**OSI OGBU: The Moon Also Sets**

**Introduction:**

The Moon Also Sets is a fascinating story set in Isiakpu, a typical in African Village in Nigeria and the University of Embarkassi –a modern African University. It gives an interesting perspective of the conflict between traditional expectations and modernity. It is a story that revolves around the mother –Mama Oby and her daughter Oby.

Mama Oby is a widow, and a devoted Catholic. She sets her mind to raising her children and giving them good education. She is a strong woman but also kind and generous. These virtues of hers do not go well with her brother –in –law Pa Okolo, who tries everything possible to make her life hell. He is portrayed as a cowardly bully who gets other people to do his dirty work.

Despite being an illiterate, Mama Oby knows that the education of her children more so her daughter is very important. She believes that Oby will bring about a difference in her family. As a widow in Isiakpu, she knows very well the difficulties widows face in their community. Before joining the university, Oby works as an auxiliary teacher but her dream is to join the university.

Sooner than later, Oby is admitted in the university. Mother and daughter struggle to push through the challenges brought about by the male chauvinism which is present in both tradition and modern settings.

When Oby joins university, she hopes life would be different since she will be educated, but the challenges she encounters are unbearable-very challenging that she finds herself at crossroads. Before joining the university, she has the mother to give her advice but now she is the key decision maker. She sums “The University is a jungle full of traps. You skip one you are caught in the other. You can never be immunised against the attacks. You have to hop skip and jump.”

Oby struggles to lead a full life in a modern but ever male dominated world. She faces the conflicting demands of education and her career. and her relationship with Chike, With him, she pursues a modern and open sexual relationship, but in a society which is still in many ways conservative. She must then deal with the consequences for her future when she becomes pregnant.

The novel tells an ordinary tale of love, campus life, family life and widowhood but places all this in the gender context that is at once familiar for its topicality among the global institutions and unfamiliar for the cultural environment in which it is addresses in this novel.

The plot centers on Mama Oby a devout Catholic and widow, working and negotiating relationships in the strongly patriarchal society. She is confronted with the task of bringing up her children all by herself because she refuses to be i inherited by her late husband’s brother. Most of the time, she is warding off the distractions posed by tradition as epitomised by Pa Okolo’s constant meddling. When her first daughter Oby gets admitted in the university, Mama Oby is forced to deal with the scars of modernity

The subject of the novel could be viewed in the context of the triangular struggle between the tradition (represented by Pa Okolo, Christianity represented by Mama Oby and modernity represented by Oby). However, the compatibility of these is not clear cut as each of the characters has allegiance across the board.

For instance, Oby is always quick to defend tradition values in her discussions with Chris. While Mama Oby considers it her duty to adhere to the village customs when the elders of Isiakpu rule that Obeta should be banished for committing a murder. though it contradicts the Christian principles to do so. A better way of facing a society in a state of flux

**Setting**

The novel paints a vivid picture of a dilemma facing most post-colonial societies in as far as defining the basis of development is concerned. The traditional institutions have been prevented from accomplishing development by ‘Christianity’ which came along side a contradictory modern culture that rejects both tradition and Christianity

People are constantly faced with a situation where actions are evaluated and re-evaluated through the lens of the three different competing value systems. For instance, in the book Mama Oby and most Catholics in Isiakpu profess Christianity but at the same time choose to obey the traditional customs that ostracise anyone accused of murder and refused to swear before the village idol, against the direction of the church.

Similarly, the Igwe, who carries himself as an exposed modern man, cares very little about both the tradition and Christian values especially when they stand in his way to success even though he is supposed to be the custodian of the culture in his capacity as the ruler of Isiakpu.

**Title:**

In chapter twelve a man called Mark finds Oby and Chike spending some quality time at the beach enjoying their new found love. The title alludes to the element of justice. It is a kind of warning to all those who do wrong. At the same time it’s an encouragement to all who are suffering that there is hope.

Mark addresses Oby and Chike telling them that although they seem to be enjoying the full moon the poor service things will change because the moon also sets. He expresses disillusionment with the way things are messed up. Despite his strange behavior and appearance, he talks a lot of sense about delivery in his country which is full of quacks and bedeviled with rampant corruption and characterized by moral degenerates like Chike and Oby. He tells the lovebirds that it seems like a full moon (metaphor)for them but specifically warns the girl “but young girl, remember the moon also sets” By this implication, the blissful moments as the one now at the beach shall surely wane and bring forth dark moments.

On the other hand, the seems to preach a message of optimism, Mark seems to suggest that time will come when things will change for the better, just like the moon sets to give way for the sunrise to start a brighter day.

The numerous changes that occur in the novel also help to give a meaning to the title. The narrator highlights things that are no longer the same in Isiakpu. The moon had set on the daughters of Ndu Nwa Agu. Their drums and flutes had been silenced by greed, modernity and corruption. The dancing steps of their daughters had also become timid and less assertive, the moon has therefore set.

The dramatic turn of events both in Isiakpu and Embakassi is the reflection that the moon also sets. Father Damian is replaced with another priest. Pa Okolo commits suicide, Uncle Ben is arrested and sentenced, the Igwe has disappeared from his palace and escapes to Lagos purportedly on a six months business trip. Oby gets pregnant and nearly dies of an abortion induced by Chike and Okoro. Professsor Akpanu’s sexual exploits are exposed by Chris. Toward the end of the novel Oby remembers the mad man at the beach who reminded her that the moon also sets.

**Themes and Ideas in the novel**

* Injustice against women/ male chauvinism
* Cultural clash (Tradition verses Modernity)
* Corruption
* Moral degeneration
* Hypocrisy (Relgious hypocrisy)
* Women emancipation
* Appearance verses reality
* Formal education –Modernity
* Change
* Suffering (Physically and psychologically

**Narrative techniques used in the novel**

* Use of flashbacks/reminiscence
* Irony /satire
* Use of proverbs and sayings
* Allusions
* Use of songs and dance
* Descriptions
* Third person narrator –Omniscient narrator
* Dialogue
* Use of letters
* Use of pidgin English
* Symbolism
* Setting
* Stream of consciousness
* Characterisation
* Pathetic Fallacy
* Juxtaposition/Contrast

**CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

**PART I**

**A Widows Might**

**Chapter One**

The novel begins with Oby –Obiageli Onyia running out of patience. She is nineteen years old but she has not yet joined university which troubles her. She wonders why she has not yet been admitted to university yet all other students she beat academically have already joined university. She has so far missed twice. This leaves her to work as an “auxiliary teacher” To Oby her future is going to university. This is what results in her anxiety that develops into disillusionment “for two years, Oby had been an auxiliary teacher, a euphemism for an untrained teacher, and she saw no future for herself without a university degree” Pg2.

Meanwhile she helps her mother with the farm work and also practices teaching. There is description of the village life in Isiakpu – a traditional set up. The farm work especially weeding is done by women.

Mama Oby’s relationship with her-in-laws has been portrayed. She is the widow who puts up a spirited fight for her children to inherit the land after the death of her husband. “It is an acre of red soil…”

Mama Oby notices that her daughter is frustrated for not being able to get the admission in the university. She comforts her to believe in God’s providence with or without university education. She encourages Oby to have an optimistic approach to life.

The author uses Mama Oby to portray the different attitudes towards women in Isiakpu. She says “for us women in Isiakpu these problems are compounded by society…” Pg 3. She brings out the different views about women in Isiakpu.

Like her daughter, Mama Oby is equally anxious about the university admission but does not want to show that she is worried. She comforts her daughter that “God’s time is the best…” Pg 4. Both of them know that Oby’s success belongs to them both “…Oby‘s success was their success…” Pg 4. Mama Oby being a widow is acting as a mother and the same time a father to her children.

Note the mother and daughter are surprised at the admissions to university. Those who qualify do not get admitted but those with fewer marks are admitted to university. For example Nkeiruka who relies on Oby academically-Oby used to help her with the home work. The irony is that all her friends who were not as good as Oby have all joined university.

Mama Oby ponders about Oby‘s education life. She is a bright girl who got Grade II in her final exams. She wonders if there is another way of joining university. The author insinuates on corruption. Those who have money get admitted. The author uses Mama Oby to reveal that “A lot depends on who you know and your standing in the society…” Pg 5 bringing out the idea of nepotism. Those who do not have people who matter in the society would never benefit from it.

Mama Oby thinks of contacting her brother Uncle Amechi for help. She believes that “with money he could unlock some doors…” Pg 5. Amidst all this she still believes that God can still open doors for her daughter. Mama Oby knows that her brother Amechi knows the social dynamics of the Nigerian society. She wants to entrust him with the matter of Oby’s admission.

It should be noted that Oby’s delayed admission is may be their failure to raise money so as to bribe the university officials. The author brings out an issue of a society that is eaten up by corruption. To get a university admission does not mean good grades but who you know. (refer to the students who not as bright as Oby but have already joined university). Mama Oby is used by the author to show that money is the key factor to any advancement in Nigeria “Now money talked and brother may not recognize sister. The spirit of self centeredness is now rooted in the country. Pg5.

Through the omniscient narrator, Mama Oby background is given. She is born Oyodo Nwa Eze and baptized Abigail. When she gets married, she becomes Abigail Onyia. She is forty years old and a widow. Note that the author points out the changes that come with Christianity (title of Mrs). After giving birth to Oby, she becomes Mama Oby and loves to be addressed by the name of her first child. “In Isiakpu, there was no greater joy than to be referred to as mother of the first child.” Stopped.

The author takes the reader through the Isiakpu traditions. The society condemns childlessness, “For a woman life was meaningless if you did not have a child. Society has no sympathy for a barren woman” Pg 5. The society also condemns children born out of marriage, for Isiakpu traditions dictated that “you had to be married and you had to have children”. The men of Isiakpu could not think of women being barren- this brings out male chauvinism and the conservative nature of the Isiakpu traditions.

Mama Oby is a staunch Catholic and believes that everything happens by God’s will. She is a single mother after becoming a widow at a young age. Being an attractive woman, she endures many temptations from men especially those who should have protected and helped her uphold her faith. Osi Ogbu portrays the male chauvinistic society where a woman is always expected to marry. Isiakpu society despises a female adult who stays single. This society underrates women as they think they have no mind of their own. The man plays the role of decision making. “All decisions affecting her life were made by someone else …” Pg 6. Women have no say in the society not even on the matters affecting her.

Again the author portrays the Isiakpu society being a patriarchal society. A woman would only have /get her full rights when she has adult sons. “Only sons could grant a widow status” Pg 6. The wife gains respect in her husband’s homestead if she gives birth to male offspring. “The heir apparent”

The Isiakpu society does not uphold education for girls, but Mama Oby believes that it’s the only way out from that conservative society. That is why Mama Oby is worried when Oby’s admission delays to come.

Mama Oby’s husband has been dead for eight years and it has been her role to shield her children from the “difficult and sometimes infuriating experience of being a widow in Isiakpu” Pg 7. In a flash back, she remembers the time she is confronted by one of the Isiakpu traditions. She is summoned by her late husband’s brothers. Pa Okolo is introduced as the eldest of her brother’s -in-law and is highly respected by everyone in the family. Other brothers include Uncles, Nebo, Eze, Ben and Oby’s father. The sisters are Oyodo and Oyima who are married and live in other villages.

Pa Okolo acts as the chairperson of the family. For his outspokenness, he wants to get to the admission to “the select council of the elders of the town…” Pg 7. On the day of the meeting the main thing on the agenda to be discussed is getting Mama Oby to remarry. Pa Okolo emphasizes the customs and that is what he also demands.

The Isiakpu people believe that when a man dies, one of his brothers can marry the widow (young). He is seconded by his brothers. Mama Oby is asked to choose a husband from her brothers-in-law. The brothers zero on Uncle Ben as a suitor of Mama Oby.

The narrator describes Uncle Ben as “a loafer who had spent 15 years moving from one Nigerian town to another…” Pg 9. Pa Okolo convinces the brothers that Uncle Ben should marry Mama Oby for economic reasons. He reminds them of Mama Oby inheriting their brother’s wealth. He also reasons that their responsibility for Uncle Ben would automatically be lessened. Also Mama Oby will be controlled by the family. Uncle Ben welcomes the idea. (Ben is described as a failure in life). He lacks seriousness in life his only hobby is to move from town to town and is always away from Isiakpu. He is lazy and characterized by poverty “…depended on his wife and relatives for up keep” Pg 9.

Pa Okolo humiliates Uncle Ben by reminding him of being a pain in the neck to his brothers. Through the portrayal of this incident, the author brings out the traditional custom of wife inheritance in Isiakpu. From the description of Uncle Ben’s life, the author brings out the moral decay. For example Uncle Ben moves from pub to pub “watching naked women dance” Pg 9. Pa Okolo reminds Uncle Ben that he is the burden of the family. He tells him that “you are excess baggage to this family” Pg 9.

Mama Oby is incensed by the turn of events. The outcome of the meeting leaves her in pain, recalling the pain brought by the death of her husband.” …the pain of her husband brought her so much anguish. His early death had brought her untold humiliation” Pg 10. The events of this meeting leave Mama Oby humiliated.

Mama Oby controls herself in order not to sound abusive. She responds by praising her in –laws for their concern but tells them that she wants to remain single which shocks her listeners. Pa Okolo sarcastically thanks her claiming that Mama Oby has not seen any eligible man among the brothers to marry her. She confidently urges that she does not despise them. Pa Okolo accuses her of having a love relationship with the **Reverend Father Damian** the parish priest of her church claiming that the whole village has observed. This is a grave accusation against Mama Oby.

Pa Okolo goes ahead to accuse Mama Oby of making the women of Isiakpu rebellious-” the so called members of the Christian Mothers Association” Pg 11. He claims that the women just attend Sunday and ignore doing chores at home. The author brings out the role of women in the home.

Mama Oby is deeply hurt by Pa Okolo’s accusation. Her confidence is affected and she begins to sob. She faces Pa Okolo and his brothers and tells them that the accusations are lies assuring them that “there is nothing between her and Father Damian” Pg12. The author brings out the helplessness of widows in the Isiakpu society.

In order to show that he is a strong man, Uncle Ben wants to slap Mama Oby for calling Pa Okolo liar but is restrained by Pa Okolo himself. Uncle Ben does this to show that he is in control as a man. Osi uses sarcasm here “It was perhaps a demonstration that he was capable of controlling this stubborn woman” Pg 12.

In this whole incident, the author brings out the male chauvinism in this society. Her brothers -in-law know that Mama Oby is strong person so it is this “indefatigable spirit” that they desire to kill. They do not want to concede defeat before a woman. As men they do not want to give up “It was their social obligation not to give up…” Pg 12. He portrays a society that demeans women. They regard them as a mere property. He emphasizes the male chauvinism and wife inheritance.

Pa Okolo is portrayed as being very abusive and disrespectiful to Uncle Ben. He puts him off claiming that he does not want “his brainless skull or weak hands for defense…” Pg 12.

Mama Oby protests about the accusations but later apologises. She is fined for answering back to Pa Okolo which is regarded as being rude to Pa Okolo. All this has been planned to teach Mama Oby a lesson. In anger, Mama Oby leaves the meeting and Uncle Ben is expected to follow her after getting the family’s blessings.

Osi Ogbu through the omniscient narrator, portrays the wife inheritance in this society. Pa Okolo is willing to let her remain single as long as she remains quiet. She assures them that she is ready to remain single and bring up her children. The concocted story of Father Damian is a move to “take possession of her” Pg 12. Being a devout Catholic, Mama Oby is deeply hurt by the accusation and dragging “her parish (Irony) priest‘s name in the mud…” Pg12.

Mama Oby reflects on her relationship with Father Damian who she has relied on for counsel. The attention Fr Damian gives to her is now being misinterpreted by people. This attention from the priest breeds jealousy from Christian Mothers Association especially Mama Ijeoma. She sees herself as Mama Oby’s rival.

Mama Ijeoma like Mama Oby returns to Isiakpu when “her husband was prematurely retired from the civil service” Pg 13. She is a wild woman who leads the village to despise her husband because he has no control over his wife. Here, the author portrays the role of a man in the home. He is expected to provide shelter to the family and to have a firm control over his wife and children. If Mama Ijeoma cannot be controlled by her husband, her husband is scorned. The villagers despise him for being the woman in the home. The tradition of Isiakpu acknowledges male chauvinism and does not uphold woman emancipation. Actually Mama Ijeoma does not hide the fact that she is the one who builds the house they live in.

The narrator gives Mama Ijeoma’s background, as a wealthy woman but it is believed that she gets her wealth from “fooling around with wealthy contractors” this is scorned by the soiety in Isiakpu.

Both Mama Ijeoma and Mama Oby, are exposed to city life and are members of the Christian Mother’s Association. The two women have a different view of life with Mama Oby “a modest woman who still clangs to the memory of her husband‘s love long after his death…” Mama Ijeoma on the other hand “cared little about her husband. She only needed “the social prestige associated with being married” Pg 13. Sheis portrayed as a lifists who gives birth to only two children claiming she will lose her beauty. The author uses contrast to bring out these two characters. The two women differ in the way that Mama Oby despite her husband being dead she is still clinging to his memory whereas Mama Ijeoma cares less about her husband who is still living.

Mama Ijeoma tries to be an influence to Mama Oby but she in not successful which affects their relationship. Mama Ijeoma carries bitterness towards Mama Oby “Mama Ijeoma’s insistence on directing the life of Mama Oby led to a further souring in their relationship…” Pg 15. Mama Oby is conscious of the competitive Mama Ijeoma but being diplomatic, she keeps the relationship alive. Mama Ijeoma, as Mama Oby learns later that she is the one who tarnishes her name by telling Pa Okolo about Fr Damian being her lover. This she does out of jealousy and seeing her as her rival. Mama Ijeoma is portrayed as a hypocrite who pretends to be friends with Mama Oby but deep down her heart, she hates her. She pretends to be concerned about the name of her in-laws family. All this Mama Oby learns from Pa Okolo’s first wife.

