

Things Fall Apart Project - Culture

The following quote is from “An Image of Africa” by Chinua Achebe:

“The young fellow from Yonkers, perhaps partly on account of his age but I believe also for much deeper and more serious reasons, is obviously unaware that the life of his own tribesmen in Yonkers, New York, is full of odd customs and superstitions and, like everybody else in his culture, imagines that he needs a trip to Africa to encounter those things.

The other person being fully my own age could not be excused on the grounds of his years. Ignorance might be a more likely reason; but here again I believe that something more willful than a mere lack of information was at work. For did not that erudite British historian and Regius Professor at Oxford, Hugh Trevor Roper, also pronounce that African history did not exist?” Achebe makes clear that most people of European descent know little about their own culture; moreover, they often do not understand or respect Africa as a cultural equal to their own culture and are guilty of ethnocentrism, racism and/or ignorance.

Choice #1 In a group of two, please create a short fiction story describing a new culture emphasizing the importance of a cultural tradition. Your story short should be free of ethnocentrism - judging a new culture by using your own culture as a standard. Your story must also contains the following five literary elements of a story:

- ❖ Plot
- ❖ Character
- ❖ Conflict
- ❖ Theme
- ❖ Setting
- ❖ Final product should be a 3 to 6 page short story.
- ❖ Class presentation

Choice # 2 - In a group of two, research the origins of a cultural tradition. Research the tradition and explain it in the context of the inception of the tradition up to modern understanding. You will need to write a research paper on your findings using at least 3 sources and include:

- ❖ Information you found on the tradition
- ❖ food, music, dance, religions or government etc.
- ❖ teach the class all about this tradition.
- ❖ Final product should be 2 to 3 page paper on your topic
- ❖ Class presentation

Topics must be pre-approved - no duplicate projects. Please sign-up with Instructor

Choice #3 - In a group of 2 - create a poetic or prose response describing a fictional cultural tradition using the The Hero's Journey - Mythic Structure of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth:

- ❖ 1. Ordinary World
- ❖ 2. Call To Adventure
- ❖ 3. Refusal Of The Call
- ❖ 4. Meeting The Mentor
- ❖ 5. Crossing The Threshold
- ❖ 6. Tests, Allies, Enemies.
- ❖ 7. Approach To The Inmost Cave
- ❖ 8. Ordeal
- ❖ 9. Reward (Seizing The Sword)10. The Road Back
- ❖ 11. Resurrection/Climax
- ❖ 12. Return
- ❖ Final product should be a 3 to 6 page Short Story or Epic Poem /class presentation

Due on Turnitin.com - February 20

Presentations due - February 20

The following cultural tradition is from Part I - Things Fall Apart -

“One day a neighbor called Okoye came in to see him...He immediately rose and shook hands with Okoye, who then unrolled the goatskin which he carried under his arm, and sat down. Unoka went into an inner room and soon returned with a small wooden disc containing a kola nut, some alligator pepper and a lump of white chalk.

“I have kola,” he announced when he sat down, and passed the disc over to his guest.

“Thank you. He who brings kola brings life. But I think you ought to break it,” replied Okoye, passing back the disc.

“No, it is for you, I think,” and they argued like this for a few moments before Unoka accepted the honor of breaking the kola. Okoye, meanwhile, took the lump of chalk, drew some lines on the floor, and then painted his big toe.

As he broke the kola, Unoka prayed to their ancestors for life and health, and for protection against their enemies. When they had eaten they talked about many things: about the heavy rains which were drowning the yams, about the next ancestral feast and about the impending war with the village of Mbaino” (1.7-10)