribal war in Benue state displaces thousands of people.

2002 February - Over 100 people are killed in Lagos in clashes between Hausas from mainly-Islamic north and ethnic Yorubas from predominantly-Christian southwest.

Indirect Rule

-Indirect rule, a system in which native leaders continued to rule their traditional lands so long as they performed other duties ensuring British prosperity. -

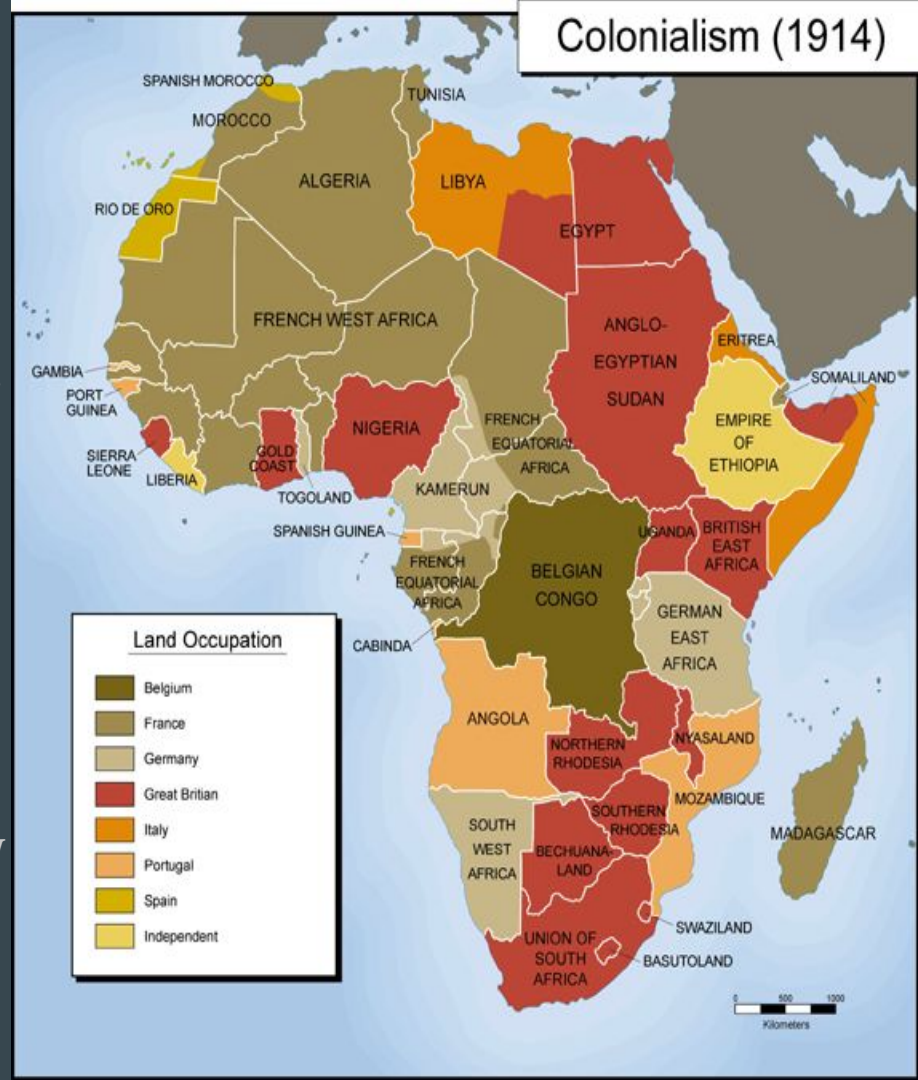
Uncooperative or ineffective leaders were replaced by others who were more compliant or competent. Britain saved economic and political costs of running and militarily securing a government.

-Indirect rule went smoothly in the north, where the British worked with the current aristocracy, who had long controlled the Sokoto caliphate and who could administer Sharia alongside British civil law.

