

Editorial

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To me, being an intellectual doesn't mean knowing about intellectual issues; it means taking pleasure in them (Chinua Achebe).¹

The late Nigerian novelist, poet, professor and critic Chinua Achebe was perhaps his country's most celebrated sensemaker, storyteller and thinker. Achebe's post-colonial novel *Things Fall Apart*² explores his Igbo people's traditions, beliefs and values through the eyes of Okonkwo, a community leader and local wrestling champion, and charts the hero's eventual demise following the arrival of British colonialism and Christian missionaries. The evocative title of Achebe's novel comes from the opening lines of Irish poet W.B. Yeats's apocalyptic *The Second Coming*, which has echoes of the fall of Okonkwo and his Igbo traditional community's parallel disintegration and despair:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world...³

These references to the works of Achebe and Yeats offer an apposite framing for this special issue of *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship* entitled "Intellectual Shamans, Wayfinders, Edgewalkers, and Systems Thinkers: Building a Future Where All Can Thrive". Within their particular cultural, political and socio-economic contexts, Achebe and Yeats were undoubtedly intellectual shamans of the highest calibre and their writings continue to offer inspiration and solace to their millions of readers and followers across the planet. Achebe's, *Things Fall Apart* has sold more than 10 million copies worldwide.

Within and spanning their respective domains, the five guest editors of JCC 62—Sandra Waddock, Malcolm McIntosh, Judi Neal, Edwina Pio and Chellie Spiller—are wise, talented, and widely admired intellectual shamans, wayfinders, edgewalkers

1 See Chukwuemeka Bosah (ed.) (2013). *Celebrating Chinua Achebe: Essays on His Life, Legacy and Works*. New Albany, OH & Enugu, Nigeria: Ben Bosah Books, p. 86.

2 Chinua Achebe (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. London: William Heinemann Ltd.

3 William Butler Yeats (1920). *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. Churchtown, Dundrum: The Cuala Press.

and systems thinkers. These fellow changemakers share passion for and commitment to healing wounds caused by an often violent and unrestrained global economic system. The guest editors and other contributors to this timely *JCC* special issue challenge themselves and their readers to engage in meaningful conversations and to raise difficult questions about the future of community, business, ecology, society and the survival of life on this small planet called Earth. This is an invitation for us all to become “boundary spanners”⁴ as we seek to discover innovative pathways and imagine more empathetic futures.

Before you immerse yourself in the rich array of contributions contained in this wonderful special issue of *JCC*,

I want to leave you with germane reflections from Chinua Achebe, the ultimate sensemaker—lauded by Guernica as “the inventor of the post-colonial African novel in English”. This excerpt from Achebe’s posthumous memoir *There Was a Country* was released just a few months before his death in 2013:

I wasn’t questioning in an intellectual way which way was right, or better. I was simply more interested in exploring the essence, the meaning, the worldview of both religions [Odinani and Christianity]. By approaching the issues of tradition, culture, literature, and language of our ancient civilization in that manner, without judging but scrutinizing, a treasure trove of discovery was opened up to me.⁵

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4 Michael L. Tushman (1977). Special boundary roles in the innovation process. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22(4), 587-605.

5 Chinua Achebe (2012, October 15). How things fell apart. *Guernica: A Magazine of Art & Politics*. Retrieved from <https://www.guernicamag.com/features/how-things-fell-apart/>