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In Isiakpu, tradition dictates differently about widows. Widows do not have a right or say and are always reminded about their husbands being no more “You would never forget your husband is no more…” Pg 14. In a flashback, Mama Oby is used by the author to paint the picture of what used to happen to widows. If the husband died under mysterious conditions-prematurely. The widow is treated as a criminal. This maltreatment worsened during the mourning.” In Isiakpu …” Pgs 14-15

Note that when the family accuses the widow of being responsible for the husband’s death, the widow is subjected to the wrath of the sisters-in-law. She is humiliated at the expense of fellow women. It is a lengthy period of punishment (Seven market weeks).

In Isiakpu, premature death is not expected so wherever a woman is suspected of being responsible, she is subjected to both physical and psychological torture. Such is meant to show others who might want to take the lives of their husbands the repercussions. Mourning lasts one year which still exists up to the present. Mama Oby’s husband dies prematurely but she is not subjected to the seven weeks “the seven weeks seclusion period had been shortened to a week and the bizarre market outing had been eliminated…” Pg15.

Despite the revision of the traditional laws about the premature death, widows like Mama Oby are still facing problems in Isiakpu. It is ironic that when things seem to have changed they still look the same. When husbands die, the traditional law allows the family of the dead husband to take all the property away. It should be noted that the modern widows have put emphasis on material which has been brought about by the harsh traditions. This “was sensible and practical under the circumstances” Pg 16. What the in-laws do to the widows brings about greed, insensitivity, materialism without minding about the plight of the orphans. Pgs 15-16. The chauvinistic nature of the men of Isiakpu is portrayed “the man’s brothers had to first claim to the man’s assets, whether or not he had a wife or children.”

Osi presents a society that is promoting inhumanism towards the dead man’s family. Shamelessly the men in Isiakpu do not even wait for the burial to be completed. This action is justified by claiming that the wife used to enjoy when the husband lived. It is ironic that the wife tries to ask questions, she is accused of being interested in material things other than her dead husband.” She would be condemned for lacking respect for the dead “Pg 16. The men of Isiakpu are so conservative that they do not respect the ‘will’. The life of the women in Isiakpu is doomed. This society does not see a woman as a human being but just a mere property. The traditions enslave women but Mama Oby insists that they need to educate their children if change is to take place. Mama Oby is optimistic that “education is the only tool that can liberate the female gender from the traditional unfairness.”

**Activity**

1. Describe the character of the following as portrayed in this chapter:
2. Pa Okolo
3. Mama Oby
4. Oby
5. Mama Ijeoma
6. Uncle Ben
7. Identify and explain the themes
8. Show the significance of the story within the story
9. Describe the effectiveness of the narrative techniques used in this chapter

**Chapter Two**

Two weeks after the confrontation from her in-laws “something happened that sent shivers down her spine “Pg 18. One evening Mama Oby after the usual Christian women meeting, is sent for by Fr Damian (sends his cook). Without hesitation, Mama Oby goes to him as she always does. However, this time it is different. When she gets into Fr Damian’s house, he takes long to come. When he finally comes, he appears in the most unusual attire yet he is expecting a female visitor.” He wore a pair of shorts and a singlet that partly showed the chest and its scanty hair…” Pg 18. Fr Damian looks ridiculous which is not expected of a priest-religious leader. His dress code shocks Mama Oby. He hugs her rubbing his elbow on her firm breasts. She is surprised at the strange behavior of the priest but dismisses any suspicion regarding it as” evil thoughts”

Father Damian tells Mama Oby that there is something he wants to show her upstairs. He lures her to his bedroom. Meanwhile, the weather begins to change “the thick clouds… had enveloped the sky.” This leaves Mama Oby troubled. When she notices that the priest’s houseboy is not in the house, she begins to get scared. When she stumbles on the stairs, Fr Damian comes to her rescue. “This afforded him the opportunity to get close to her.” Pg19

In the bedroom, the atmosphere is of lovemaking. Being a scantly furnished room, Fr Damian makes her sit on the bed. She protests but to no avail, this increases her discomfort and helplessness. The author uses coincidence, at a time when she is falsely accused of being Fr Damian’s lover; she is actually seduced by Fr Damian. Mama Oby is scared and her prayer at that moment is for the door to be blown open. The music playing on the radio cassette, “What a wonderful world “by Louis Armstrong which is carefully selected by him to rouse her feelings sexually. Mama Oby realizes that Fr Damian planned the evening to the last detail.

Note that Fr Damian has been anticipating this day for a long time and could not give up now. This portrays Fr Damian’s immoral character. He grabs her breast and squeezes it. This is sexual assault and ironically it’s from a priest. Mama Oby courageously defends herself “She shoved him away so hard he landed on his fours on the small table…” Pg20.

Mama Oby is in shock and confused but manages to walk to the door, leaving Father Damian seated on the floor confused. He tries to stop her but Mama Oby’s’ message is clear. He pleads for forgiveness on his knees claiming “the devil had been at work and had pushed him into doing what he had done “Pg 20. He begs her not to let anyone know.

Mama Oby thinks of where she has gone wrong. All she has done is because of her devotion to the church. The fact that Father Damian is younger than her angers her as he should have shown her some respect. This opens her eyes and ears about the stories she has always heard about “Reverend Fathers and women “Pg 20.

When she flees from the house, the weather outside reflects Mama Oby’s calamity.” The wind blew harder…” Pg 21. She tries to walk home but the weather is horrible. Father Damian calls her back to the house. The impending storm scares her so she decides to go back to the house. Later Father Damian drives her back home. It is a silent drive with only apologies from the priest. What happens that evening affects the relationship between the two “The relationship between the two was never the same again. “Pg 21

Mama Oby in keeping with her faith does not disclose it to anyone. Much as she is deeply hurt by the assault from Fr Damian, it does not stop her from “doing her regular Christian duties” Pg 21. Note that Mama Oby is disappointed by what Fr Damian does. It creates distrust in him though it does not affect her being a devout Catholic.

**Activity**

1. Analyse the character of Father Damian portrayed in this chapter.
2. Show how religious hypocrisy is portrayed.
3. What feelings are aroused in you towards
4. Mama Oby
5. Fr Damian
6. Explain the use of the omniscient narrator in this chapter.

**Chapter Three**

The following day is Sunday, the description of the preparation of Sunday. Fr Damian’s sermons are described as being based on commenting about village politics and morality which last for hours but most of all the sermons are boring. Fr Damian is described as being God’s representative and never entertains challenges. Whoever yawns is branded a drunkard who is nursing a hangover from the previous day. A case in the point is when a city dweller comes to Isiakpu to visit his parents. Due to the long and boring sermon, he walks out of the church and even when the priest send for him he refuses to come back. This earns his parent’s wrath from Fr Damian.

The irony is that when the same young man makes a generous contribution for the Catholic Church during the annual bazaar. He immediately becomes the pride of Isiakpu. The author quotes this “Them say, money talks. And in church money dey talk well well, sotee is echoes” Pg 22. The author portrays the materialism in church. Those who give to the church are a pride of the village.

# The introduction of Ikechukwu, Mama Oby’s youngest child. He is treated with care and spoilt by his mother a thing that annoys Oby. He is seven years old but very dependent. He cannot do any of the chores done by boys of his age. To Mama Oby, Ike is a baby. There is a special bond between mother and son. He is born after the death of Papa Oby. With Ike on the way after her husband’s death, there is a lot of speculation. People thought she had conceived after the death of her husband. The author brings the communal concern about the lives and morals of the people. The whole village of Isiakpu gets concerned about her pregnancy. Her pregnancy and birth of Ikechukwu happens in the period of mourning. Everyone suspects that she has sex during this period and the result is the pregnancy.

Osi brings out the male chauvinism whereby any man responsible for impregnating the women is not reprimanded but the woman who allowed it to happen is punished. The woman would be subjected to punishment administered by the “…women, aunts, sisters-in -law and grandmothers “Pg 23.

Despite being a strong willed person, Mama Oby gets worried not that she doubts herself. Doubts of her child’s paternity would weaken her position in the society. This forces Mama Oby to wish that the unborn child should be a true Onyia as there was no paternity tests in Isiakpu. That is resembling the father would be the only way to wash away any doubt “he had to be an Onyia beyond reasonable doubt “Pg 23. Resemblance’s is the paternity test that would confirm that Mama Oby never committed any sexual abomination during the period of mourning.

To Mama Oby’s relief, Ikechukwu is born a spitting image of his father. Osi brings out the village gossip machine when different villagers come to see Mama Oby and confirm the paternity. He also portrays the hypocrisy that exists in the traditional setting. Note that while some people are happy for Mama Oby, some are disappointed. The author brings out the ordeal that Mama Oby experiences during her pregnancy which contributes to the strong bond that exists between mother and son. “Her child was her comfort “Pg 24.

The author describes the Isiakpu church which is the pride of Isiakpu community. By portraying the church in Isiakpu, the author brings out the corruption in the church “The speed with which a church was built depended on the fund raising skills of the various parish priests and their sincerity “Pg 25. This is ironic.

This particular Sunday, Oby and her mother implore God to make Oby join University bringing out the role of university education. Mama Oby is noted to have built the foundation of her family in God.

Father Damian preaches on righteousness basing on the adage ‘do as I say but not as I do. ‘It is ironic that Fr Damian even has “psychological counseling for sexual indiscretion” Pg 26 and a priest at that. Despite his sexual weakness, he is extremely effective as a priest. He spearheads the completion of the Isiakpu Catholic Church.

After the church service, people mingle in the church compound sharing bits of gossip. The irony is that in the church compound “rumours were started and confirmed… “Pg26. This portrays a society that has a communal approach to life. Note that after church, men converge to the market place to take palm wine. More so village meetings take place on Sundays and “palm wine drinking was a permanent feature. Discussion on the business in the village was crucial” Pg 26. Business is basically commodity trading with emphasis on how to stay in business. In the tradition set up, the economic welfare of individuals is catered for.

The tradition of the Isiakpu village puts a lot of emphasis on morality, respect for elders and values which were taught through “folklore and role play. “These make up the informal education syllabus. Such used to take place at the ‘otobo’-village square. Now mothers were taught the tricks of child rearing from one another.

At the village square, during the new moon, it transformed into a theatre, “Drama, song and dance, wrestling and story-telling competitions were staged there” Pg 27. The informal education was all embracing which trained an individual to be part and parcel of the community. It also encouraged healthy competition especially when it came to games.

The traditional set up condemned poor morals, for example cheating especially in games. The author sadly points out that such has been lost and with it the ability to develop skills. The author contrasts the ‘otobo’ with the church which he portrays to be very different in as far as roles are concerned. It is absurd that all the things that promoted traditional values like ceremonies and informal gatherings have been labeled anti-Christian.

The new religion has not played a crucial role of uniting people but has encouraged division contrary to the tradition set up. Protestants and Catholics do not mix freely and Christians and non-Christians can longer interact even for their own benefit. Contrary to the traditional set up, the Sunday among Christians is special. It is characterized with good food -rice and tomato stew. People would dress in their best and latest attire Pg 28.

Note that Christianity has its restrictions whereby a person in church is expected to dress properly for service. Church tradition dictated that women “whose head or other part was not properly covered” are reprimanded by the church wardens. The church wardens who the author describes as “quite a breed” and points out that they are “more catholic than the pope “Pg 29. Instead of doing God’s work as the bible teaches, they misguide the priests. These lack good education which makes them “prone to misinterpret and misrepresent the spirit and the letter of the Catholic doctrine.” Pg 28

In the traditional set up, people thrived on community life and deviating from its expectations “was the greatest punishment.” Those imprisoned in the colonial era would be isolated which would leave them alienated. The author compares the church wardens to the colonial interpreters who were oppressive, unfair liars etc. The wardens have made many traditional beliefs and rituals look evil. For example, burial ceremonies, family reunions and other communal activities and have branded them idolatry. They accept Christianity wholesale with the influence of the Reverend Father who instructs them to ban or have them modified to suit the church.

Anyone who is found guilty of practicing idolatry, the wardens would recommend that the individual be excommunicated. The victim keeps pleading for reconsideration. The affected person has to frequent the wardens and the priest. Such visits seeking forgiveness, one does not go empty handed “Gifts helped wardens and priests understand your point of view and persuaded them to persuade one another to forgive you” Pg 29. The wardens in the church assume the role of God. The priests do not question the warden’s mischief.

The wardens execute the church tradition to the letter. The author portrays the wardens being the authority in church matters. The author uses hyperbole to bring out the appearance of the women and head gears.

While at church Mama Ijeoma meets Mama Oby. Mama Ijeoma is hypocritical and she is jealous towards Mama Oby. Mama Ijeoma inquires if Oby has heard anything from the university. Mama Oby is optimistic that Oby will get communication from the university.

Through Mama Ijeoma, Osi brings out the moral decay in society. She suggests that she can send Oby to a university lecturer in the University of Nigeria. This implies that Oby can have sex with the lecturer so as to get the admission. She says that” We can send Oby to him next week; she can use her charms to solicit his help.” Pg 30. This portrays her not being morally upright. She is used to portray the moral decadence in the society. The innocent young girls fall victims of sexual manipulation in the bid to gain favours i. e. getting university admissions.

Unlike Mama Oby, Mama Ijeoma would go an extra mile to see that she achieves what she wants. She is ready to sell her soul, she is conscious of Mama Oby’s “straight-laced manners.” Mama Oby is portrayed as a prayerful person who believes that prayer can move mountains therefore she does not buy her advice.

Introduction of another character Isaac Eze who is an auxiliary teacher like Oby. He wants to marry Oby but she does not yield to his suggestion and advances. He discourages Oby from pursuing university education. Oby is annoyed with his continued advances. She reminds him that no one wants to marry a man without ambition. Isaac reminds her that she will still come back to their kinds of jobs.

Meanwhile, Mama Oby ponders over Mama Ijeoma’s suggestion and knows that it is not the right path to take. She does not even dare to tell it to Oby who out of despair can take the option. Mama Oby knows that if this happens,it would be a subject of gossip of course spread by Mama Ijeoma.

Oby is described as a decent, highly respected and level headed girl. It is for this character trait that earns her advances from many men who see in her “as a potentially good wife and mother “Pg 31. This brings out the traditional outlook at the girl child. Through Oby the author brings the traditional society in as far as education of the women/girls is concerned. Pa Okolo appreciates the value of education but still believes that “marriage and education were not compatible” Pg 32. Pa Okolo believes that the value of the woman depreciated over time irrespective of her education.

Oby is determined to attain university education and this is the driving force behind her resistance to the many advances from the men, “education was uppermost in her mind “Pg 32. She has the support of her mother. Mama Oby’s prayer is that Oby should not disappoint her by becoming pregnant or get an outcast for a husband. If this happens; she will be the laughing stock of the village.

Mama Oby ponders over Mama Ijeoma’s suggestion and and resorts to prayer as always. She reads from Isaiah 40:31for comfort and Psalms 23 beseeching God for his guidance and protection.

Uncle Ben comes in the night to claim his conjugal rights after being given Mama Oby as his wife in the family meeting. He is on tension and when Mama Oby notices it she asks Oby to excuse them. Oby being a caring daughter requests her uncle not to keep her mother up for long.

Through Oby, the omniscient narrator portrays the kind of man Uncle Ben is. He is an irresponsible father who cares less about their welfare.” Had no idea what the children ate.” Pg 33. Actually Oby despises him. To Oby’s dismay, Uncle Ben asks for money from her. On one specific day, Oby responds aggressively towards him which results in Mama Oby being fined “two cocks and a gallon of palm wine for not bringing Oby up well enough to respect her elders” Pg 34. Osi brings out the unfair customs.

When the two are left alone, Mama Oby demands to know what Uncle Ben has come to do that late. He tells her that he has come to perform his duties as her husband claiming that it is a family injuction that he has come to fulfill.

In shock, Mama Oby orders him to leave before waking up Oby or the neighbours. Osi brings out the plight of the widows who have no say in anything regarding their lives. Society marginalizes widows and these are the consequences Mama Oby suffers. She swears that Uncle Ben will never have anything to do with her. She puts him in his place. Unlike her character, she abuses him “Foolish man …” Pg 35. She regrets this when she realizes that her response is bound to cause her problems. She is however remorseless of what has just happened. She puts up a fight and wins it but she is left dejected. She recalls the blissful time she had expected to have with Papa Oby. Once again she reads her bible beseeching God for his guidance and protection. (Psalms 119:133-136)

This reference to the psalms brings out Mama Oby as strong woman of faith who only looks up to God for everything. God is her only hope in the world where people are determined to torture her both pyschally and psychologically. However her strength does not waver.

Oby strains to hear what is going on but could not hear much. Osi brings out Oby being a responsible girl who wants to join hands with her mother to fight for their rights. She wonders if only she were a boy, the situation would have been different. In this Osi brings out the patriarchal society which cherishes sons. The traditional society looks at girls as passers by in their family. They are therefore excluded from the family. She sometimes would be unhappy if Mama Oby left her out. This shows that male chauvinism is deeply rooted in the Isiakpu community. To a girl child, home is where she gets married.

**Activity**

1. Describe the theme of tradition as portrayed in this chapter.
2. Analyse the character of the following
3. Mama Oby
4. Oby
5. Uncle Ben
6. Identify and explain the significance of the narrative techniques used in this chapter.
7. What are your views about wife inheritance?

