

## *Things Fall Apart* Ch. 16-20 Close Reading Questions

- 1) Read the following quote and discuss the impact the whites have had on the area. How did the indigenous people of Africa contribute to the undermining of their culture and the conversion of their people to the colonizer's cultural beliefs?

“When nearly two years later Obierika paid another visit to his friend in exile the circumstances were less happy. The missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. That was a source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan, but many of them believed that the strange faith and the white man's god would not last. None of his converts was a man whose word was heeded in the assembly of the people. None of them was a man of title. They were mostly the kind of people that were called efulefu, worthless, empty men. The imagery of an efulefu in the language of the clan was a man who sold his machete and wore the sheath to battle. Chielo, the priestess of Agbala, called the converts the excrement of the clan, and the new faith was a mad dog that had come to eat it up.”

- 2) Read the following passage and discuss why Nwoye would be “captivated” by the new religion. Discuss the impact this has had on Okonkwo.

“But there was a young lad who had been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son. It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow. The hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul--the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed. He felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. The words of the hymn were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry palate of the panting earth. Nwoye's callow mind was greatly puzzled.”

- 3) At the end of chapter 19, one of Mbanta's village elders says the following words at the feast before Okonkwo returns to Umufoia. What is he afraid of? Are his fears justified? Explain.

"As for me, I have only a short while to live, and so have Uchendu and Unachukwu and Emefo. But I fear for you young people because you do not understand how strong is the bond of kinship. You do not know what it is to speak with one voice. And what is the result? An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and his brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors, like a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. I fear for you, I fear for the clan."

- 4) What are some of the things that Okonkwo regrets about his exile? What are some of the plans Okonkwo has for his return to Umufoia? How has Umuofia changed and why is Okonkwo disappointed in his return?

**\*\*\* Please write 2 open-ended discussion questions for us to discuss in class. \*\*\***