



Class Notes on  
**Chinua Achebe's**  
*Things Fall Apart*

**PART - 2**

FOR  
B A  
ENGLISH  
SEM - VI  
ENGL3016

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# THIS PPT...

- ❖ is in continuation of the previous PPT
- ❖ deals with...
  - i. Ill-fated Okonkwo and his resistance to colonialism
  - ii. Ibo society's belief with regard to Man slaughtering and committing suicide
  - iii. Whit man's 'divide and rule' tactics
  - iv. Tragic end of Okonkwo

# DISORIENTED OKONKWO

- ❖ Okonkwo feeling completely disoriented after the killing of Ikemefuna and at his own role in the killing.
- ❖ Okonkwo's friend, Obierika, tells him that the goddess of earth might punish him for taking part in Ikemefuna's killing
- ❖ Okonkwo's daughter Ezinma suddenly falls ill with shivering and fever
- ❖ Okonkwo gets some medicinal leaves and Ezinma was given a steam-bath with boiled leaves which cured her of her shivering and fever



# ILL-FATED OKONKWO

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- ❖ Ezeudu, a village elder and warrior died
- ❖ At his funeral guns were fired as an honour to the dead warrior
- ❖ The dead man's sixteen year old son was killed by Okonkwo's gun going off accidentally
- ❖ According in Ibo belief it was an act of man slaughtering

# IBO/IGBO PEOPLE'S BELIEF

- ❖ Man slaughter was a major crime against the earth goddess in Ibo society
- ❖ He had to flee from his home and clan along with his entire family
- ❖ Okonkwo's crime was inadvertent so he could return after seven years of exile
- ❖ Okonkwo fled to Mbanta, a nearby village of his mother's kinsmen.
- ❖ His house was then ransacked and burnt as a part of the ritual of revenge for the earth goddess



## OKONKWO BEGINS A FRESH LIFE IN MBANTA

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- ❖ Chapter fourteen – first chapter in **Part Two**
- ❖ In Mbanta Okonkwo is given land for making a house and for farming.
- ❖ He took help of his uncle and his cousins who offered him seed-yam
- ❖ He worked hard but was not happy
- ❖ He dreamt of becoming a lord of the clan but the accident shattered his hopes forcing him flee from his own clan



## ENCOUNTER WITH WHITE MAN

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- ❖ At the end of the second year of his exile, Obierika, Okonkwo's friend, visits him
- ❖ Obierika informs him that the village of Abame nearby was wiped out by white men and some of the survivors fled to Umuofia.
- ❖ A white man on an iron horse had come to Abame.
- ❖ The villagers killed white man and tied his iron horse to a tree



## WHITE MEN'S RETALIATION

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- ❖ In retaliation, three white men and some Africans fired with their powerful guns and killed most villagers on a market day.
- ❖ Stories heard about the white men
  - a. They make very powerful guns and
  - b. They take away Africans and sell them as slaves across the seas.



## WHITE MISSIONARIES IN UMUOFIA

- ❖ Obierika's next visit after two years of his first visit
- ❖ Obierika's informs Okonkwo...
  - a. White missionaries took over Umuofia
  - b. A church built in Umuofia
  - c. Some villagers converted to Christianity
  - d. Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, was with the missionaries in Umuofia.



## PREACHING OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL IN MBANTA

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- ❖ A white man accompanied by some Africans came to Mbanta
- ❖ He persuaded the villagers to adopt his religion.
- ❖ For the white man African gods were 'false gods'
- ❖ Villagers were not impressed by the lecture given by the white man but were impressed by song sung after the lecture



## NWOYE'S DISBELIEF IN AFRICAN RELIGION

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- ❖ Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son was impressed by the hymns
- ❖ Nwoye recalled the harrowing experience of Ikemefuna's killing as well as the throwing away of twin new-borns
- ❖ Both of these acts were a part of the African religion
- ❖ The preaching of the Christian gospel by the missionaries in Mbanta

## SHIFT IN BELIEF

- ❖ The villagers gave a piece of land for building the white man's place of worship in the 'evil forest'
- ❖ In 'evil forest' those who died of dreadful diseases like leprosy and small pox were buried.
- ❖ The people believed that anyone inhabiting such a place would himself be dead
- ❖ Nothing happened to the missionaries after living there for many days,
- ❖ Villagers started believing that the god of the white men was more powerful than that of the Africans. Some Africans converted to the white man's religion



