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HIS 114 World Civilization 11

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Finals -Ted Talks: The Danger of a Single Story by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

The talk entitled “The Danger of a Single Story” delivered by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explores the way we are quick to overgeneralized belief of a category of people in a global world. The story of Ngozi highlight on the perspective of hierarchies, cultural frames, network and the idea of identity. Ngozi’s passion at the age of seven was to read foreign books. What impresses me is her ability to write exactly the stories she read with pencil and illustrate with crayon at that young age. She engaged herself to explore the western culture in her readings drawing attention to American’s weather, snow and the apple the characters eat even though in Nigeria there is no snow and the fruit they usually eat is mango. The characters in the British books she read drank ginger beer even though she had no idea of what ginger beer is, she became desperate to taste it one day. She stressed on the fact that human, especially children become vulnerable in the face of a story. Over the years she was convinced that books by their very nature must be foreign since the characters of the books she had read were foreign. She noted that she developed a mental shift in her perception as she began to read stories written by Nigerian scholars. She discovered that she is

special, created with dignity, her identity in African culture and learnt that girls like her could also exist in literature in the course of reading books written by Africans. She emphasized that her perception about books changed and African writers save her from having a single story of what books are. In terms of hierarchies, her family was among the social class and that cause her to have a different perception about the poor especially when her mother comparing their family to Fide, their house boy's family. Her perception about the poor changed when she discovered the creativity of Fide's brother in the designed basket. Her conversation with her roommate made her realized that American children have been brainwashed about Africans negatively. Her ability to speak English language eloquently shocked her mate because she had a single story of African. In terms of network, the single story of her mate portrays that there is no way Africans could be connected to the rest of the world as human equal. It is very unfortunate that some people think that Africa is a country but not a continent. False image about Africa has created havoc making some African American lose their identity. Some westerners like John Lock has deceived people to belief that Black Africans are beast without houses, people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their dress. In terms of Hierarchies, Africans were considered low class. Ngozi stressed on how she felt overwhelmed and ashamed of herself when she discovered that she had be deceived to believe about the image portray by the media about Mexicans as abject immigrant. Power plays a major role in spreading false information and tarnishing one's

cultural images. She reiterated that adhering to single story rob us of our human dignity, brings discrimination as its emphasis on our differences as human instead admitting our human equalities and similarities. We are united in diverse ways as human. She echoed that stories matter, they are used to malign or destroy human dignity or image but can also be used to empower, humanized or repel human dignity.