**Chapter Four**

Amechi and his sisters Chika and Ngozi return to Isiakpu. Amechi has just completed his school certificate examinations. He is not passionate about getting university education. Actually it’s Oby who encourages him to work hard at school. His goal is to become a motor-parts apprenticeship. This he had even wanted to join when he finished his primary school after he realised that his mother was struggling to keep them in school. He did not want to be a burden to her. His desire is to go into business like Uncle Amechi and be able to solve their financial difficulties.

Amechi would by now have completed his apprenticeship but he is lured into continuing with his education when Uncle Amechi volunteers to pay his fees.

In Isiakpu, there is a “unique apprenticeship scheme…” Pg 37, its purpose is to redistribute the wealth from the rich to the poor. The rich owner of the business would hire apprentices to equip them with skills as they worked. In this portrayal, the author brings out the society that does not fear competition. Masters can even use the trainees as their outlets. Traditionally, this is a “social contract” and all the ventures depended on trust. However with the turn of events, formal arrangements have replaced this system. Osi underscores the trust that has become “increasingly rare”

The author portrays the attitude of the youth towards education. They look at themselves as getting rich very fast. They scorn education because those who are educated are not doing well as those who are involved in trade/business. However, he notes that they only focus their attention to a few who are successful which is bad.

Before sitting down for the midday meal, the post office agent comes with good news for Oby. Oby is anxious to know what is in the letter. On reading the letter, Oby jumps in the air in the jubilant mood. She is finally admitted to the University of Embakassi to study sociology. There is jubilation in Mama Oby’s compound. Mama Oby is overwhelmed with joy. She does not forget to thank God for answering their prayers. To Mama Oby, this is triumph over her enemies.

The excitement, the dancing and noise attracts neighbours who come to join in the celebration when they learn about the news. The neighbours want to celebrate with Mama Oby because they want to share in her joy because she is a kind and generous woman. Note that Oby’s success is the success of the whole community. Even those who do not understand what university education is join, in the celebration. The author brings out the spirit of togetherness /communal spirit.” While many did not appreciate what this meant for Oby and her mother, they were happy to rejoice at anything that made Mama Oby that excited. “Pg 39. Oby’s admission to Embakassi University is like breaking the chains that bound the women in Isiakpu society.

Many people appreciate Oby for being a well behaved girl who deserves that success. Through the women, Osi brings out the issue of morality in the Isiakpu society. They note that Oby “… has always behaved differently from the other young educated girls in our village who pursue men like flies follow flies.” The metaphor brings out themorals that have been affected by education. Educated girls are no longer respected due to the way they behave. This is contrary to what Oby and her mother expect from education. Most people conclude that Oby is as reserved as her father “A great man had begat a great daughter. “ The leopard has left its spots” Pg 40. The proverbs explain who Oby really is. The reader gets an insight in ‘the character of Oby’s father. However, Mama Oby attributes all her success to God. She says “When God has been kind to you, you should praise Him four fold” Pg40

After the receiving the news and the rejoicing, Mama Oby does not leave the women to go without giving them something-she gives them biscuits. This gesture portrays her generous nature.

Immediately after the celebration, the reality sets in. Mother and daughter sit down to discuss the plan and work out the money needed. Mama Oby knows that it will be a sacrifice to send Oby to the University but she is ready to make it not wanting her children to feel the absence of their father.

The admission having arrived late, there is no time to lose; they have to act very fast. Note that Oby’s admission exonerates Mama Oby. She prides in it and says “I thank you for placing me well above my mates, “Pg 41. She comments about the advice she has always been given about the admission recalling what Mama Ijeoma told her.

Before Oby’s departure for Embakassi, Mama Oby plans to “throw a small send off party…” Pg 41 Oby is opposed to the party saying it will be a financial burden but Mama Oby cannot hear of it claiming she is doing what her father would have done if he was alive. She says it would even have been greater than what is planning to do. About the money Mama Oby assures Oby that they will manage.

Mama Oby points out how Oby’s relatives neglected them i. e not paying school fees for the children. Her in-laws claim that her husband left her with millions to spend lavishly. Osi brings out the materialistic nature of Oby’s uncles. Oby’s relatives want to marry her off to get the dowry. They represent the Isiakpu society which does not value the education of the girl child. Pg 43

In a flash back, Mama Oby reminisces about Papa Oby and what he would have done if he was still alive. A background to the cause of his death is portrayed. He died in the civil war. He was a successful businessman who lived in Kano with his family. During the civil war he sends his family to Isiakpu. Later he is killed in the second massacre of the Igbo and his body was never discovered.

Note that even the government is unjust to the citizens. The Kano state confiscates Papa Oby’s house in Kano and just gives Mama Oby some little money. Moral decadence is present in the Nigerian society.” The Nigerian moral fibre was so decayed that the sins of the past were never treated seriously “Pg 44. Mama Oby is used to portray the Nigerian society where justice is lacking.

**Activity**

1. Explain the significance of Oby’s admission to the university to Mama Oby’s family.
2. Describe the communal spirit as portayed in this chapter.
3. Describe the character of the following
4. Mama Oby
5. Oby
6. UncleAmechi
7. Identify and explain the significance of the narrative techniques in this chapter.
8. What feelings does this chapter arouse in you?
9. What do you learn from this chapter?

**Chapter Five**

Very early the next morning, Amechi is sent to Uncle Amechi in Onitsha to deliver the good news of Oby’s admission to theUniversity of Embakassi. Uncle Amechi is invited to a send off party for Oby. Uncle Amechi is happy but wonders why it’s not Oby who goes to give him the good news. Note that he is very supportive to his sister Mama Oby. Uncle Amechi counsels Amechi to be serious with his education so as to emulate her sister. The author brings out the role of education. Uncle Amechi reminds him of his pledge to support him in his education journey. The irony is that the paternal uncles are not interested in making their brothers children have a better life.

Uncle Amechi advises Amechi to proceed with his education up to university instead of becoming an appreniceto become a motor mechanic.

While they eat, Uncle Amechi’s wife comes back from visiting a mother with a child who is ill. Like her husband, she is suprised to see Amechi but later she calms down when she sees the two speaking calmly-Uncle Amechi’s wife visiting the mother with a child who is ill brings out the spirit of communal responsibility.

Uncle Amechi’s wife is happy and praises Oby for her brilliance and being a well behaved girl. Note that she mentions the university having a negative effect on Oby. She says” I hope that the university doesn’t spoil her as it has spoilt so many highly educated women…” Pg46. It is ironic that the university instead of producing morally upright people, it is just contributing to destroying the women. Through Uncle Amechi, the author shows that the women who come out of the university are feared by men but she has confidence in Oby. She points out that as a result “many of them remain unmarried after university … “Pg 46

Uncle Amechi loves his sister and has been supportive to her. He wants to send money to his sister for the organization of the send off party for Oby. His wife however puts a check on his generousity, she disagrees with giving Mama Oby one thousand naira. ’She only allows to give her five thousand naira. Uncle Amechi’s wife lacks the generosity of her husband. She is a selfish woman who only cares about her own needs and interest. For example, she reminds her of his promise to buy her a gold set. She is sarcastic when she uses the image of Father Christmas to describe Uncle Amechi’s generosity.

The narrator goes ahead to describe Uncle Amechi by giving his nickname ‘Ochendu’ meaning ‘one who protects life’. This is given to him by his fellow businessmen in Onitsha. This is confirmed by his assistance to his sister. The narrator uses this nickname to reveal the traditional titles that are given to people who stand out in the society. However, this nickname of Uncle Amechi does not reflect the traditional title. “Traditional titles were accorded a lot of respect if properly acquired “Pg 47

Traditionally, the title is bestowed on important sons and sometimes daughters who had distinguished themselves in certain ways or contributed to the development of the town. However in the changing times, money now dictated who got the title. This is ironic because the titles that are given traditionally, are no longer genuine. Corruption has infiltrated the traditional society. Those who are worthy are the ones who get the so called traditional titles. For eample, Uncle Amechi deserves this title but he is not recognized.

In the flash back, the author uses a story within story to give a brief background of Uncle Amechi. It brings out his character of being a strong willed man who vowed never to eat cassava as a grown up. Pgs 47-48

**Activty**

1. Describe the role played by Uncle Amechi as in this chapter.
2. Describe the character of the following
3. Uncle Amechi
4. Uncle Amechi’s wife
5. Amechi
6. Describe the attitude of the society towards university education.
7. Identify and explain the themes portrayed in this chapter.
8. Show the author’s use of irony in this chapter.

**Chapter Six**

The last week before Oby’s departure to theUniversity of Embakassi is very hectic for her. It is basically characterized by preparations, visits to friends and relatives. She is given advice from each and everyone she visits. In this male dominated society, very few understand the importance of university education “Not everyone understood the importance of university education for a woman” Pg 49

Despite the mixed feelings, many people wish Oby success and appreciate her for being a girl who “who maintained a sense of respect for tradition and avoided fooling around with men “Pg 49. The admission of Oby to the university is a break through which liberates her and her mother from the chains of male chauvinism.

Note that the author brings out the traditional beliefs in conflict with religion. Where Oby is going, the place is believed to have many people who believe in witchcraft but they cannot dare challenge Mama Oby’s faith. The author notes that traditionally the Isiakpu community, believes in getting protection from the traditional medicine men which is contrary to what Mama Oby believes in. As for Mama Oby, she believes in God’s protection. They know that Mama Oby will tell them to leave everything to God

While visiting the different homes, Oby comes faceto face with reality. She realizes the kind of life the women live. She counts herself lucky to be going to university and the challenges ahead of her are just “a badge of privileges” Pg 49

Oby counts herself a lucky girl after noting that “fewer and fewer girls were gaining admission to the university and her village was still asleep as far as female education was concerned.” The Isiakpu society has not embraced the education for the girl child. This will leave the women of Isiakpu in the subject position in this male dominated /chauvinist society.

The author brings out the spirit of togetherness that thrives in the traditiotnal setting. This is portrayed through the attendance of Oby’s send off to party which is well attended. Many women come to help Mama Oby despite her protests. Mama Oby is described as a good cook which is attributed to her city experience.

The author uses Oby’s send off portrays the social divisions in the society. Guests like Uncle Amechi are treated differently and a special meal is prepared for them. There is a limit to egalitarianism.

During the preparations even Pa Okolo in his meanness brings “two gallons of palm wine “to demonstrate his support. He has never ruled out the thought that he will preside over Oby’s dowry negotiations. “…he wanted people to know that he had contributed his share for her upkeep.” The author uses this gesture to show that traditional men still believe that no matter the level of education, a girl is only meant for marriage. Pa Okolo’s opportunism is portrayed. He instructs Mama Oby to keep some of the wine he brings to be kept for Uncle Amechi.

When Uncle Amechi arrives and Pa Okolo misses no opportunity, he quickly tells him to ask Mama Oby for what he brought for him. Pa Okolo acknowledges Uncle Amechi’s role in Mama Oby’s family. He tells him that “You have been a giant in this house. “Pg 50

Uncle Amechi points out that Oby is now going to be independent. He advises her to stop her naivety in the village. He informs her about the world outside Isiakpu where” It is dog eat dog if you know what I mean. Neither your mom nor I will be around to watch for you…” Pg 51

Mama Oby requests her brother to join her to thank God confessing that she has had sleepless nights because of the admission problem. She says that” If I tell you that I have not had sleepless nights because of his admission problem, I will be lying. “Pg 51

She points out her fears about what the village people would say if Oby failed. She is aware that they will attribute it to her father not being alive or the poor guidance of her mother. Uncle Amechi comforts her, pointing out a proverb that “It is the mouth that utters evil things that will utter good things as well.” Pg 51

Through Mathias –Uncle Amechi’s sycophant-the author brings out the effect of the Nigerian civil war on the different people i. e Mama Oby loses her husband,house,Okeke was shell shocked (partially deaf)but left with a strong sense of smell. Through him the author applies humour and exaggeration to lighten up the tension.” He could smell a feast mile away…” Pg 52. His philosophy in life is that man must eat. He is a village comedian. Through him the social status of Uncle Amechi is portrayed. He is very rich. The despair of people like Mathias who live on handouts brings out the personality of Uncle Amechi. The character of his wife is also portrayed.

In attendance is Mama Ijeoma who comes with Father Damian. Mama Ijeoma “As usual she was dressed flamboyantly in dazzling colours … “Pg 53. She likes to walk in the company of the priest indeed the two cause a stir when they walk in together and “many exchanged knowing glances. For a while there was a wave of murmuring… “Pg 53

The evening is spent with little speech making for many people had spoken to Oby privately. Pa Okolo not wanting to miss any opportunity to demonstrate being in charge of the family, claims that he loves his brother’s family. He comments on his brother being the cause of the great things happening in Alfred Onyia’s family. He describes Papa Oby as having been an upright and generous person pointing out that he “had principles and whatever he believed in he fought for.” Pg 53

Pa Okolo requests Oby to emulate that Uche endeared her family to many. To him, the university is meant to represent all that is good. He however notes that things have changed and what to expect is not certain. Like all the others, Pa Okolo acknowledges Oby being a well brought up child. He cautions her that she is being sent to the university to bring “honour and not shame” Pg 54

He uses different proverbs to caution Oby about the wickedness that awaits her at the university “We are sending …That is all I have for you “Pg 54. Note that he emphasizes morality in his speech which is the foundation of tradition/culture.

When the party is over Mama Oby and Oby sit together for a long time. She advises Oby to be careful of the men who are “wolves” who will come with sugar coated words, who might exploit her and leave her in regrets. She also cautions her against close personal relationships with her teachers.

Oby cries at the thought of leaving her mother alone. She is worried about leaving her with Pa Okolo and Uncle Ben but her mother assures her that she will be protected by God.

The following day, Oby leaves for the University of Embakassi which is in a different state. Mama Oby prays for her before she embarks on the journey into the “…unknown place unprotected” Pg 55. Out of the blue, Mama Ijeoma appears, she praises Mama Oby and points out how the whole of Isiakpu is proud of her. She praises her for achieving a great thing without a husband. She uses this opportunity to demean her husband who she calls “…one of those men who have worthless balls between their legs.” She is obviously disappointed by her husband and despises him. She is not even afraid to confess it to Mama Oby. Mama Oby is conscious that Mama Ijeoma is up to something but is pretending to be good.

After her ranting, she turns to Mama Oby and asks her if she has given Oby some contraceptives. Mama Oby is in disbelief and shock to hear her ask such a question. This brings out her loose character and her lack of good morals. At Mama Oby’s reaction, she begins to lecture to her, accusing her of being” as naïve as a raw villager “Pg 57. She confesses that she equips Ijeoma with contraceptives. She warns Mama Oby not to go crying to her. Mama Oby assures her that it will not happen.

Mama Ijeoma comments on Fr Damian also using contraceptives –protection when he indulges in sex with women. This is ironic because he is expected to live a celibate life. Mama Oby is left wondering if Mama Ijeoma and Fr Damian have an affair. She thinks that it is immoral to think about contraceptives yet she is a catholic.

**Activity**

1. Explain the significance of Oby’s send off party.
2. Describe the character of the following.
3. Fr Damian
4. Mama Ijeoma
5. Pa Okolo
6. Oby
7. Mama Oby
8. Show the effectiveness of the narrative techniques used in this chapter.
9. What lessons do you learn after reading this chapter?
10. Identify and explain the themes portrayed in this chapter.

**PART II**

**Searching for the Golden Fleece**

**Chapter Seven**

It takes Oby eight hours to get the University of Embakassi. Despite her enthusiasm, she feels strange in this new life and land. She finds herself alone and does not know who to ask about the directions. It is a whole new world for her. Oby gets to Embakassi two days after registration has started.

Embakassi University is described as one “of the second generation of Nigerian universities. “It is converted into a university during the oil boom. It is described as a beautiful place which makes Oby very happy to be part of it. Despite the first impression, the university beyond what the eye can see is the ‘ghetto’ with “dilapidated structures comprising the academic blocks and the laboratories. “

While still standing confused and not knowing where to begin from, a young man approaches her and asks her if she needs help. She requests him to direct her to the woman’s hostel. He helps Oby by carrying one of her boxes. He also inquires from her which part of Nigerian she comes from. He introduces himself as a student. He is described as a mature person and Oby keeps on calling him sir. He warns her against calling a fellow student ‘sir’.

The young man takes Oby to Mary Slessor Hall. It is described as a “beehive of activity in the evenings. All types of cars are parked in front of it. “Pg 60

The narrator portrays the university life that welcomes Oby. Actually it is not the right hostel for a girl like Oby. Through the portrayal of the activities in this hall, the narrator brings out the morality of these university girls. To Oby’s surprise, she learns that girls fight to reside in this hall. It is described as a hostel that would turn a novice like Oby grow faster than she otherwise would Pg 61.

The young man leaves after directing her to the porter on duty. After being checked, she is temporarily allocated Room 146 where she finds two senior students Ada and Fumi. Oby is excited to be starting a new life. She prays and goes to sleep.

Note that Oby gets to the university when the senior students are doing their “by- elections” taking retakes. This is indirectly a warning to Oby not to take her studies less seriously.

It should be noted that during the orientation, the security department cautions the new students to take security seriously due to the increased cases of crime including rape. The new students are vulnerable. Pg 61 As a way of safe guarding their lives the new students are given the “dos and the don’ts.” “Girls were asked to always walk in pairs at night and to avoid dark alleys “Pg 61. Right from her first day at the university what Oby hears “…her image of the institution as the ideal place was being gradually demolished “Pg 61.

On her second day Oby passes by the spot where the young man who helped her came from but she does not see him. He sees her but does not wave to her. He does this because he does not want his friends to assess the girl as they always do. Irony is when young university men indulge in gossiping about girls.