-The south on the other hand went horrible. In the southeast, particularly in Igboland, many of the societies had never had chiefs or organized states. The chiefs appointed by Britain received little or no respect. In Nigeria's culturally fragmented middle belt, small groups were forcefully incorporated into larger political units which was not wanted

Scramble for Africa

The European powers saw Africa as a rich source of wealth ready for the taking. As the major European powers each made claims in the resource rich continent through colonization or conquest, each one was in a race against each other for as much land as they could grab. With the Berlin conference of 1885, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, and France each solidified their colonial claims, and by 1914, nearly the entire continent save for a few independent African countries were under European rule.



The Conquest of Africa

As European forces drove deep into the heart of Africa on their road to colonial domination, they encountered fierce yet often ineffective resistance from the African natives. Although the resistance the Africans put up was determined, they did not have the unity, strategic, and technological means to defeat the invaders. Although the natives far outnumbered the Europeans, the use of new rifles, artillery, and the devastating new Maxim machine gun by the invaders made the African's strength in numbers obsolete. Rifles, bows, and spears, were not invulnerable to the invaders, and soon enough, nearly all of Africa was subjugated under colonial



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British Colonial Rule-Territorial Changes

In 1906, Britain moved into Nigeria and took over colonial rule. The British turned the country into two parts, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. In 1914, the parts combined to form the Protectorate of Nigeria. Under British control, railroads and roads were built and the production of cash crops, such as palm nuts, cocoa beans, and peanuts were encouraged.

British Colonial Rule-Changes in Government

British rule got rid of most of the traditional rule, causing the citizens to be unaccepting of the new government. To fix this, Frederick Lugard was appointed to high commissioner and commander-in-chief. Lugard gave power back to the small territory leaders, and later led the whole nation to be self-governed in 1959. In 1960, Nigeria won their independence from Britain.

African Resistance

The British imperialism was bearing down on Africa but this didn't change the relationships between African communities. These communities thought about how they would protect their own rights and most came to the conclusion that they could work with the Europeans to keep some of their political rights. The Europeans wanted to increase revenue from these colonies, to do this they started to make taxes such as the hut tax and the poll tax. They also started to take land and give it to European settlers, this forced Africans to work for the Europeans.

Using existing feuds against Africa

In one example the British used the feud in what is current day Zimbabwe between the Ndebele and its neighboring territories to further their political power. The British stepped in to help the Ndebele and thus gained control over that land. The British used this land to mine for diamonds and gold and when the Ndebele tried to resist, the British attacked them. The British then used the Africans from neighboring territories to police the Ndebele. The British also used smallpox (a disease) against the Ndebele and weakened them further.

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Present Day Nigeria

Hunter K., Carissa D., Javi V., Avery O.

Population

- Nigeria's population is 167 million
- It is estimated that Nigeria will be responsible for most of the world's overpopulation in 2050
- Every 1 in 5 Africans is Nigerian
- It is the 9th most populated country in the world



Date of Independence

- Nigeria's date of independence is October 1st, 1960
- Independence was gained with Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa leading a coalition government. He was killed in a coup in 1966.

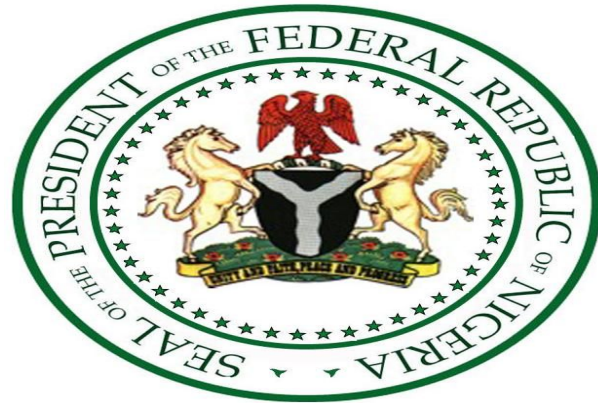
Culture

- Nigeria is home to four large ethnic groups: Fulani, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba
- 350 languages spoken across the country
- Official language is English
- Divided into 36 states
- Follow Sharia law, a code for how Muslims should lead their lives, since 2000
- Clothing
 - in the north- women wear robes and head scarves
 - in the south- women can choose to wear western style clothing
 - on Sunday- Women wear most traditional clothes



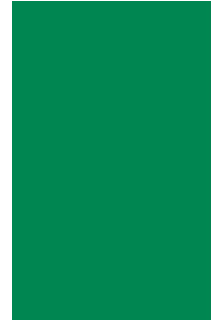
System of Government

- Nigeria is known for being a federation of states with a democratic form of government, meaning the type of government is federal republic. Their type of government is inspired and modeled after the U.S. government.
- The president is Muhammad Buhari. He was elected in May of 2015.
- The people of Nigeria are required to follow rules from their constitution which was written in 1999.



