

The Novelist as Teacher Literary Devices

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Figures of Speech Imagery Definition: Imagery uses descriptive language that appeals to the senses and creates mental pictures. Achebe uses imagery not for nature, but to show cultural contrast, social expectations, and emotional situations.

Figures of Speech

Imagery

- **Definition:** Imagery uses descriptive language that appeals to the senses and creates mental pictures. Achebe uses imagery not for nature, but to show cultural contrast, social expectations, and emotional situations.
- **Example:** "Cleanliness was next to godliness." "I ain't gonna wash for a week."
- **Explanation:** Achebe uses cultural images from Europe, cleanliness as godliness, and later the pop singer joking about not washing, to highlight the irony in European moral values. These images show how societies change and how cultural ideas shift over time.
- **Effect:** The imagery helps readers see the difference between African needs and European attitudes. It clarifies Achebe's point: every society has its own reality and its own cultural logic.

Symbolism / Symbols

- **Definition:** Symbolism is when an object, idea, or concept represents a deeper meaning. Achebe uses symbolic ideas to express African identity, colonial damage, and the writer's responsibility.
- **African Writer:** Symbol of guidance, leadership, and cultural healing. Achebe presents the African writer as more than an artist. He symbolizes the "sensitive point" of the community and a moral leader responsible for correcting history. Readers understand that the writer carries the emotional and cultural weight of the entire society.
- **European Misrepresentation:** Symbol of colonial distortion, false history. Achebe shows how European books created a symbolic image of Africa as barbaric and uncivilized. This false image is a symbol of colonial psychological damage. Readers see why African writers must correct this distorted image through literature.

- **Props like “African personality,” “negritude,” and “African socialism”:** Symbols of tools for rebuilding identity. Achebe calls these ideas “props”, temporary symbolic supports to help Africans stand up again after colonial humiliation.
- **The Hausa Folk Tale:** Symbol of hope, community growth, national progress. This ending symbolizes African optimism and the belief that stories can guide social improvement. It reinforces Achebe’s argument that literature can teach, inspire, and shape society.

LxNotes