Chike is the first to comment about Oby pretending not to have met her before. Okoro, Chike’s friend comments that Oby has “a good background and nice legs.” This is what the three indulge in as pass time –the three are gossips. Chris appreciates Oby. From the description of the three, we can sum up that Oby is a village beauty who is likely to attract many men to her. After his friends have finished commenting on Oby, Chike declares his interest in her. He says “I am going to go after this girl come rain or shine” Pg 63. It is love at first sight for Chike. He confesses to them as having met Oby already but is willing to give a full semester to let her get used to the new environment. Through these three friends the author portrays the male students’ lack of seriousness in the relationships they undertake. For example, Chris and his former girl friends. However, Chris is an exception who is bent on getting a girl with good manners.

Okoro,on the other hand points out that he will continue to get girls from the nearby nursing school claiming he has no time “for the romantic requirement of dating university girls.” Pg 64. The author through the three young men gives an insight in the campus life. Okoro asks Chike if he has found out if the girl is an Igbo-the issues of tribalism comes in.

Through the omniscient narrator, the backgrounds of the three friends, Chris Onuora, Okoro Ohulo and Chike Amaefuna is given. They have been friends since their first year in the University of Embakassi and now they are in their third year. They are brought together by their common hatred for their statistics lecture and beeing all Igbo, cements their relationship.

Chris is 20 years and is studying Geography whose ambition is to become a commercial pilot. He comes from an enlightened family. The father is a professor of Business Management at the University of Enugu. His mother is a principal of a secondary school. He is born in England while her parents are studying. This background gives him “a polished look” Pg 65. The author portrays that one’s background determines one’s character. He is described as having “a fine taste and dressed well.” He has two sisters who are studying medicine at the University of Enugu.

Okoro is 20 years old and is pursuing a degree in Buniness Management. His father is an “illiterate, wealthy business man in the commercial city of Aba “Pg 65. He hails from a polygamous family –his father has two wives. His father rules his household with an iron hand. Okoro is affected by this environment with the father being an over domineering person. Okoro is also described as a humorous person who inherits this from his father. Actually his father is his role model. His father wants him to study business management so as to take over his businesses in future.

Chike is 22 years and unofficial leader of the group due to his age and experience. Of the three, he is the only who lives alone without parental influence. After his secondary school education; he is not admitted to university immediately. He takes on the job as a secondary school teacher in Asaba not far from Onitsha town where his parents lived. His father is an administrative officer and his mother a trader. He is pursuing an economics major but without a fixed career goals. He builds his motivation on the few successful economists. His mother is optimistic that one day “her son would join the ranks of the arrogant bank managers…” Pg 65.

**Activity**

1. Dscribe the University life as portrayed in this chapter.
2. Show how the omniscient narrator is used in this chapter to develop the plot.
3. What do you think are the author’s concerns in this chapter?
4. Analyse the character traits of the three friends

**Chapter Eight**

It is now been two weeks since Oby reports to the university. Most continuing students have reported back and the lectures are in full gear. Her residence has been confirmed as Room 146 Mary Slessor Hall. She is now well acquainted with the daily routine of the university. She realizes that the students are not in the mood for serious work. Oby comes face to face with the real campus life where students do not take studies seriously. Oby is disappointed that some students use the library for their private social life. She is surprised at the incredible amount of freedom the students have at the university.

Oby is exposed to a new culture where students dress up when going to the cafeteria. It is this observation that lures Oby into dressing up when going to the cafeteria. This particular Friday, Oby dresses up when going to the cafeteria.

Likewise Okoro, Chris and Chike go to the cafeteria early and are dressed smartly. While there, they see Oby who appears “beautiful, elegantly dressed and walked with graceful comportment.” Pg 66 Okoro and Chris are mesmerized by what they see. They are in disbelief to see a change in the girl they saw two weeks back.

Oby’s appearance at the cafeteria is a golden opportunity for Chike who has been looking for Oby in vain. He is full of praise for Oby and appreciates her transformation in just two weeks. Without wasting time, Chike goes to where Oby is seated. By coincidence, Oby has also been looking for Chike but in vain so she is happy to see him in the cafeteria.

When he points out that he does not even know her name, Oby teases him that she thought that he was only interested in her place of origin. Through Chike, the author brings out the issue of “state of origin and ethnicty” in the university to which he says Oby will learn before long.

Chike introduces himself to her and the course he is doing. This makes Oby laugh recalling her high school teacher who is said “to measure yams before giving it to the house boy to cook” Oby paints a picture of economists being very mean.

Chike notices that Oby has really changed from the girl he meets and helps on her arrival to Embakassi University. He notices that she “she spoke very well, and had an inner sophistication and composure” Pg 68. He concludes that she is a well groomed girl.

The author portrays Oby as a shy but humourous girl. Her good high school education helps her to adapt very fast to people and situations.

Her first two weeks at the university are very significant. She notices that “the near absolute freedom at campus also implied independence, outspokenness and a sense of survival.” She also notices that there is a lot of peer pressure.

Chike asks Oby her nameand she tells him. This is because he wants to get to know her better. She asks Chike why he wants to know her room number which portrays Oby’s naivety and innocence. The two have an intimate friendly conversation. Chike asks her how she has been adjusting and she points out that it is a strange place. She also points out the observation that normal activities are even scheduled on Sunday, security of the students is not guaranteed. She laments that leturers are teaching but the students are not ready to study. All the strange activities worry and surprise Oby. She finds life at the university very challenging.

The author uses Oby to expose the wrecklessness of students and the general atmosphere. He is critical of the too much freedom given to students. They are regarded as adults and are left to do whatever they want. She realizes what has always been said about universities.

When Chike asks her about her expectations before she joins the university, she is quick to say that she expected “an ideal community which commensurate with its status as an ivory tower “Pg 69. She adds that much as it’s a university it might not be different from the society.

Oby like the other people in Isiakpu believes that the university is very different crowned with dignity and honour but to her dismay this is not so.

In the bid to keep talking Oby, Chike suggest that they take another cup of tea. He also specifically wants the other students to see him with Oby so as to lessen the competitors.” If he quickly identified with Oby, he could lessen the competition.”

The author uses Chike to portray the issue of tribalism at the university. He comments on the unfairness in giving out scholarships. He points out those students from the East (Igbo) are not given scholarships. Only the students from the North and the minorities are” enjoying double scholarships” The issue of regional balance is brought out where the giving out of scholarships to people in the north and minorities is an incentive to encourage them to produce “high-level man power.” Pg70

Chike is bitter at the discrimination against particular groups –privileges given to people from the north. Oby thinks that Chike is exaggerating, she points out that the ethnic issue has even infiltrated the university where there is a quota of “who dates who” . The issue of ethinicity has spilled to relationships. Chike explains to Oby who seems confused at the unfolding of things. This is the reason Chike gives for asking for her tribe before even knowing her name. He points out that the issue of ethnicity is very serious at Embakassi. This also gives Chike the opportunity to indirectly state that he is interested in her. Oby is still confused. To make it clearer, Chike relates to her a story of what happened the previous year.

Through Chike, the author brings out the conflict between the Embakassi boys and the Igbo boys. The Embakassi boys accuse the Igbo boys of taking their girls and as a result the girls no longer respect them. The girls who go scot free are the ones who come from the influential homes. Those who are not very rich are strongly cautioned. The sturbbonness would lead the Embakassi boys carrying out their Igbo boys. This portrays the tribal conflict at the university. This flashback is significant as Chike gets more acquainted with Oby.

The issue of the Igbo verses Embakassi boys skyrockets one day when two Igbo boys are beaten for playing around with Embakassi girls. Those involved find themselves admitted in hospital. In order to avoid such snenarios people like Chike prefer Igbo girls.

It is very ironic that these university students at the pinnacle of learning but still have ethnic biases. One would think that the learned students would be the ones to rid the society of such biases. Oby echoes theauthor’s intention when she comments that, “And is this supposed to be a university. “She wonders why such things are happening in a university when it should be “an island of inter-ethnic harmony” Pg71. She points out that if people who are supposedly being prepared for futureleadership, cannot even accommodate each other when little is at stake. Oby acts as the author’s mouth piece.

With such sentiments, Oby wonders what would happen if they are the ones to decide who gets what slice of the national cake. To her, this is very disgraceful. Oby comments that a lot is at stake. Actually she is disgusted by what she hears. She does not believe that people should fight for girls instead of concentrating on their studies. Chike cautions her that there is very little room for logic at Embakassi.

What Oby hears from Chike disgusts her and leavesher so disappointed with the life she encounters at Embakassi. This is contrary to what she anticipated before joining the university.

The irony is that the university has not come out to root out this social evil. Chike tells Oby that nothing has been done by the university to address the issue of ethnicity. This is attributed to the lousy Vice Chancellor whose only interest is “lining his pockets” He has amassed a lot of wealthy and now owns a Mercedes Benz. To the students dismay, even the students who get involved in the fight are still at the university.

Oby’s naivety and innocence is portrayed when she asks about the many cars at her hall of residence. Chike explains to her that her hall is “a slaughter house” implying that female students are valued like meat for consumption.

Oby portrays a vivid picture of the activities that take place in the Mary Slessor Hall. Girls smoke, drink, indulge in sex etc. Three weeks down the road, Oby comes face to face with reality about university life.

The porter is used to portray how the girls change while at the university. Through the omniscient narrator she comments that “They all arrive innocent and naïve but turn into something else after a few months” Pg 73. This brings out the negative influence the university has on the girls. This is very ironic.

**Activity**

1. Show the significance of the dialogue in this chapter.
2. Describe the character of Chike and Oby portayed in this chapter.
3. Explain the author’s concerns in this chapter.

**Chapter Nine**

Oby and her two roommates are in their room taking a siesta. Having had a tiresome day, she sleeps immediately her head touches the pillow. She later wakes up due to commotion in the room. When she opens her eyes, she sees two men in their room. One is holding and kissing Ada while the other is intimately touching Fumi.

Oby who is still in her sleeping gown is shocked to see the men in the room when its not even visiting hours. The two men do not even notice Oby. She tries to go back to sleep but she cannot.

The omniscient narrator gives the background to the relationship between Ben and Uche. The two become close when they begin dating Fumi and Ada and now they are in their final year. They both do Geology. Having reported back late, they immediately come to see the girls.

Uche and Fumi‘s relationship is not regarded normal. They two hail from different tribes-Uche is Igbo and Fumi is Yoruba. The issue of ethnicity still manifests. The tribal differences affect relationships. Some Yoruba students at the university accept him as one of them but others call him all sorts of names. Those who dislike Uche reach an extent of wooing Fumi away from him but without success. Despite the obstacles, they sustain the relationship. To Uche and Fumi “their ethnicity was not a subject of discussion” Pg 75.

Fumi’s parents are opposed to the relationship at first and even threaten to stop giving Fumi tuition. They appreciate Uche but cannot allow him to marry their daughter. All the parents’ threats do not deter the two from loving each other. They “stood their ground “and eventually Fumi’s parents accept him.” It was an uphill task since Fumi was their only daughter whom they had pampered a lot “Pg 75. Uche being a serious minded man the two are planning to get married after their graduation.

Ben and Ada’s relationship is not strong. it is more of a campus affair. Ada is skeptical about men and only regads them as ‘cash-machines.’ This ideology of Ada reduces their relationship to ‘cash and carry.’ Despite Ada’s attitude, the two stick together as an ‘on and off affair’ and has survived the two years.

Having failed to go back to sleep, Oby reflects on the time she has been in the university. She thinks about her expectations and the reality. She wonders if she can reconcile the counsel given to her by the different people in Isiakpu with what goes on in the university. This leaves her in the dilemma.

Note that from the comments made by Ben and Uche, every girl is expected to get a boyfriend –peer pressure. Through Fumi, the author cautions the women to be careful with “the morning of love” she also points out that some women expect a lot from men.

The four note that Oby is distressed by what she experiences at the university the little time she has been at Embakassi.

The dialogue in room 146 is used to portray the campus life, how the girls relate with boys. The issue of morality has also been portrayed. They discuss what happens in the relationships the girls indulge in. Later the three roommates resume their discussion on love. Ada and Fumi, confess to Oby that when they just had arrived at the university they were confused as Oby is now. The different backgrounds they hail from prepare them differently, for what to encounter at the university.

They explain the meaning of the “October rush.” This means that the senior boys rush to get the first year female students who have just joined university. Fumi and Ada ask Oby ifshe has been rushed already and she discloses that there is a senior man who has claimed interest in her. Oby however says she is not interested in him pointing out that the academic work is overwhelming and that is what she wants to put her energies on. Fumi and Ada insist that they want to see the senior man but Oby insists that she is not interested in that sort of thing. Ironicaally, fate lands Oby in the room where she has to share with senior girls. Her morality is being tested.

From Ada and Fumi, she learns that despite being in the university, the attitude of men towards women is still the same. Man still ruled pointing out that,” The tyranny. The same treachery. Men were in charge “Pg 75. Their only advice to her is that she has to make life enjoyable while still at the university and caution her that life will be difficult for her if she sticks to her “preconcieved ideas”.

Oby is confused and in a dilemma. Shehas always wanted to come to the university not to make life difficult for her “but to prepare herself for that difficult future” Pg 78. Before long it dawns on her that life at campus is more likely to be based on survival instincts rather than following the rules and regulations and the advice given to her from home.

Ada advises to use all the survival tactics, reminding her that for the best part of her life at campus she will be staying on her own. Ada advises her that while at campus, she cannot rely on anyone for defense. She continues to tell her that she must learn “…to be strong but flexible where necessary “Pg79

The irony is that the actual orientation that Oby gets about life at the university is from Ada and Fumi. These two make Oby face the reality of campus life. Oby realizes that the rules of campus life are different from the rules in Isiakpu. At home, she would depend on her mother for making decisions but at campus, the immediate family are her roommates who advise her to ‘wisen up. ’ She recollects what Chike tells her that “the university had to go through you. “Pg 80 This leaves Oby worried and wonders if it is “possible to survive without playing the right rules” Pg 80. She ponders over the other issues like tribalism which also troubles her. She wonders if lecturers will also be influenced when awarding marks to students who are not from their tribes.

The use of rhetoric questions portrays the dilemma Oby finds herself in at Embakassi. She wonders whether the male counterparts also face the same problems. She recalls what her mother referred to as “women’s burden”

**Activity**

1. Describe the character of Fumi and Ada.
2. Show the significance of the dialogue in this chapter.
3. Analyse the character of Oby portrayed in this chapter.
4. Identify and explain the themes portrayed in this extract.

**Chapter Ten**

Chike and his friends Okoro and Chris are in his room. The conversation centers basically on campus gossip. They review the social life since the beginning of the semester. Chike tries to avoid the subject because he does not have any positive news about Oby. He realizes that Oby has many barriers in place. Despite his relationship with Oby not yielding good results, Chike is determined to win her “come rain or shine.” Pg 81

His friends want to know about his development with Oby but he silences them by telling them that it’s none of their business. These claim that their interest is based on their desire to make Oby part of their team.

They also talk about campus politics. Chike is the upcoming president of the Economics Association so he must have a first lady. Chike confesses to his friends that Oby is a special girl and because of this he is ready to wait until when Oby accepts him.

Much as Oby is still holding on the advice given to her by the different people in Isiakpu, she faces the challenges of the new environment where not only academic work matters but also social life matters a lot.

Okoro is used by the author to bring out the male chauvinism in the text. He comments that his father told him that “all women are the same. “He lacks seriousness when dealing with women. For example, when they visit the nurses’ hostel; he is not bothered by the girls who resist him.

Osi uses the vulgar language used by Okoro to bring out the moral decay among university students. This is ironic because the university is supposed to be a centre of morality /uphold morality but what happens at this university of Embakassi leaves a lot to be desired.

Okoro is portrayed as a young man who never takes his girlfriends seriously. His girl friends are just for pass time. He says he cannot fall in love because it is regarded as a slang of foolishness. He gets all his advice from his father who is a male chauvinist. His father insists that falling in love is “a weakness on the part of man and a clever way for a woman to milk the man dry “Pg 83

Chris shares his experience with one of the girls from the nursing school (Pg 84). On the other hand Chike wonders when Oby will accept him. He is determined to win her no matter what. He begins to compose poems for her which he is ready to deliver to her.

**Activity**

1. Identify and explain the significance of the narrative techniques used in this chapter.
2. Describe the character of the following
3. Chike
4. Okoro
5. Chris
6. Explain the themes portrayed in this chapter

**Chapter Eleven**

Chike decides to go to Oby’s room to deliver his love poem. He is nervous as he approaches the Room 146. He wonders if Oby will treat him well after breaking the rules of not going to her room. The story that goes around is that Chike is well endowed (his sexual organ is extremely big) He is nicknamed ‘Mr B, Mr Kubwa, Mr Big Stuff ’which is a threat to the girls Pg 85. The moment Ada and Fumi see him they burst into laughter.

He is embarrassed when the girls giggle. He tells them that he has a message for Oby but Oby is not in the room at that time. The girls tease him that they will tell Oby about his problem. He begs them not to tell her. They caution him not to mess up Oby who they regard as their junior sister.

The two girls set conditions which include taking them to dinner at Hotel Metropol and end the evening with “a bottle of gin and wine.” They make him promise to include them on the list of the Economic Association party guest list. He complies with all this.

What Chike hears from Ada and Fumi gives him courage that Oby must have mentioned him to them. Fumi and Ada are very comic.

Ada is used by the author to comment on the men who only respect women when they are looking for love /sex. After getting what they want, they make you begin chasing after them.” Everything is yes and yes –until you give them your soul “Pg 86.

