

Colonialism

Dieser Vorschlag bezieht sich auf George Orwell: Shooting an Elephant.

Aufgaben

Der vorliegende Vorschlag enthält in Aufgabe 3 alternative Arbeitsanweisungen.

- 1 Sum up the information given about Okonkwo and the Ibo tribe's customs. (Material) **(25 BE)**

- 2 Compare the situation depicted in the excerpt to George Orwell's essay "Shooting an Elephant", taking the mindset of the colonizers and the narrative technique into account. **(45 BE)**

- 3 Choose one of the following tasks:

- 3.1 The sequel tells the story of Okonkwo's grandson Obi. The following quote is taken from a passage in which Obi, who is studying in England, is sitting among his clanspeople while on a visit home:

"He wished they [the English people] were here to-day to see. Let them come to Umuofia now and listen to the talk of men who made a great art of conversation. Let them come and see men and women and children who knew how to live, whose joy of life had not yet been killed by those who claimed to teach other nations how to live."

Taking the quote as a starting point, assess the effect British colonization has had on other cultures from the perspective of both the colonizers and the colonized.

or

- 3.2 "If we are going to be truly proud of the wonderful things we have achieved in our history we must first be honest about our past." (Race & Faith Manifesto of the British Labour Party, 2019)

You are spending a term at a British school. The school's reading club has launched a competition about the best idea of how dealing with literature in class can serve to achieve an adequate approach to British history. Write a blog entry for the competition in which you comment on whether "Shooting an Elephant" is a suitable text for this purpose.

(30 BE)

Material**Chinua Achebe: Things fall apart (excerpt from the novel, 1959)**

Okonkwo is a highly respected member of the West African Ibo tribe, who despairs when he realizes that his tribe will not stand up against the colonial authorities that increasingly impose their rule upon them. Obierika is one of the village's elders.

When the district commissioner arrived at Okonkwo's compound¹ at the head of an armed band of soldiers and court messengers he found a small crowd of men sitting wearily in the *obi*². He commanded them to come outside, and they obeyed without a murmur.

"Which among you is called Okonkwo?" he asked through his interpreter.

5 "He is not here," replied Obierika.

"Where is he?"

"He is not here!"

10 The Commissioner became angry and red in the face. He warned the men that unless they produced Okonkwo forthwith he would lock them all up. The men murmured among themselves, and Obierika spoke again.

"We can take you where he is, and perhaps your men will help us."

The Commissioner did not understand what Obierika meant when he said, "Perhaps your men will help us." One of the most infuriating habits of these people was their love of superfluous words, he thought.

15 Obierika with five or six others led the way. The Commissioner and his men followed their firearms held at the ready. He had warned Obierika that if he and his men played any monkey tricks they would be shot. And so they went.

20 There was a small bush behind Okonkwo's compound. [...] It was to this bush that Obierika led the Commissioner and his men. They skirted round the compound, keeping close to the wall. The only sound they made was with their feet as they crushed dry leaves.

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."

25 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.

30 "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.

¹ compound – an area, often walled-in or fenced, that contains a group of buildings

² obi – the large living quarters of the head of the family

“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.”

35 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.

“Shut up!” shouted one of the messengers, quite unnecessarily.

40 “Take down the body,” the Commissioner ordered his chief messenger, “and bring it and all these people to the court.”

“Yes, sah³,” the messenger said, saluting.

The Commissioner went away, taking three or four of the soldiers with him. In the many years in which he had toiled to bring civilization to different parts of Africa he had learned a number of things. One of them was that a District Commissioner must never attend to such undignified details as cutting
45 a hanged man from a tree. Such attention would give the natives a poor opinion of him. In the book which he planned to write he would stress that point. As he walked back to the court he thought about that book. Every day brought him some new material. The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was so
50 much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details. He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of Lower Niger*.

(703 Wörter)

Chinua Achebe: *Things fall apart*, London 1959, S. 206–209.

Hinweis

The author (1930–2013) was a Nigerian novelist. He also worked as a literary critic.

³ sah – Sir