Society

- 64 percent of households claim to be poor
- Nigeria's education system is in a state of neglect
- Sixty-six percent of the population is literate, and 75 percent of that 66 percent is men and 57 percent is women
- The Niger and Benue Rivers come together in the center of the country, creating a "Y" that splits Nigeria into three separate sections. In general, this "Y" marks the boundaries of the three major ethnic groups, with the Hausa in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast.



Current Events

- A Nigerian politician has been accused of being part of the scandal in which he has misused a total of 1.5 million dollars that was intended to go towards the military funding.
- The year 2015 was very successful for Nigeria. The government thrived immensely. In result of having such a successful year, Nigeria opened up their very first shopping mall. It is the largest venue in Nigeria and despite the other problems occurring, it is giving the citizens hope that life in Nigeria is getting materially better every year.



Map

Nigeria is located in western Africa, bordered partially by the Atlantic Ocean and is near other bodies of water such as Lake Chad.



Economy

- Nigeria has one of the fastest growing economies in the world, due to its richness in oil and petroleum.
- However, the country has become overly focused and dependent on the oil industry, making it difficult for Nigeria to find money to meet its people's basic needs.
- Nigeria is ranked 158 out of 177 in human development, and 32% of Nigerian households report that their economic situation has gotten even worse within just one year.



Education

- Because of Nigeria's unbalanced economy, education funding is very low, and school buildings are scarce.
- Over the years, Nigeria's literacy rate has improved due to the earlier introduction to the English language, as opposed to the native language that young students spend their first years learning.
- Schools in Nigeria are run by the state.



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The Igbo Culture

**Sam Searles, Cece Sanchez,
Luna Bolton, Deepy Goel (A3)**

Customs

Weddings in Igboland are a very sociable event. The family of the bride and groom, their extended family and a very large portion of the village are all invited. At the ceremony, guests will bring wine and kola nuts, which are presented to the bride's father to be approved. After eating, the groom and bride's father will negotiate the bride's price, which usually involves giving fine wine, chickens, goats, kola beans and sometimes small amounts of money. After all deals are met or settled, a wedding is planned. Before the ceremony takes place the bride goes around to her guests and sells boiled eggs, showing that she can make money and possibly open a store. At this point the groom hides among the crowd. Then, the bride's father fills a wooden cup with palm wine so that the bride can look for her husband. Once she finds him hidden among the crowd, she gives him the wine to drink and the couple is married.



Customs

Birth is celebrated on the twenty-eighth day. A large naming ceremony is performed, each event is of course accompanied by a feast for relatives.

In older days, **funerals** were accompanied by music, masquerades, and animal sacrifices. A Chief or high ranking official would be buried with two to three human heads next to his body at times. Firing a canon is also very traditional to notify the general public of a death.

Major Beliefs

- ❑ Death in the Igbo culture is thought of as a person crossing over from the physical world to the spirit world.
- ❑ It is believed that only after the second burial rites can a person reach the spirit world. If not given the second rites, the departed will wander the earth with no motivation to move on.
- ❑ Igbo people strongly believe that the spirits of one's ancestors are watching them. One must pray to and show appreciation for the dead and cannot speak badly about a spirit.
- ❑ Some deaths are considered shameful; some being women who die in labour, or those who commit suicide. Their funeral ceremony consists of being thrown into a bush.



Major Beliefs

- ❑ Religious beliefs had the Igbo people kill those considered to be shameful to the tribe. The shameful people may include babies born feet first or those not born in a single birth, such as twins. Once killed, these people were secretly thrown away.
- ❑ Gods and deities were an enormous part of Igbo life. There was a belief that gods could be manipulated. The gods must protect the people and serve their interests. If the gods performed their duties correctly, they were rewarded. The reward was the tribe continuing to have faith in the gods.
- ❑ Igbo Jews have the belief that they are descendants of Jews who had migrated to west Africa a very long time ago.