Fumi and Ada agree to keep quiet about Chike. It is ironic because the two call themselves Oby’s sisters but do not protect her from ‘Mr Kubwa.’ They claim its not their responsibility to protect Oby but leave her to undergo the “the baptism of fire.”

Through the dialogue the author portrays the survival skills at the university. Everyone lives on their own, even the so called friends are not genuine.

The two girls continue to discuss Chike long after he has gone and their discussion is about the issue of his manhood. Fumi wonders if they should inform Oby who they call sister but Ada insists that they should not. Ada is portrayed as a girl who the university has gone through. She has different men and has her own sexual experience. This shows her lack of seriousness and commitment in her current relationship with Ben.

Fumi insists that what they hear about Chike might be a different version, claiming that what is being gossiped about him might not be true. Osi brings out the gossip machine in the university. According to Fumi, the girl just refuses to have sex with him because Chike refuses to use a condom. Ada refutes her story. Ada is portrayed as a social leader and advisor by virtue of her courage. Pg 88.

Oby comes back when Fumi and Ada have gone for an early dinner. She finds an envelope addressed to her from Chike. After reading the poem over and over, her heart is softened. She wonders if this is the time for to begin her affair with Chike. She observes that Chike has been very persistent yet very gentle and respectful. His poem touches a soft spot in her heart. She lowers her guard a little.

After her sociology lecture, Oby is anxious to see Chike. She thinks that not seeing Chike will be a disappointment. She is willing to touch him in the presence of the other students. She welcomes him with a big smile and acknowledges reading the poem and also appreciates his talent. Before they separate, they agree to go to the beach the following Saturday. Oby is now in love.

Activity

1. Show the significance of the poem Chike‘s poem to Oby.
2. How effective is the dialogue in this chapter?
3. Analyse the character of
4. Fumi
5. Ada
6. Chike
7. Identify and explain the themes portrayed in the chapter.

Chapter Twelve

Soon it’s Saturday the day set for Oby and Chike to go to the beach. It is a very beautiful day. ”The sky was blue with streaks of the rainbow brushing the southern horizon “Pg 91. Ironically its Oby’ day of initiation to the university social life. With all the forces around her and without the protection of her mother who would have given her guidance, her protection wall begins to crumble. The forces against her zeal to remain focused on her studies are overwhelmed by the social life at the campus.

Note that while in Isiakpu, Oby is able to resist all the offers of marriage, in Embakassi it is very difficult to resist the advances from men because it is the order of the day. The temptation is magnified by her hall of residence which is known for its social life. It is a center of men coming for girls to the extent that students have sex in the hall of residence.

In a flashback, Osi brings out the kind of girl Oby has been as far as the opposite sex is concerned. She is portrayed as a strong willed girl who resists even the love of a man many girls would yearn to have “a man from the United States.” She despises him for looking down on his parents-stay in the hotel when he comes back to Isiakpu.

The two love birds get to the beach and find out that it is not as crowded as it used to be. The author uses the beach to bring out the issue of pollution due to the oil boom. The environment is affected and the people are sensitized about the dangers of pollution so they keep away from the beach. The demonstrators against the environment degradation lead the government to dispersing them using the armed policemen. The government cannot tolerate any interference in the “key source of government revenue.” Pg 92.

Oby’s state of mind is now of having a “romantic beginning of their relationship.” She wants a romance that she reads about in novels. Therefore she starts a love affair with Chike basing on fantasy which is likely to land her into problems. Chike on the other hand wants to confirm that Oby is his and hopes that this will be able to redeem his reputation. The irony is that the two start a love affair with different expectations so it is likely to be a disaster.

At the beach, the two enjoy romantic moments. They confess to each other how strong their love is. Oby asks Chike about his commitment and whether he will never hurt her. Chike assures her with his word. l

Oby confides in Chike that she wants to read and get more degrees and asks him if he will let her do so. Oby confesses that she has promised her mother to keep the commitment. She is conscious of her responsibility to her mother and family. From Chike, Oby wants love, help and protection. She pleads to Chike never to cheat on her with any other woman and he pledges to be faithful to her. Their pleasure is momentarily disturbed by a tiny malnourished dog. After Chike chasing it, the two engage in a gentle, slow and passionate kiss.

Slowly but surely, Oby loses herself and begins to adjust to suit in the university social life. Note that this is Oby’s first love relationship. She says “Yes, this is my first and hopefully my last “Pg 94. Oby’s naivety is portrayed when she uses the physical appearance to judge Chike. She even confesses that if he ever disappoints her, she will kill him. Oby is very serious, a thing that worries Chike. Chike takes his time not to hasten Oby, fearing that what happened the previous year might happen again. With this romantic escapade, Oby seems to be steadily trusting Chike.

While they are deeply engrossed in their romance, an almost naked man sees them and walks where they are. He mutters to himself and laughs holding his “penis”, jumps in the air, laughing hysterically. This brings them back to reality. From what he says,he is disillusioned by what is taking place in his country. He reveals himself as Mark.

This mad man is used by the author to reveal the politics of the country “the truth is bitter … expect from a quack doctor.” Pgs 95-6. Mark believes that people should always tell the truth. He comments that “the truth is bitter but the truth shall set you free.”

Mark’s appearance when the two lovebirds make promises to each other is significant. Is Chike deceiving, only time will tell. He is used by the author to portray a morally degenerated and corrupt country. He wonders what the young generation will do to remedy the messed up status quo. His attack is geared towards the politicians, civil servants, and other bureaucrats who are paid for no work done or for the shoddy work.

He goes ahead to comment on the army where people are decorated without being worthy. He is critical of the army’s involvement in the government of the, saying “they claim to intervene in governance to fight corruption” Pg 96. He refutes this, saying they are only paid to lie. Corruption has been institutionalized, corruption which they have given “baptismal names such as settlement “Pg 96.

He entrusts Chike and Oby to tell the soldier to go back to the barracks. Mark symbolises all the Nigerians who are disillusioned as a result of the happenings in the country. He asks them to take note of the filth at the beach which he says used to be a neat/clean place but now it is full of filth. He says the filth symbolizes the filth in the nation.

There is negligence of both the government and the oil companies. Both point fingers to each other for not cleaning the beach saying “But everyone is shifting responsibility…” Pg 96. He goes ahead to point out that the common men and women who depend on the “river for their livelihood”. He accuses Oby and Chike for also adding to the pollution of the beach not necessarly in the physical sense but morally. He uses the image of a full moon for the two. This symbolizes their romance but cautions Oby that she should always remember that “the moon also sets” Pg 97 which implies that nothing lasts forever. The blissful moments as the one now at the beach shall surely wane and bring forth dark moments just like when the moon sets.

Through the omniscient narrator, Mark’s background is given,” … had been a final philosphy student at the University of Embakassi many years ago “Pg 97. His madness cannot be explained as no one knows exactly its cause. It is believed he saw a chief disposing off a dead body of a girl he had killed for refusing his advance. It is alleged that he is bewitched as he swore to tell the truth.

**Activity**

1. Show the significance of Mark in this chapter.
2. Analyse the character of the following
3. Oby
4. Chike
5. Show how the author uses setting in this chapter.
6. Explain the use of symbolism in this extract.

**Chapter Thirteen**

The setting shifts to Isiakpu. Pa Okolo is visited by the Igwe of Isiakpu Chief Ugwueze at 5. 30 in the morning. Pa Okolo fears that it might be assasins but later realizes that it is the Igwe who has come at that time.

The Igwe commands a lot of respect. Pa Okolo apologises for keeping him waiting. Pa Okolo wonders why the Igwe has come to his home at that time.

Through the omniscient narrator, the background of the Igwe of Isiakpu is given. He is a corrupt man who has amassed a lot of wealth when he still worked as “a junior immigration officer made a lot of money from illegal aliens and companies that hired expatriates beyond the allocted government quota” Pg 99.

He also gets the chieftainancy through bribery. He defies the “the age-old tradition” where its rotated between two families by arguing that “the system was undemocratic and that it tended to prelude those who would offer better leadership to the community. He get his support from the lyes of Pa Okolo.

The narrator continues to describe how Chief Ugwueze’s grandfather was an ‘outcast’-Osu, making him a “second-class citizen”. Traditionally, such people are not allowed to mix with the free born. He meets a stiff opposition. His father had been sacrificed to the God of Isiakpu. This stigma has passed on from generation to generation. Even with sacks of money no one in Isiakpu would want someone with a “tainted lineage” Pg 100. Note that most people in the village knew about his parentage but could not fight him because of his money.

The author portays a tridational society which is bribed to erode its customs. It is ironic that in the society where people know the truth but decide to act contrary to what the culture dictates because the Igwe is rich. -Those who are rich can get what they want. Male chauvinism is portrayed when the women are subjected to the submissiveness. They are expected to be under a man. For example, the second wife of Pa Okolo is accused of all sorts of misbeviour simply because she becomes a trader. In Isiakpu, a woman being independent is not tolerated.

The reader also gets an incite in the political arrangement of the Isiakpu society where the Igwe is the political head -he is a traditional leader. The portrayal of Chief Ugwueze, Osi brings out corruption in the country. Chief Ugwueze bribes the committee members to declare him a free born. The author portrays money as a root cause of evil. Out of greed, traditions are twisted by the committee of elders.” Money turned facts into fiction.” Pg 100

Pa Okolo’s opportunistic character is brought out when he wants to support him so as to be admitted to the council of elders the ‘Ozo’. His ambition drives him to support Chief Ugwueze. The Igwe comes with ‘vodka’ which they begin to take before the Igwe reveals the purpose of his visit. The Igwe exaggerates about ‘vodka’ and Pa Okolo is really impressed. The Igwe is pompous and proud. He tells Pa Okolo that ‘vodka’ is not a drink for poor people.

The Chief is very cunning, he has not given Pa Okolo the much cherished title, claiming that the elders have something against him. Pa Okolo is anxious to know why the Igwe visits him that early but the chief takes his time.

Chief Ugwueze finally tells Pa Okolo the reason for his visitng him that early. He is seeking for Oby’s hand in marriage for his son who is currently in the United States. He praises Oby for being “…beautiful, intelligent and a well brought up girl.” Her going to university is a qualification that fulfills her candidature for the Igwe’s son. Note that the leader of the family is the one who is consulted for any offer of marriage -a daughter.

The Chief wants Oby for his son who he thinks is ripe for marriage. He expresses his fear that his son might marry an ‘oyibo’ an American girl/white girl. Pa Okolo is surprised to hear that the chief wants his son to succeed thereby making the chieftaincy hereditary. He emphasizes this by saying he does not want his son to marry a girl who cannot even speak their language,not appreciating the culture of the Isiakpu people. He is critical of the alien cultures where “women fight over men in the open” Pg 103.

The author portrays the role of parents in the choosing the right suitors for their children. Pa Okolo appreciates Chief Ugwueze for thinking about his family for providing the chief’s son with a wife. He sarcastically points out at Oby becoming the future queen of Isiakpu. As the head of the family, he promises to consult other family members including Oby’s mother but he is certain that he will meet the Igwe’s expectations.

The Igwe promises that if the marriage agreement between the two families is settled, he will be able to bring Pa Okolo to the council of elders “…a place among the most respected in this village.” Pg 104

The author portrays Pa Okolo’s hypocrisy, when the Chief is around, he pretemds to be happy in the presence of thte chief but has a grudge against Chief Ugwueze for not “fighting hard to admit him into the council of elders “a much coveted thing for Pa Okolo.

Chief Ugwueze is portrayed as being crafty and an opportunist. Pa Okolo sees the chief’s proposal as a great opportunity that he has come his way.” To force him to put up or shut up” Pg 104. His manipulative character meets a great challenge with the Igwe who he sees as being” a slippery man”

**Activity**

1. Explain the theme of tradition in this chapter. .
2. Analyse the character of

I) Pa Okolo

II Chief Ugwueze

1. Show the effectiveness of the narrative techniques used in this chapter.
2. Identify and explain the other themes portrayed in this chapter.

**Chapter Fourteen**

Very early in the morning Pa Okolo goes to Mama Oby’s house. As a bringer of good news, he thinks he can lose a few hours of his sleep. Pa Okolo is anxious not being sure of Mama Oby’s reaction. At around 5. 00 am, he knocks at the door of Mama Oby to deliver the Igwe’s news. He is angry because he is not in full control. He is aware that Mama Oby will not be “an easy nut to crack.” Pg 105. To him, this is not the proposal that he could afford to miss.

Mama Oby wonders what has brought him at this time of the day. Pa Okolo almost falls which means “a bad omen and a traditional appeasement from Mama Oby “has to be performed. However, Pa Okolo ignores everything as he wants to be friendly to Mama Oby.

Mama Oby apologises to Pa Okolo and his cunningness is portrayed when he pretends to be caring. Mama Oby is anxious to know what has brought him this early to her house. He begins with praises about his family. He is used by the author to show the expectations of a family from a girl child. To him and the traditional set up, marriage “…is the Number One certificate for a woman…” Pg106. He also points out that getting “a good and respectable husband is job Number One.” Society puts a lot of emphasis on who should be a son-in-law.

Finally he discloses to Mama Oby –the Igwe’s offer with a lot of praises that the Igwe “came …to ask for Oby’s hand in marriage for his son Ndubisi…” Pg106. It is evident that Pa Okolo is excited about the proposal. To him, this is a step towards getting the entrance to the council of elders. Pa Okolo is surprised that Mama Oby is not excited about the news. Through Mama Oby, the reader learns that Oby has received many marriage proposals.

Pa Okolo tries to convince Mama Oby that the offer is different as it comes from the Igwe and it is about the first son, the heir to the throne. Actually she is not impressed at all by the offer. She wonders if they cannot ask questions. As for her, she respects her culture which is the sense of value which she has respect for. She reminds Pa Okolo of the Igwe’s heritage which is not straight. He is a grandchild of an Osu. -outcast.

The irony is that despite being a Christian, she still upholds her culture/traditional beliefs. She completely rejects the idea of marrying off their daughter into such a family. She cautions Pa Okolo not “to cover the dung with one hand and then eat with another.” Pg107

Out of his opportunism, Pa Okolo tells Mama Oby that the Igwe’s past life has been erased. She insists that one cannot erase ones heritage. Much as he buys the chieftaincy, it cannot change one’s heritage. She expresses her fears of wanting to subject Oby and her children to such stigma.

Mama Oby is dejected at the thought and wonders how Pa Okolo could be excited at such a marriage proposal. She begins to be suspicious. Pa Okolo begins to get angry at the reaction of Mama Oby. He reminds her of being the most respected church leader in Isiakpu. To him, the ‘Osu’ thing contradicts the Christianity preaching, reminding her that of “love your neighbor …” Pg108 and the preaching that all men are equal before God. He defends the Osu thing with the bible he has always been despising. Mama Oby puts up her foot on the Osu thing.

He warns Mama Oby but deep down he knows that she is right. He is willing to sacrifice Oby because of the advantages that can come out of being an in-law of the chief. The narrator through Mama Oby reveals that the so called son of the chief does not have a good education as the chief claims. Mama Oby despises Ndubisi’s lifestyle. Pa Okolo advises her to ignore what the rumours say and emphasizes that this marriage proposal comes with “…wealth, connections, the throne “Pg 109 so she should not turn it down.

Mama Oby insists that Oby being a big girl her opinion should be sought in order to obtain her consent lest she has her own plans. Osi presents a liberated woman who acts contrary to expectations of the Isiakpu community. It should be noted that girls are not given opportunity to choose suitors traditionally.

Pa Okolo is not happy with Mama Oby being defiant and warns her to be very careful when rejecting the marriage proposal. To him, this would be securing a better future for herself and security in old age. Even with these threats, Mama Oby stands her ground saying that God will provide and protect her saying the Lord is her shepherd.

The author through what Pa Okolo says brings out the attitude of the society towards the widows. He tells Mama Oby that “he believed that talking to a woman who wakes up alone every night does not often yield good results “Pg 110. This portrays male chauvinism.

It should be noted that Pa Okolo believes in whatever Mama Oby is raising but he is driven by his selfishness and ambition –He wants to be admitted to the council of elders. He desperately wants this title to give up this opportunity. To him, his ambition /the coveted position precedes all other considerations. He asks Mama Oby “to range principles against reality” Pg110. He claims principles do not put food on the table.

He cautions her that she stands to lose if she turns down this marriage proposal. Having been born in an American hospital, Oby is not circumcised which means that no man would want to marry her. Traditionally female children are circumcised. Mama Oby being a liberated woman does not see this as a problem. Circumcision is regarded as a ritual that makes the woman “wholesome”. What Pa Okolo points out is uncultured so he would not mind about Oby not being uncircumcised.

Mama Oby is angered by Pa Okolo calling her daughter “unwholesome. “Her argument is that Oby will be the first woman graduate in the family. To her, education makes a woman wholesome. She rubbishes Pa Okolo by telling him that Oby can marry elsewhere, where such customs are not revered. She calls on Pa Okolo to realize that such customs have changed.

Pa Okolo is infuriated by Mama Oby’s reasoning and it is now evident. He is shown as being interested in the dowry of Oby –material gains but not the repercussions. He leaves Mama Oby’s house very annoyed. Note that in this community important issues are discussed at dawn. Pa Okolo leaves grumbling and accuses Uncle Ben for failing to perform his duties as a man. As he leaves Mama Oby promises to send a message to Oby.

The narrator reveals that Oby comes back for midterm break and discusses Chike with her mother. She tells her mother that it is a serious relationship. Oby requests her mother to discourage everyone who might be thinking about her for marriage. In times like this Mama Oby wonders if it is wise to stay unmarried or remain in a village that has no regards to rights of women. Her responsibility and love for her children stops her from remarrying despite the many offers she is given.

