## Dead Men’s Path.....by Chinua Achebe

## Michael Obi became the headmaster of Ndume Central School. He was very happy with his new job and wanted to change the school to a modern one with the help of his wife Nancy. He has two aims for the new school: a high standard of teaching and a beautiful schoolyard. Nancy planted flowers of many different colours that blossomed when the rain set in. After seeing an old woman walk across the planted area in the schoolyard, he walked up to the place and realized that there was an old road used by the villagers. He sets up a big fence around the school to stop them from using that path. Three days later the village’s priest contacted Obi to remove the fence because they believe that the spirits of dead people depart by it and babies who are born come through it. Obi informs the priest that his job as a teacher is to destroy these old myths, and therefore he does not remove the fence. The villagers become outraged and destroy the garden along with the fence. When a Supervisor comes on an inspection, he is not impressed with the tribal war between the school and the villagers. He believes that this is a direct result of an enthusiastic new headmaster.

Regarding the **style and technique**, Achebe - Nigerian author- blends a folktale with impartiality, and is achieved by allusion rather than explicit explanation. He uses **irony** and **paradox** to portray the conflict between Christianity and Igbo traditional culture and belief. **Themes** are condensed in this story such as change, tradition, progress, arrogance, ignorance of other people’s customs and tribal culture meets modern ideologies.

**The story is told in the third person by unnamed narrator** revealing how Mike Obi-the headmaster- is driven by his need to make a change without minding the local people’s tradition and beliefs. He looks like a colonizer who considers himself to be better than others, and causes many problems by blocking off the path.

**Setting:** the story takes place on Igbo village in Nigeria, January 1949, Ndume Central School, which is not a progressive one. It belongs to **social realism genre.**

**The title** of the story foreshadows the series of events that are about to take place. “Dead Men’s Path” does not only refer to the ancestral pathway in the schoolyard, but also refers to Obi’s choice of action. By not compromising, this has made him a dead man. Dead in this context is not death, but meansfailure and dead dreams. The title also foreshadows the dark events and the unhappy ending of the story.