Religion

- ❑ Profoundly religious.
 - ❑ Chukwu: their creator, who created the visible universe (uwa). Especially associated with rain, trees, & other plants. No gender roles are associated with Chukwu.
- ❑ Ofo & Ogu, governing law of retributive justice. Believed that they will vindicate anyone wrongly accused of a crime “as long as his hands are clean” (meaning that they are not lying).
 - ❑ In the same idea of retributive justice, it is believed that everyone has their own personal god (Chi), who is created for one’s fortune/misfortune.
- ❑ Believe that there is another plane existing (other than the natural world) that is filled with spirits called “alusi”. These are minor deities & have the capacity to perform good/evil, depending on the circumstances.
 - ❑ (next slide for list & more info on the minor deities)

Native Religious Beliefs

- ❑ Minor deities claimed an enormous part of the daily lives of the people, due to the idea that they could be manipulated in order to protect the pop. & serve their interests. These are the main 8 deities:
 - ❑ Ala- the earth goddess, spirit of fertility of man as well as the productivity of the land
 - ❑ Igwe- the sky god, not appealed to for rain, as was the full-time profession of the rain-makers
 - ❑ Imo miri- the spirit of the river, believed that a big river has spiritual aspect; it's forbidden to fish in such deified rivers.
 - ❑ Mbatuku- the spirit of wealth
 - ❑ Agwo- the spirit envious of other's wealth, always in need of servitors
 - ❑ Aha njuku/Ifejioku- the yam spirit
 - ❑ Ikoro- the drum spirit
 - ❑ Ekwu- the hearth spirit, which is the woman's domestic spirit

Modern Religion/Igbo Jews

- ❑ Some still practice traditional Igbo religion. Many have been largely Christianized due to the large missionary presence in Nigeria. Most Igbo Christians are Roman Catholics.
- ❑ Many Jewish Igbo believe that they are descendants of Jews who had migrated to W. Africa over many centuries.
- ❑ According to the lore of the Eri, Nri, & Ozubulu families, Igbo ethnic groups w/ Israelite descent are made of 3 groups:
 - ❑ Benei Gath: Tribe of Gath ben-Ya `aqov (Gad), who was the 8th son of the Israelite patriarch Ya `aqov (Jacob)
 - ❑ Benei Zevulun: Tribe of Zevulun ben-Ya `aqov (Zebulun), who was the 5th son of Ya `aqov (Jacob)
 - ❑ Benei Menashe: Tribe of Menasheh ben-Yoseph (Manasseh). Manasheh who was one of the grandsons of Ya `aqov (Jacob) through his 11th son Yoseph (Joseph)
 - ❑ Israel has not recognized the Igbo as one of the Lost Tribes of Israel. It took many years before the Chief Rabbinate recognized the Bnei Menashe as Jews, & is thought that the

Traditional Gender Roles

Male Gender Roles

- Trained from birth to be aggressive and see himself as superior to women
 - In order to ensure that his son will get rid of all “womanish” traits the father would employ any tactic ranging from scolding to beatings
- Take care of the livestock, protect the women, work on their craft (farming, shephard, or a trade craft)
- Both men and women would farm, however the men plant yams because yams are regarded as the “king” of crops.
- Can marry multiple times, however he could not divorce his wife/wives or beat her.
- Very protective of women
- Paid bride price

Female Gender Roles

- Inculcated to be passive and to see themselves not as people, but as accessories to men.
- Women take charge of all household duties such as sweeping, washing, cooking, etc.
- Plant corn, melons, and beans
- Only career paths open to her are motherhood and wifhood
- Can only marry once
- A son is highly celebrated, but a daughter is received with disappointment
 - If she cannot produce a son her place in her husband’s family is extremely unstable.
 - Multiple daughters are unwanted because it further destabilizes the wife’s position and risks the father’s continued lineage
- Oriaku = Consumer of husband’s wealth
- Bride Price

It should be noted that both genders accepted their traditional roles without questions or conflicts

Modern Gender Roles

- When the colonization of Igboland happen were introduced to Igbo society, women realized that there was more to life than being a wife and mother and they started to advocate for their rights
- Gender doesn't matter



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