**Activity**

1. Show the effectiveness of the dialogue in this chapter.
2. Analyse the character of the following
3. Pa Okolo
4. Mama Oby
5. Explain the theme of tradition portrayed in this chapter.
6. What feelings does this chapter arouse in you towards
7. Mama Oby
8. Pa Okolo
9. Identify and explain the themes portrayed in this chapter.

**PART III**

**Is this love?**

**Chapter Fifteen**

It is almost the end of the first semester. It has been an exhausting semester in which Oby tries her her best to study and also make time for Chike. By this time, Oby has experienced a lot of things. She is happy that her relationship with Chike is stable now. More so, Chike has not pressurized her not to do what she does not want to do. She is in control of their relationship.

Her first semester leaves her a lot wiser and reconciles to herself that the university “…was not an island of peace and perfection” Pg 113. The first semester has a lot of activities that Oby comes to learn of. She hears about different secret societies and their “nocturnal meetings” and how the members are initiated in a cemetery “…with lots of human and animal blood involved “Pg 113. Actually Oby notices that acts of lawlessness are just ignored or people keep quiet for fear of being harmed.

What Oby experiences is a lot that she loses her innocence very fast. All her expectations of University life have now changed. She later learns that most cult members are sons and daughters of the “rich and famous “. The university authorities always turn a blind eye or turn a deaf ear save for when they feel their positions are challenged. The Vice Chancellor has no control over the students.

She learns of how lecturers raped female students. She is quick to note that the university is not for children (innocent)but adults. This observation makes Oby matures very fast. It is an environment where change is inevitable. She observes that “There was a strong corrupting influence in the environment” Pg 113.

She realizes that even the university community is unfriendly to women. She recalls her mother‘s “admonitions about the women’s burden. “This keeps reverberating in her mind. “The numerous student demonstrations that have always been quelled violently depict the lawlessness in a place she thought should be an ‘Ivory Tower’.

Soon Oby is to finish her last paper and has ten days to the end of the semester. The Economics Association gala is fixed one week to the end of the semester.

Oby goes to the cafeteria and she is to eat alone as Chike and Okoro had gone to Aba. She dresses very well to go for dinner. Incidentally, Chris is also at campus, he contemplates going for Oby but fears the gossip. It is evident that Oby has grown fond of Oby and shows it unconsciously. Oby and Chris always take the same line of an issue. Chris quietly wishes that Oby was his girlfriend. “ He found her articulate and sophisticated, an impression contrary to what he held when he first saw her “Pg 114.

Chike even wishes that Chike could vanish so he could take his place. Chris could not even risk losing his relationship with Chike and Okoro for”he enjoyed their friendship “Pg114. Luck is with Chris that evening, he meets Oby on her way to the cafeteria. Like Chris, Oby also likes and respects him. She has also noted that of the three, Chris is the most polished.

After getting their food, they sit in a corner where they engage in the conversation while eating. Chris is on tension. “…was uneasy and kept staring at Oby…” Pg115. Chris acknowledges her beauty and says Chike is a lucky man. Oby comments that Chike is “very considerate,very reasonable and understanding.” Pg 116

Chris ‘response to Oby’s comment has a hint of doubt and sarcasm. This creates suspense to the reader. Chris’ response shows thatChike is not serious with Oby though she has put her heart and soul in the relationship. She really trusts him beyond any doubt. Chris’ being on tension is portrayed when the food “falls off his fork.”

Oby and Chris’ conversation centers on the three friends. Okoro’s character is portayed through Chris. He points out that Okoro is a male chauvinist who depends on his father for any decision he makes. He is described as being crude and bold.

They also talk about the campus social life. This helps Oby to learn the campus jargon. (language). From what Chris tells her, she realizes that women are not really respected /treated differently. Actually the rights of women are violated. Oby feels that the world is unfair to women. At Embakassi women are referred to as ‘bush meat’.

As a woman, Oby wants to fight for women causes which has been reinforced by what she has witnessed her mother go through since her father‘s death. Her mother has suffered at the hands of her uncles. She vows to fight “for more power and recognition” Pg 119 She wonders why women are regarded as inferior to men’s wishes. Oby notes that Mama Ijeoma and Ada are comfortable using their womanhood to exploit men. It is this personality of Oby that attracts Chris to her.

The issue of tribalism disturbs Oby and is surprised to hear that such things are happening in the University the apex of learning. The conflict between the Embakassi and Igbo boys brings out this tribal conflict. It is ironic that even parents put pressure on their children not to involve themselves In the intertribal relationships. For example, Fumi’s parents fighting her relationship with Uche, then Chris ‘girlfriend’s parents. Pg 120

Oby realizes that she has now matured and independent. She can no longer rely entirely on her mother for everything. Chris is in no doubt in love with Oby but cannot risk his life because he is aware that Oby is so much in love with Chike. Oby on the other hand is left confused.

**Activity**

1. Show the significance of the the dialogue in this chapter.
2. Analyse the character of
3. Oby
4. Chris
5. Okoro
6. Chike
7. Analyse the themes portrayed in this chapter.
8. Show how Irony is used in this chapter.

**Chapter Sixteen**

Okoro and Chike return from Aba the following day. Okoro announces his desire to celebrate his birthday and chooses Hotel Metropol as the venue for the party. It is dinner for six-he asks his friends to come with their girls. Being generous, Okoro is to meet all the expenses. He books two rooms for himself and Chris. Chike turns down the offer which disappoints Okoro. Chike could not risk asking Oby to spend the night with him because he really wants to be with Oby for the forthcoming Economics gala night.

Okoro is scornful of Chike idolising Oby. Okoro is portrayed as a male chauvinist and does not give women’s opinion a priority. In attendance, is Ifeoma and Cynthia,Okoro and Chris’girlfriends from the nursing school. This is Oby’s second time to dine at the Hotel Metropol. The first time is with her roommates Fumi and Ada when Chike’s fulfills promise to the two. He spends lavishly. Chike has it rough because he even deposits his gold watch because he does not have enough “money to clear the bills” Pg 123. Okoro is portrayed as uncultured which is evident through his language and actions. He also emulates his father in everything.

In the dialogue, the author portrays the proffessor’s lives –drunkards. i. e Professor Akambi who drinks and urinates in his pants and a divorcee. Chris agrees with Oby’s comment and Okoro attacks him for always agreeing with women. He calls him senseless. The level of morality in higher institutions has gone down. For example, Cynthia and Ifeoma are surprised that Oby has not had sex with Chike. Cynthia warns her that Chike might not be happy with it. She uses the proverb “You should not interprete the fact that a lizard is always nodding to mean that it is always in agreement with what’s being said…” Pgs 126 -7.

Chike and Oby leave to look for a taxi back to the university. They are hit by a strong stench from the open gutters near Hotel Metropol. The author describes the Nkrumah Avenue which due to negligence has lost its glamour. The whole enviroment is filthy. The irony is that this area is near a beautiful hotel and named after an African president. The taxi they get is described as a” moving tattered box “Pg 128. Even the roads are in a sorry state.

Oby is determined to find out from Chike if what Ifeoma and Cynthia said is true but while in the taxi she cannot do so due to lack of privacy. When they get to campus, she asks Chike about his ‘enlarged manhood’. She links it up to the comments people make when they see the two together. Chike in response, explains what had happened with his girlfriend. He relates to Oby his own version of the story claiming that the girl was suffering from “pathological hysteria.” He concludes that the girl came back seeking reconciliation but he was tired of her hysterical behavior. He challenges Oby to find out for her herself other than depending on rumours. The two engage in a romantic frenzy and confess their love for each other. They are brought back to their senses by a chirping cricket. Oby is quick to notice that thing s are going out of her control and wrestles out of Chike’s embrace.

In a dialogue that follows, Oby confesses that Cynthia has no decorum and is very raw qualifying to be ‘bush meat’. Chike discloses to Oby that Okoro loves such girls. Chike wonders when Oby’s teasing would stop. -he desired her like a man desires a woman. This foretells the future and one wonders ifChike is serious or he is only interested in sex.

**Activity**

1. Show the significance of the dialogue in this chapter.
2. Identify and explain the themes in this chapter.
3. Analyse the following characters
4. Oby
5. Chike
6. Okoro
7. What feelings are aroused in you towards the men at the campus and elsewhere?

**Chapter Seventeen**

It’s the day for the Economics Department gala. Chike comes for her but she is not ready yet. She wonders how the evening will be for her as the first lady.

It is the night when Chike will be sworn in as the new President of the Economics students Association. Oby takes her time knowing that Chike would come for her at around 7:30 pm. Her roommates are also going to attend the party as part of Ada’s deal with Chike and a front row table is to be reserved for them.

Oby is a bit embarrassed when Chike turns up very early but Chike enjoys every moment. To occupy him, Oby gives him her album as she completes dressing up. While looking at the photographs, he recognizes the Reverand Father Damian in a photograph with Oby’s mother. Chike knows Fr Damian. His face lights up and Oby asks him if he knows Fr Damian and he consents. Chike recalls an encouter he had with Fr Damian. He calls the priest ‘the rascal’. This creates suspense in the reader and it speaks volume about Fr Damian. Chike says he knew Fr Damian while he was teaching at Asaba. The irony is that Fr Damian is not worthy being a priest but he is priested. Chike says that he used to say “if Fr Damian became ordained, rather than protest, I’d aspire to become a Pope. “Pg 132

This confession by Chike and what the reader knows about Fr Damian brings out the religious hypocrisy. Chike is sarcastic and his sarcasm portrays the evil in the Catholic church. Oby tries to defend the priest claiming that “he is a very knowledgeable man and his mastery of the liturgy is not in doubt” Pg 133. The author is very critical towards the Catholic Church through Chike. Despite Fr Damian’s character, he” came highly recommended by the Bishop.”

Chike continues to laugh a thing that puzzles Oby. She is anxious to know why he continues to laugh and wonders if Chike knows what she does not know. In orders to know what makes him laugh; Oby threatens not to go with him if he does not tell her what he knows about Fr Damian. Not wanting to spoil his evening, Chike tells Oby how Fr Damian got involved with women in Asaba which is widely known.

On Oby’s persuasion, Chike tells the story of how Fr Damian got involved with two sisters (nuns). These come to his house unannounced. Oby’s naivety is portrayed when she vehemently refuses to believe what Chike tells her. That day, Fr Damian and the sister engage in the sacrilegious act of sex. Chike confesses that he was angered by Fr Damian’s action. He also feared that lightening would strike him dead. Oby is disgusted by what she hears as she does not want anything that challenges her faith. She is disappointed on hearing such a story about someone she holds in such high regard. Fr Damian is shown as a man who practices what he says but not what he does.

Oby vows never to let her mother know about Fr Damian’s other side of life. It is ironic because already Oby’s mother has already had an encounter with Fr Damian’s sexual advances.” if only she had known her mother’s encounter with Fr Damian!”

Through Fr Damian, the author portrays the filth in the Catholic Church. For example, Reverend Fathers and Catholic nuns indulge in sex yet they take an oath of celibacy. The believers follow blindly and do not question anything. That’s why Oby is disgusted with the story suspecting it to be a concocted story.

**Activity**

1. How effective is the use of dialogue in this chapter?
2. Analyse the character of the following in this chapter
3. Chike
4. Oby
5. Fr Damian
6. Describe the role played by Chike in this chapter.
7. Identify and explain the other narrative techniques used in this chapter.
8. Explain the themes in this chapter.

**Chapter Eighteen**

It is Friday, the much awaited moment has come. When Chike and Oby step into the new social science Auditorium, and all eyes are on the two. They stood out in the crowd. “Chike was the man of the hour and Oby was truly looking and walking like the First Lady” Pg 135.

Chike is proud to walk in with Oby who is elegantly dressed. Chris is the master of ceremonies. He keep pouring compliments on Oby and “stealing a few touches” Pg 135. He does not invite his girlfriend Ifeoma because he does not want to make the relationship public. The actual truth is that Chris is in love with Oby.

In attendance is the President of the Banking society of Embakassi and is the guest of honour. Chike is very nervous. He is advised to take his seat and also take a glass of water to calm his nerves. He is very anxious for the party to be a success.

Amidst all this, Chike sees his former girlfriend in the hall. She comes to the party unexpectedly. Chike freezes. He concludes that whoever invited her wants to “to humiliate him or cause trouble” Pg 136 as it is not a party to gate –crush. Still puzzled at the thought of his former girlfriend being in the house, Chris invites the first couple to take their seats at the high table. Oby’s roommates arrive with their boyfriends.

The guest of honour makes a short speech focusing her argument on the lack of women in the banking profession and other economics driven-careers. This shows that girls are left behind in this male dominated field.

Chike is nervous when he begins to speak but later gains confidence. He uses his recent experience to describe the country’s economy “our economy …who had no choice” Pgs 137-8. This reflects the state of the economy in which the leaders are not prepared to invest in the future. The dilapidated taxi represents the economy where a lot is at stake.

Chike‘s speech hints on the issues that affect the country. He advises that “we must in our deeds and intent avoid opportunistic actions.” The country is losing worthy people who go away to look for greener pastures. “Many have indeed jumped ship. And the ship captain is encouraging more to jump out, the very good and skilful swimmer thinking that it would lighten his burden…” Pg 138

He calls on the country to always think twice before making policy pronouncements that “There is no substitute to investment, infrastructure, in education, in health…” Pg138. The author uses Chike to point the economic issues in the country. He concludes that “there is no substitute to governance and macro-economic stability” Pg 138.

Oby is impressed by Chike’s speech and is very proud of him. Despite the standing ovation he gets from the audience. he is uncomfortable because of Margaret’s presence (ex-girlfriend). He is worried that she might cause problems on this special day. She had threatened never to leave him to the “low -class girl” Pg 138.

Chike requests Okoro to help him handle Margaret. Meanwhile, Oby is conscious that Chike has a problem. She tries to inquire from him but he lies that he is trying to settle an important guest. As usual Okoro sets into action. Okoro works with Jim another Economics student to get rid of Margaret who he fears to be erratic and hysterical. He is conscious that Meg can cause trouble after taking a few drinks.

Jim takes this opportunity to identify with Chike who has not been very close to him. It is a golden opportunity so he is ready to do anything “to be counted among the senior boys” Pg140. By coincidence, Meg, also wants to walk out so when Jim suggests, she accepts immediately. Okoro, when he realizes that Jim and Meg have walked out, he instructs the gatemen not to allow her back to the hall. He gives them money.

Margaret thinking that Chike will be jealous accepts not knowing that Chike is behind the whole arrangement.

The author portrays the social life where students live wrecklessly. They fall in and out of love as they wish. Meg lacks seriousness in her relationships. Jim plays on her psychology and eventually she is stopped from going back to the hall. Chike is relieved to hear that she is out of the way. Through the gatemen, the author brings out the attitude towards the women. The security men laugh at Meg as she walks away in disgrace. Pgs 141-2

Note that Chike has “two pint sized bottles of whisky in his pockets. “This causes suspicion especially when he keeps checking on the bottles. By luck, Oby who has been taking Fanta all evening asks for a punch drink. Chike uses this opportunity to mix whisky in her drink. Oby notices that the punch tastes differently saying it has an alcoholic taste but wanting to act grown up she does not question. Innocently, Oby is proud of Chike and feels that “the only way of fending off girls who seemed to be after him was to act as sophisticated as them.” Pg 143

Oby is conscious of the different taste of her drink but chooses to please Chike. Oby gets excited and gets to the floor. Chike is worried and wonder if his plan of reducing Oby’s resistance will work. Oby is now acting crazily which is very unusual of her. Chris also notices this change. The effect of the concoction is drastic that it leaves Chike scared. Quickly, they get Oby out of the hall.

Chike and Chris lead her to Chike’s room, the effect is too strong that she begins to sweat profusely calling her mummy. It is ironic that the very person Oby always praises is the one who subjects her to shame out of selfishness. Oby passes out which makes Chike and Chris panic “For the next couple of minutes both men did not know what to do.” Pg 145

Note that Chike lusting to have sex with Oby, he almost kills her. It is ironic that Chike does not want to go to the clinic claiming that it is risky. Chris is deeply affected by Oby’s condition “the sighrt of Oby lying almost naked and helpless made his eyes water” Pg 146. Chike on the other hand in frightened, he fears that if Oby dies, it will be the end of his university education.

When Okoro comes, as usual he admires Oby. He inquires from his friends what they have decided to do. Okoro comes up with his “street sense.” He suggests that they apply ground pepper. Chris tries to refuse but Chike out of despair accepts.

Before Okoro brings the pepper, Oby shakes her leg and moves her right arm and “gave another loud blast of wind” Pg 147. Unconsciously, Oby subjects herself to shame. Oby gradually gains her conscience and to “avoid any further embarrassment” Pg 147.

Chike blames himself for what has happened to Oby. He is angry at himself for succumbing to peer influence which he notes as a weakness and for being impatient with Oby –his burning desire to have sex. Oby finally gains her consciousness and tells Chike about his wanting to kill her. He asks her to forgive him.

After cleaning herself, Oby orders Chike to have sex with her claiming it is the reason why Chike wanted to kill her. Ironically, Oby plans to lose her virginity on the night of the Economics gala night but out of impatience Chike messes up her life. Oby’s loss of virginity is symbolic it marks the loss of her innocence and a passage to womanhood. She is now a real university student.

Note that Chike craves for Oby for so long but when the much desired moment comes he is not sure. He keeps asking Oby if it is what she really wants. After their sexual encounter, Oby sleeps and Chike sits to write a poem for her entitled ‘Lost in the crowd’ Pg 150.