## A BIG BLOW TO OKONKWO

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- ❖ Okonkwo threatened Nwoye after knowing that he too became a convert,
- ❖ Nwoye left home and went to work in the missionary school for the converts at Umuofia.
- ❖ A big blow to Okonkwo and his male ego



## OKONKWO'S EXILE WAS TO END

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- ❖ Okonkwo was about to leave Mbanta and go to Umuofia as his seven years of exile was coming to an end
- ❖ A thanksgiving feast was organised
- ❖ One of the elders warned them against the impact of the new religion on their children and their lives
- ❖ 'I fear for you; I fear for the clan', said the old man

# OKONKWO ARRIVAL TO UMUOFIA

## ❖ Part Three

- ❖ Okonkwo came back to Umuofia and was unhappy to see the spread of white men and their religion
- ❖ So many transformations took place in Umuofia
- ❖ The clan people could not dare to question the white man's impositions

# TRANSFORMATION IN UMUOFIA

## A Court of Justice

- ❖ A court of justice was set up by the white man
- ❖ A district commissioner judged cases of dispute
- ❖ Had a jail where African employees of the white man's government (known as Kotma) beat people mercilessly irrespective of their status in the clan.
- ❖ People were punished for obeying their African customs and rituals.



## The Clan was Divided

- ❖ Okonkwo advocated fighting back the white men
- ❖ But the clan was already divided
- ❖ The converted people from the clan sided with the white man.
- ❖ 'He has put a knife on things that held us together and we have fallen apart', Obierika said to Okonkwo
- ❖ The white man gradually changed the entire life in Umuofia
- ❖ Commercial advancement in Umuofia

# Missionary Work

- ❖ Mr. Brown, the white missionary, was a clever and kind man and was respected by the clan
- ❖ He ordered not to provoke those who had still not converted to Christianity
- ❖ He wanted to win them indirectly and not through a frontal attack
- ❖ Got hospital built in Umuofia
- ❖ Got school built for Umuofia
- ❖ If they don't get educated people from other region will take the administrative positions



## MR BROWN WAS REPLACED BY REVEREND JAMES SMITH

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- ❖ Mr. Brown left Umuofia due to bad health
- ❖ Mr Brown was replaced by Reverend James Smith
- ❖ Reverend James did not appreciate Mr Brown's policy
- ❖ Reverend James believed in open confrontation between evil and good, between black and white
- ❖ Encouraged people to fight among themselves



## NWOYE WORKS FOR THE MISSIONARIES

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- ❖ Nwoye, started working for the missionaries
- ❖ Nwoye was given a new name – Isaac
- ❖ He was sent to a training college for teachers in Umuru.
- ❖ Okonkwo was worried about his clan when he saw his clan breaking up and falling ‘apart’



## OKONKWO BEHEADING THE MESSENGER

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- ❖ A meeting was called to fight back the divide and rule policy
- ❖ A group of messengers were sent to inform that the meeting was declared illegal by the District Commissioner
- ❖ Revengeful Okonkwo was furious and in a fit of anger he beheaded the messenger with the machet
- ❖ Some of the members of his clan did not stand by Okonkwo's act



## VILLAGE TO PAY THE FINE

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- ❖ Six of them were arrested including Okonkwo
- ❖ They were ill-treated and beaten in the lock-up by the African guards
- ❖ The village was asked to pay a fine of 250 bags of cowries (small shell used as money in parts of Africa) to save them from hanging
- ❖ The village paid the fine

## OKONKWO'S SUICIDE

- ❖ Finding himself completely isolated from the villagers, Okonkwo committed suicide
- ❖ The body of Okonkwo was hanging from a tree when the District Commissioner comes to arrest him
- ❖ His clan members refused to touch his body since it is sinful to touch someone who had taken his own life
- ❖ Not buried as per the normal customs and rituals.
- ❖ End of the tragic tale of Okonkwo who at one time was the most strongest and respected individual in Umuofia



# DATA FOR WHITE MAN'S BOOK

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- ❖ African people and their culture are reduced to the mere chapters in books by white men
- ❖ The struggle for reclaiming the past of the clan is just a primary stuff for a book to be written by a white man
- ❖ The District Commissioner. was thinking about writing a book on the Ibos
- ❖ He decided to devote a whole chapter to the story of a person who had killed the messenger and then had committed suicide



## FURTHER READING...

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- ❖ How the Christian missionaries successfully challenged the beliefs of the Ibo traditional society thereby claiming a superiority for their own religion Christianity – over the traditional religious practices of the Ibo?
- ❖ White man's divide and rule tactics in the novel



**THANK YOU**