**Activity**

1. Describe the significance of the Economics students’ gala.
2. Describe the character of the following characters
3. Oby
4. Chike
5. Chris
6. Okoro
7. Identify and explain the themes portrayed in this chapter.
8. Show the effectiveness of the narrative techniques in this chapter.
9. Show the significance of the setting.
10. What are your views about the campus life portrayed in this chapter?
11. Describe the symbolic importance of Chike’s poem.

**PART IV**

**Tradition and Ambition**

**Chapter Nineteen**

Two days after Pa Okolo discussing the Chief’s offer and proposal for Oby’s hand in marriage to his son with Mama Oby and her refusal, Pa Okolo has no courage to face Chief Ugwueze. The chief has sent his driver to ask Pa Okolo to see him but he has not yet responded. “He had thus far avoided any situation that might bring him face to face with the chief.” Pg 153

The narrator describes the character of Pa Okolo. He is a good orator, humorous, hypocrite. He is described as being generous with the people outside his home but fights with those in his family. - stingy with his family members. He is pained by not being allowed in the council of elders. He rules his household like a king and Mama Oby’s refusal to listen to him does not go well with him. That is why he tries to force Uncle Ben to tame her as her husband which also fails.

Uncle Ben’s failure to impose himself on Mama Oby earns him an abuse and is called useless. Pa Okolo is determined to see to it that Mama Oby is controlled and put where he wants her to be. He thinks that if Mama Oby has not appreciated his diplomacy, he is going to use force “…if Mama Oby did not accept peace, she must prepare for war” Pg 154. He is determined to use coercion. He spends sleepless nights over the issue of the chief’s proposal.

After much thought, Pa Okolo decides to go and see Chief Ugwueze to discuss the matter and maybe come out with another strategy claiming that ‘two heads are better than one’.

Note that Pa Okolo fears that if Oby does not marry the chief’s son even his desire to join the council of elders will not materialise. His selfishness makes him lose his sense of reason. Pa Okolo decides to go to the chief’s home at 5:00 am. He is sweating despite the early morning chill. He is anxious and on tension.

The narrator describes Chief Ugwueze’s house and a brief background is given “…was a palatial house in size and architecturally convoluted” Pg155. The Chief uses different contractors not wanting the people from around to know its details. He is portayed as a crafty man as the narrator comments about “His questionable activities in Lagos and his ill-gotten wealth…” Pg 155.

In the flashback, the author brings out the background to the land where the chief‘s house is built. “The house stood on a former forest, sacred land that belonged to the Ndu Nwa Agu clan of Isiakpu.” Pg 155 “was respected as an ancestral land, land with mystical powers.”

The traditional beliefs are portrayed through the mentioning of the shrine on which the clan relied for protection and prestige. Discreting the land by doubting, one would be subjected to apology and paying fine. The author reveals the importance of the sacred forest-a place where meetings at the ‘otobo’ are held.

In the male dominated society, the fluitist praises the women as mothers which is ironic “…the link between us and our pride and our glory.” Pg 156

Traditionally, barrenness is condemned and such women are excluded as they are regarded as having failed to perform their role on earth so “It would therefore, be improper including her in the ceremonies that involved meditation with the gods” Pg 157. In Isiakpu, if a woman becomes pregnant, it is considered spiritual. This is regarded as fulfillment to the woman. “They had earned a certain degree of respect and had a power connecting them to the spiritual world…” Pg 157

Women who have had children are “masculinised”. It was a ceremony that accorded with them respect as senior members of the patriarchal society” Pg 157. These are old women referred to as “senior daughters “meaning that despite being a patriarchal society it recognizes the elderly women who are regarded as the mediators between men and their god “Agu.”

Society also acknowledges polygamy. It allows a man to get a young wife if the senior wife stops having children and now qualifies to serve the gods. Serving the gods comes with benefits to the husband. “They often took home food and meat and men felt protected by marrying from such a clan.” Pg157.

In the flashback, the Chief’s background is given. “The chief’s great grand father was an Osu and so would all his children and grandchildren. “Pg 158 Chief Ugwueze hails from a poor background. Despite his getting rich, it could not wipe out the fact that he is an outcast –Osu. Being born in such a family, no matter the achievement one remains an Osu. Such a man cannot marry a freeborn but marries from his own kind.

In the colonial period, the Assistant District officer orders the clearing of the forest claiming that it was a symbol of oppression. He did not believe in the stories he heard, the people ordered to clear the forest ended up dying in the forest and were believed to have been killed by the Agu clan. This incident puts a stop to tresspassing in the sacred forest and it remained intact.

Being an outcast, no one is willing to sell land to him so he decides to build his house on the sacred land of the forest. –The chief is regarded as a second –rate citizen. He is a school drop out who could not continue with his education after his father’s death much as he was a bright student. Denying his father a befitting funeral leaves him bitter and upset. Traditionally an Osu is not given a decent burial because “the death of an Osu is not significant.” Pg158. Chief Ugwueze after witnessing all this “swears publically that he would end the Osu nonsense” Pg 158.

The humiliation he suffers at his father’s funeral makes him realize that to break this prejudice he needed to go away from Isiakpu. He chooses Lagos where he could not be discriminated against. He marries two wives while in Lagos. Here women would not stop to ask their would be husbands their backgrounds.” Most Lagos women had no time to check the background of a prospective husband” Pg 159.

It should be noted that the traditions have been affected by people’s ambitions. For example Chief Ugwueze is very wealthy and “was all that mattered” Pg 159. He lives a mysterious life and the villagers did not know what he really did in Lagos.

Equipped with knowledge of the changing values of the Igbo community since the civil war and the oil boom that “Money spoke, money ruled”. He comes back to Isiakpu to establish himself. Money is the means of regaining “his honour and that of his late father and great grandfather. “

The Isiakpu community is portrayed as still having “dignity even in the face of poverty and that values and tradition in the community had not died yet” Pg 159. The chief knew that this could not withstand the prevailing situation. He knew that men of honour are few but again hungry. He therefore uses generosity to lure men on his side.

Chief Ugwueze corrupts people through giving “scholarships to the sons and daughters of Isiakpu” Pg159. Apart from the scholarship, he builds a town hall, contributes generously to the building of the church, piped water is brought to Isiakpu through his initiative and influence. He is seen as an influential person who rubs shoulders with people who matter in the country.” He always came in company of police commissioners, army officers and business associates from other parts of the country” Pg 159. All this earns him popularity among many people and to others mixed feelings.” Some people spoke with trepidation and fear, others with contempt or cautious admiration…” Pg 160

The diehards are skeptical about him. The traditionists condemned his ill-gotten wealth and he is conscious of such people. To these “he will still be an Osu, and a common one at that “although they are just a few. The chief is feared in Isiakpu and people only talk about him in the confines of their bedrooms. His generosity leaves many in a dilemma. That’s maintaing the tradition and also acknowledging his generous contributions to the village.

The issue of money affects the traditional set up in Isiakpu. “Many suggested the tradition should be done away with but worried that money drove anything and changed their lives too fast for their liking” Pg 160. The author portrays the clash between traditional values and the pragmatism of modern life. This is tearing the village apart. Chief Ugwueze applies the law of divide and rule.

The chief slots in a request to clear the forest to build his house. This is outrageous to the people and is regarded as sacrilege. The chief corrupts /bribes different people “…rounds with his generous envelopes among the elders and the opinion leaders …” Pg 16o, are circulated among the elders. With money, Chief Ugwueze is left to clear the sacred forest. To the traditionalists, they think the gods will fight their battles. To the Catholic converts, it is a timely incident as it will rid the society of the heathen tradition.

The daughters of Ndu Nwa Agu are not amused. They do not get any envelope as they could not be bribed as the men folk. In any way, the daughters of Agu could not afford to diminish their recognition by allowing the clearance of the sacred forest.

Chief Ugwueze‘s shrewdness is portrayed when he brings surveyors from a different part of the country as a way of not being “encumbered by the knowledge or fear of tradition in surveying the land” Pg 161. The surveying takes three days, one of the surveyors dies mysteriously and another falls ill.

The effect of the illness is drastic that it sends shock waves to the Isiakpu community. “Isiakpu was in the grip of of rumour, confusion and fear…” The author uses irony through the portrayal of the Catholics being frightened by the turn of events,” None of them left home without a rosary.”

The people of Isiakpu now believe that the gods have avenged their enemies. Those who receive envelopes are also frightened at the turn of events. Even the chief is scared and leaves for Lagos. Those who were given envelopes do sacrifices to appease the gods. To the die hard traditionalists and the daughters of Agu, this was victory and “…rolled out their okanga and oja …danced and sang praise to Agu and many imitated its presence” Pg 161.

Note that the wrath of the gods is felt heavily by the people who engage in the destruction of the forest in one way or another. The effect is both physical and psychological.

The significance of this flashback is that money makes the custodians of the cherished traditions compromised. It brings out the sacred forest as a means of showing how the elders who signfy authority and justice go against their expectations to support a man they know he is not supposed to be chief. This portrays materialism and self-centeredness. As a result of this incident, many people die prematurely.

The forest symbolises the traditional values. Its “the last vestige of the Ndu Nwa Agu’s prestige and mystery” but would not stand for long. The destruction of the sacred forest is the destruction of the things that hold the Isiakpu community together.

Chief Ugwueze is scared at the turn of events and for the time being goes back to Lagos where he monitors everything through the Police Commisioner of Enugu.

The author portrays the causes of several deaths as rare malaria which could not be treated by the prescribed therapy. This Chief Ugwueze keeps it to himself because he wants to destroy the sacred forest but deep down in his heart he knew that the gods had a hand. “He wanted to destroy the myth and powers of theforest and that of Ndu Nwa Agu” Pg 162.

Determined to take over the sacred forest, Chief Ugwueze brings two strong medicine men to appease the angry Agu. The villagers watch in utter amazement and shock. The chief brings “the two medicine men to appease the gods and save the society from the wrath of gods” Pgs 162-3.

The appeasing ritual is a success and the forest is declared freeand clean. The cleansing of the sacred forest land liberates those who were frightened. Saying the rosary reduces and men regain their glory in society again and “there was a general sight of relief in the village” Pg 164. Some people still have doubts that Ndu Nwa Agu will strike again while others praised the men from Ijebuode.

The ritual of cleansing the sacred forest has an effect on Isiakpu. Things change dramatically and life is no longer the same. Due to greed and materialism Ndu Nwa Agu has been compromised. The elders become the “envelope handlers.” The moon sets on the daughter of Agu. Their drums and flutes had been silenced by greed, modernity and corruption. There are no environment groups to protect the forest and its sanctity. Even if they existed, and they would not withstand the chief’s forces. Note that poverty leads the men of Isiakpu to sell their souls. The chief on the other hand is driven by ambition to destroy that which has been revered and preserved for generations. He is a ruthless man who does not symphasise with the villagers.

The effect of the destruction of the forest is portrayed through the daughter of Ndu Nwa Agu losing their prestige as they lose their position in society. The chief builds his house in just one year.” Iron…bent iron.” The cherished customs are lost forever and when the okanga and oja are blown, it is only done with a sense of nostalgia.

Going back to Pa Okolo’s early visit to the chief’s house, he is ushered into the spacious living room. His visit is to deliver the message of rejection from Mama Oby.

Through the eyes of Pa Okolo, the house of Chief Ugwueze is described in detail. His heartless and lack of humour is portrayed in the colours used in his living room “…It was difficult to see the beauty because of lack of respect for colour, harmony and space. It was more like a dump, and one needed to manoeuvre around the many objects of different sizes and colours, the poffs, stools and chairs to find ones way in it.” Pg 165 by the look of the house, the chief is a wealthy man. His lack of order is described very well in the arrangement of the house as one elder puts it that “…it is a place where furniture and furnishings went into riot,” Pg 165.

When the chief finally comes, he pretends being surprised to see Pa Okolo that early. Pa Okolo begins narrating his woes of how his sister -in-law is after his head. He accuses her of being evil. This is ironic because its Pa Okolo who is evil hearted.

Pa Okolo character assassinates Mama Oby in order to win Chief Ugwueze‘s sympathy. Pa Okolo swears to destroy Mama Oby. Mama Oby, as Pa Okolo says, is liberated /independent woman who cannot be driven to do what she does not want to. This is a challenge to Pa Okolo - a male chauvinist who is used to women doing what he wants.

Pa Okolo, uses this tactic to lessen the chief’s anger upon the rejection of his proposal. He also wants to mud sling Mama Oby to show that he has not lost his grip on the woman. The author brings out the wife inheritance which Mama Oby defies. Society condemns such women who are independent which is evident when Pa Okolo points out that “… when a man of my caliber is insulted by a woman of, my junior brother, it’s not a matter that I take lightly” Pg167.

Chief Ugwueze confesses that he considers it an insult that his proposal is rejected. He accuses Pa Okolo for failing to control Mama Oby pointing out to him the consequences of the rejection i. e not being allowed to the council of elders claiming that he is not “a man enough and we have evidence to prove it” Pg 167

The Igwe is conscious of the effect of his words to Pa Okolo- he knows that he really cherishes being admitted to the council of elders and that he can do anything to accomplish it. Pa Okolo is agonized to hear the chief’s accusation. His pride is hurt terribly.

Pa Okolo pleads with the chief that he has come so that they find a joint solution to Mama Oby’s stubbornness. Pa Okolo is desperate in that he even wants to go on his knees to get the chief’s support. In response, the chief discloses his life to him saying that he comes back to Isiakpu to bring modernity. In a long dialogue, the chief discloses to Pa Okol the kind of life he has lived in Lagos.

Amidst all this, the chief tells Pa Okolo that the people of Isiakpu have clung to their traditions and values and calls on them to wake up and find out what other people are doing elsewhere.

His confession is not addressed to anyone in particular but wants to show how ruthless he can be when annoyed/angered. He is troubled as this is the first time he utters such to anyone. Pa Okolo is portrayed as a perfect gossip, as the narrator puts it that “Pa Okolo was perfect audience. He knew how to repeat what he had been told in confidence without violating confidetialiy especially that he also needed the chief’s help. “Pg 170

Despite being very rich, the chief is aware of the contradictions that his life represented. The narrator points out the issue of an outcast that the chief cannot run away from. The lesson is that one can never run away from their roots.” He is rich, yes, but not free…” Pg170. Despite Chief Ugwueze amassing a lot of wealth “He behaved and acted as if someone was always after him.” Actually his wealth has not set him free, he lacks total happiness. “True he might have accumulated enough wealth to last another generation but he was not happy.” Pg 170

He is wondering if his past would return to haunt him. Despite his attemt to make Isiakpu a modern community, the people still had a grip on some of the traditional values. Mama Oby‘s rejection of his proposal on the basis of his being an Osu is one thing that troubles him.

The author uses Pa Okolo to point out that Isiakpu might be backward but the people still cherish their values, traditions and the spirit of sharing which are lacking in the modern life. Modernity introdusced the spirit of individualism contrary to thetraditional society’s expectations. Pa Okolo comments that much as the people of Isiakpu are materially poor but they are spiritually wealthy. The author contrasts Chief Ugwueze who is physically rich but spiritually poor with the Isiakpu community. The contentment is visible but deep down his heart, he is an unhappy man who lives in the fear of his birth.

The Igwe responds to Pa Okolo pointing out the prejudices and discriminations that exists in the Isiakpu community where people are classified as free born and outcast –second rate citizen. As he talks one could detect his anguish.

The narrator through Pa Okolo shows the Isiakpu position and the things that are cherished. For example, the judicial system, upholding morality. Pa Okolo appreciates the change that has come but it has to be step by step. Trust is another value that is cherished in Isiakpu. Pa Okolo appreciates Chief Ugwueze for his initiative to develop to Isiakpu i. e people are going to university now even girls –Oby, Ijeoma.

Note that despite Pa Okolo’s explanation, the chief still insists that without money, life is hard claiming that people understand money more than the values of Isiakpu. He says “…money is the only language that people understand today.” Pg 172 Chief Ugwueze pledges to deal with the youth.

Mama Ijeoma’s character is portrayed. She is a loose woman, adulterous … she also has a love affair with Fr Damian and the narrator brings out the relationship she once had with Chief Ugwueze-sexual relationship. Pg 174

Pa Okolo seeks the chief’s support to destroy Mama Oby by touching where it will hurt her most as a way of teaching her a lesson. They ear mark her “small provision store “by the Eke market. The chief suggests that Uncle Ben can be used to execute the mission. He however cautions Pa Okolo not to quote him in case of anything.

Chief Ugwueze tells Pa Okolo that he will send a message to Mama Ijeoma about his interest in her daughter marrying his son. This is just to rouse jealousy in Mama Oby and probably make her have a change of heart.

Pa Okolo is contented with the suggestion and swears that Mama Oby cannot prevent him from being admitted to the council of elders of Isiakpu. It should be noted that the selfish motive of Pa Okolo drives him to desire destroying his brother’s wife. Despite his mentioning the cherished values of Isiakpu, he wants his niece to marry an Osu as a means of accomplishing his cherished dream. By the time Pa Okolo leaves the Igwe’s house, he is energized but with uncertainity by the chief’s suggestion. He decides to look for Ben to share with him what the chief has said.

Note that Pa Okolo despises Uncle Ben, symbolizing the society’s attitude towards less successful people. To Pa Okolo, Ben is a useless man Pg 176-7. Not being able to execute the plan alone, he involves Uncle Ben but conceals the actual reason from him –why he wants to deal with Mama Oby. He creates an atmosphere that whatever he is going to do is in the “interest of the family’s honour…” Pg 179. Pa Okolo’s hypocrisy and craftiness is emphasized.

Pa Okolo is used to portray the society’s attitude towards barrenness. He humiliates Uncle Ben for failing to father children with his wife.

Uncle Ben while watching Pa Okolo head to his home, he gets an idea that excites him. He decides against sharing it with Pa Okolo but just executes it as a means of proving himself as a man. Society condemns worthlessness. Punishing Mama Oby would give him satisfaction as she has been the source of his humiliation.

**Activity**

1. Describe the significance of flashback in this chapter.
2. Show the significance of dialogue in this chapter.
3. Analyse the character of the following

I) Pa Okolo

ii) Chief Ugwueze

Iii) Uncle Ben

iv) Mama Oby

v)Mama Ijeoma

d) List the values that are cherished in the Isiakpu society.

e) What lessons do you learn from this chapter?

f) What are your feelings towards the following characters?

i)Chief Ugwueze

ii)Pa Okolo

iii)Uncle Ben

g)Identify and explain the other narrative techniques used in this chapter.

**Chapter Twenty**

Oby’s first year at the University of Embakassi ends and is back in Isiakpu for a long vacation. She narrates to her mother her experiences in her first year in the university which leaves her mother worried.

Her experiences in the first academic year initiates Oby into the real world of the university. She falls in love and learns that “love was not all about happiness” Pg 180. She realizes that there is a lot to learn especially with the position of women.

Oby notices that at the University of Embakassi,” spirituality was not about Christianity” Pg180, finding out that it is more about” a deep philosophical and social orientation.” A lot of pressure is on comforming and she still needs to learn. Her exposure in this one year has been an eye-opener and the exposure has matured her into a woman and hopes that her mother would talk to her woman to woman. Mama Oby on the other hand is impatient to learn about her experience especially the boys at the university. She tells her mother about Chike who she describes as “cute, tall, intelligent and generous.” Her mother quickly adds a’brute. Oby confesses that Chike is easily swayed by pressure from the crowd. Mama Oby finds this very dangerous. Oby tries to cover up for him but by her motherly instincts, Mama Oby quickly notices that Oby is not enthusiastic about Chike.

Oby discloses that Chike lacks steadiness, he is influenced by his friends. Her mother tries to caution her to be very careful about Chike. The irony is that Chike has sexually used Oby but he is not talking about marriage. This shows his lack of seriousness. He only wants to exploit Oby sexually.

Oby admits that the university does not provide you with anyone to confide in which is confusing. It is a person’s responsibility to be in charge of their actions. Mother and daughter talk at length about many things.

Mama Oby comments about the evil of abortion and swears that Oby can never do such a thing basing on the way she has been brought up. She tells Oby that in case she gets pregnant, she can look after the baby while she finishes school. Mama Oby reminds her that “Abortion is a sin against God and against humanity…” In this argument the author brings out the moral decay among the university students. Incidentally, Oby argues with her mother claiming that circumstances can force one to have abortion.

Mama Oby concludes that to avoid the repercussions young people should not indulge in sex before marriage. To which Oby says its not very simple. Mama Oby insists on abstinence in order to avoid pregnancy but Oby insists on the use of contraceptives to avoid getting pregnant. Not that Oby’s outlook on things has completely changed from her mother’s expectations which leaves her mother troubled and confused.

Oby reminds her mother that things have changed.” The virtues of your time have become the vices of our age,” Oby says this claiming that “who cares whether you are a virgin or not…” Pg 183. She points out the peer pressure where even boys can shy away from a virgin claiming she lacks experience. The new era has come with additional pressure as compared to Mama Oby’s times. The many information outlets have really affected the youth more so those who have gone to higher institution of learning.

Oby wants to face the reality while Mama Oby is still stuck in the ideal situation. Oby expects her mother to understand. Mama Oby is in disbelief at how her daughter has changed. The one year she has been in the university has changed her greatly that “she was now a woman with all kinds of ideas” Pg 184. She cannot understand some of Oby’s ideas wondering if that is what university education does. University education has also had an impact on the marriage institution because many university graduates are remaining unmarried.

Mama Oby calls on her daughter to follow her God given wisdom to avoid temptation and make good judgement. Oby tells her mother that she should understand that the times have changed and the innocence of Mama Oby’s time has long disappeared. There is need to face reality.

Mama Oby apologises to her daughter for “not showing sufficient understanding” of Oby’s reason. She cautions her that she should always be conscious that “the world is not fair to women pointing out that the people who set the rules have different expectations for the women,” Pg 185 which is the burden of women.

Mama Oby reveals her dream about Oby and the abortion issue which scares her. Mama Oby is confident that Oby can never do such a thing. The author brings out the dilemma in which mother and daughter are. Oby cannot get the advice she needs badly from her mother. Mama Oby on the other hand has no one to turn to for advice in the whole village.

Mama Oby points out that values are changing in Isiakpu with **“Nothing is scared any more.”** Pg 185 In order to change the conversation Oby asks her mother what has been happening in Isiakpu in her absence. Her mother tells her about the crisis in the church. It is clear that Mama Oby is in regrets and is hurting to discuss the church. She discloses how Fr Damian has assumed the place of God and has excommunicated the Catholics from Ishi-ugwu.

The church, according to Mama Oby is in a major crisis with the traditionalist. Everything rotates around Obeta Nwaeze who is accused of poisoning his brother’s son Ezekiel Nwaeze and all the investigations point at Obeta.

Coming from the family of non Christians, he is asked by his family “to swear before the ‘alusi’, the Owushi of Isiakpu. He disappears only to return to the village as a full member of the Christian Association. Actually he is brought by Fr Damian who orders that no harm should come to him. Mama Ijeoma is given the responsibility of seeing to it that no harm comes to Obeta. She has to report to Fr Damian.

It is ironic when Mama Oby a staunch Catholic still thinks of the justice as practiced by the traditions. She questions the morality of Fr Damian who accepts the suspect to hide in the church. Osi presents the justice of the traditions and one wonders why Obeta runs to the church if he is not guilty. This whole incident leaves the Christians at crossroads. Fr Damian’s dictatorship is portrayed and his unethical character is brought out when he assumes supreme powers to the level of excommunicating believers in church.

Mama Oby’s dilemma is portrayed, she cherishes the traditional court justice. Her dilemma portrays the religion that is unsatisfying to its followers which leaves most of them confused. As a result, the believers remain attached to their customs. Mama Oby reasons that even Fr Damian knows the significance of the custom but is pretending that he does not understand.

The autho r uses Mama Oby to portray the necessity of understanding the customs of the people one ministers to or else they might be alienated from their society. For example, Obeta is ‘ostracised’according to the customs and traditions which do not discriminate between a Christian and a traditional believer.

Note that the accused has to prove his innocence by swearing before the Alusi which Obeta does not. She quotes the bible saying “give to Ceaser what is due to him and to God what is his.”

The author through Mama Oby points out that customs keep the people united but religion is used to split the community. For example, Fr Damian refers to such customs as ‘heathen’ which does not please Mama Oby. Despite being a faithful Catholic, she says she cannot bear to see the community split. To her, it not good to be asked to disobey the elders. The author presents religion that is preaching disharmony in the community.

It is ironic that Obeta is not even a Christian but just comes to church after commiting a crime.” He simply took refuge in church. “and as a result those who are critical of this action are excommunicated. All this is frustrating to Mama Oby and to the believers. Fr Damian reaches the level of calling those who are opposed to his decision as “weak Christians.” She points out that Mama Ijeoma and Obeta are the only Catholics in Ishi-ugwu. Obeta is baptized and is now called Micheal Nwaeze, He no longer wants to be called Obeta.

The church is portrayed as a sanctuary of evil doers i. e Mama Ijeoma, Obeta and even Fr Damian himself. This portrays the conflicting loyalties-that is serving the church or the customs of the land. Fr Damian uses divide and rule in the church. Mama Ijeoma is portrayed as a hypocrite and crafty. Oby is vexed by her mother’s revelation.

Fr Damian instructs all Christians to pass through Obeta’s house on their way to church as a means of confirming that they had contravened the ostracision decree. No Catholic obeyed except Mama Ijeoma. As a result, the Ishi-ugwu Catholics are excommunicated and banned from participating in any church activities. The Christians decide to petition to the Bishop about Fr Damian’s treatment. They decide to conduct their own mass led by the catechist. However, the excommunicated Catholics cannot have their children baptized or being wedded in church.

Through the dialogue, Mama Ijeoma’s character is revealed. She is irresponsible as a wife. Her husband is bedridden but she is not bothered. Oby wonders why Mama Ijeoma is so much interested in the affairs that involve Fr Damian. Note that Mama Oby is the reason for the suffering of the villagers.

Oby promises to go and confront Fr Damian. Her mother cautions her to be very careful when dealing with him saying he cannot trust him any more. Mama Oby’s caution makes Oby recall what Chike tells him about Fr Damian and the Reverend Sisters. Mama Oby comments on the allegations about the Reverend Fathers which include “…occasional excessive drinking…church building is not progressing…always in the company of women…” Pg 190. Mama Oby is at crossroads as she wants to protect her faith. She knows that the allegations are true but cannot confess it to Oby that it is the truth.

Oby wonders where the chief of Isiakpu was when all these events unfolded and her mother is quick to tell her that he was busy executing a plan to marry off Oby to his son Ndubisi. This disgusts Oby and says she will talk to Pa Okolo to stop the whole thing.

Oby reminds her of the chief being an Osu and wonders if it no longer matters. Mama Oby tells her that Pa Okolo thinks it no longer mattered lamenting that “values in Isiakpu are shifting faster than I can cope with the changes.” Pg 191

Oby says she does not uphold the maintainance of outdated traditions but about the issue of the Osu, she points out that “it stigmatizes one and one’s offsprings forever.” Pg 191

Pa Okolo’s true colours are portrayed through Mama Oby as being selfish. a schemer, evil etc. She is worried about what might come out of the rejection as she knows the matter is not settled. Oby assures her that Pa Okolo will never force her to marry Ndubisi or anyone else. This brings out her strong will.

In a woman to woman talk, Mama Oby tells Oby about Pa Okolo being aware that Oby is not circumcised which might make many suitable young men run away from her, if they found out that she is not circumcised.

The author brings about the issue of circumcision of women which is basically to control women from being promiscuous bringing out the contradictions in the customs. Men are allowed to be polygamous but women are circumcised to control their sensitivity.

Oby is amused at her mother’s fears assuring her that in modern times a circumcised girl stands few chances of getting a partner,” Boys ask you point blank whether you have been cut or not. They are not eager to relate with women who have been cut” Pg193. Mama Oby is in disbelief and confused at the same time. It is ironic that Isiakpus it is the women who are insisting that girls should be circumcised.

Circumcision is regarded as a rite of passage from childhood to womanhood/adulthood. For example, in Amankwo there is a conflict where older women insist that girls be circumcised but the younger ones argue that it should be dealt away with.

In Isiakpu, girls are circumucised at birth “It does not really represent any rite of passage “Pg 193. It is maintained in Isiakpu by “men, diehard, traditionalists, supported by a handful of women who insist that it has virtue” Pg 193. Mama Oby together with the other women tried to put pressure on the chief to outlaw it but later lost courage.

Through the story within story, the brutality that results from circumcision is brought out. Depite being a right of passage, circumcision brings about humiliatin, pain and can lead to death. It can affect a girl and she stays away from sex because it is painful. Mama Oby swears that “no relative of mine will undergo this terrible ordeal” Pg 195.

**Activty**

1. Explain the theme of tradition as portrayed in this chapter.
2. Show the effectiveness of irony in this chapter.
3. Analyse the religious hypocrisy.
4. Analyse the character of the following characters
5. Fr Damian ii) Mama Oby iii) Oby iv) Mama Ijeoma v) Pa Okolo
6. Show the significance of the the dialogue in this chapter
7. What feelings are aroused in you in this chapter?
8. Identfy and explain any other narrative techniques portayed in this cchapter.
9. Explain any other themes in this chapter.

**Chapter Twenty One**

In Isiakpu between July and August, people celebrate the new yam festival “it was a thanks giving service for the gift of life” Pg 196. Everyone is involved and each person has one thing or the other to thank God for. This festival is characterized by many cultural activities. Among which is a masquerade called the “Akatakpa”, this was mainly to remind people of the impending festival.

The masqueraders carried as part of the costume “several long whips, as part of the costume, with which it administered instant justice on the indisciplined and on any other person whom it deemed disrespectiful.” Pg196

The masquerade is believed to symbolize “the spirit of the fore fathers of Isiakpu.” They are the spirits of the departed and always come with a message from the spirit world therefore they have to be respected. The issue of male chauvinism still manifests.” The masquerades treatment of the women was markedly different” Pg196. Acts of insurodination and disrespect had nothing to do with what they represented.

The narrator comments that as society and its values evolve the symbolic importance of the Akatakpa begins to wane. It has become an instrument for revenge “for settling rejected, amorous advances, and for teaching some people a lesson” Pg 197. For example, women would be victims. Some would end up in hospital but due to hidden identity the bullying would go unpunished. Mama Oby cannot risk going to her shop everyday, so Amechi her son would go instead. Mama Oby knows that her daughter and herself would be targets of Akatakpu because of their relative success.

Mama Oby‘s strong will is portrayed. She likes to fight but at the same time fears humiliation at the hands of those who want to oppress her. Her fears are based on her flashback. She recalls her teaming with Mama Ijeoma and other women to organize a demonstration against the Akatakpa masquerades. This was way back when she came back to settle in the village after the civil war. At that time, the masquerades were brutal and ruthless.

The author brings out the effect of the civil war on the community. For example, Mama Oby loses her house, the exsoldiers who fight in the civil war who are not employed after the war are hardened by their experience in the war. They use the Akatakpa as “an outlet to pent-up anger “Pg 198 and in most cases the young women are the victims.

Mama Oby hosted a meeting at her house where many young women married and unmarried turned out determined to crush the brutal tradition. However, the next meeting did not take place as the married women were cautioned by their husbands not to participate in the demonstration. This brings out the submissive and dependent position of women in Isiakpu.

Note that the men of Isiakpu meet to discuss about the complaints and concluded that if there is anything wrong with the activity, they know how to deal with it. They argue that they cannot afford to let the women dictate to them what to do. The men agree to exert pressure on their women. Mama Ijeoma and Mama Oby are seriously warned not to bring women together. The men squash the voice of the women through the use of threats.

Mama Oby and Mama Ijeoma wondered when the women would organize themselves to fight for their rights. The two women acknowledge that they are partially liberated because of “the exposure of living in the city.” The traditions expect women to be submissive and not to have an independent mind. They are fighting for women emancipation.

The complaints from the women and the need for protection, come from the neighbouring towns and churches which forced the previous chief and his council of elders to “partially suspend their activities.” The young men in the Akatakpa had started using these activities to extort money and punish their enemies (corruption). As a result, the elders who wanted to maintain the respect for tradition, only allowed a few whose identinty is known.

However, when the chief died, the traditionalists fought to have the ban lifted. Igwe Ugwueze who claims to align with the traditionalists lifts the ban. Chief Ugwueze having ghosts in his closet, cannot defy the elders’ interests. The festivities were no longer business as usual and the brutality declined.

The new yam festival coincides with the August break. Traditionally, it is the period when married daughters who could afford would prepare a meal for their fathers. Because Mama Oby’s father died a long time ago, she would prepare a meal and send it to Pa Okolo who in return sends back two new yam tubers from his farm. She would then invite the women who are not doing well to join her and her family.

The new yam festival is used for thanking God for one’s achievements. For this matter, Mama Oby is thanking God for Oby’s university education, for Amechi being able to complete secondary education and her business having picked up.

While they are eating, they get unexpected visitors, Mama Ijeoma and Fr Damian. Since the excommunication of the Christians, Mama Ijeoma has not been to Mama Oby’s home in a long time. She only goes there once to brag about the chief’s proposal to have Ijeoma marry his son. The excitement dims when Mama Ijeoma notices that Mama Oby is not interested. The reception is cold and Mama Ijeoma’s visit is short.

Mama Ijeoma and Fr Damian come to announce the fire that guts down Mama Oby’s shop at the Eke market. Everything is destroyed and the person who has set fire on the shop is not known. There is pandemonium as Mama Oby “raises her voice in a high –pitched cry” Pg 200. Fr Damian holds her but she wrestles to free herself. The narrator brings out the spirit of togetherness. People mourn with Mama Oby and many sympathizers come to comfort her. “Everyone else joined in the yelling and crying…” Pg 200. “Everyone who came wanted to outwail the last one.”

Mama Oby’s is tested when she sees her mini supermarket now in ashes. Both mother and daughter stood with misty eyes and stared in the sky hoping for an answer from the Almighty. From the look of things,it is evident that “It was a work of an arsonist “Pg 201. Mama Oby knows that it must be the work of some close relatives or friends recalling that “some had openly threatened to teach her a lesson” Pg 201. She accepts that they have hit her where it hurts most but still trusts that God is on her side.

When Pa Okolo visits her late in the evening, he behaves strangely that it causes suspicion. Guilt is written on his face “He alone had a clue to what had happened” Pg 201. He wonders for how long he will conceal his involvement in this crime. He consoles himself not to cry over split milk but again notices very fast that this “split milk had his finger prints all over” Pg 201. He is scared of the consequences should he be found to be involved.

Before Pa Okolo leaves, an eye witness walks in shouting that he witnessed the Akatakpa masquerade burning Mama Oby’s mini supermarket. Though a person with psychiatric problem his story is credible according to Mama Oby. He describes vividly what happens on the day the shop is set on fire.

After hearing the story, Pa Okolo sneaks out of the house and goes to Uncle Ben’s home. The narrator exposes Uncle Ben as the one who executes the mission/whole plan. Uncle Ben is satisfied with the way he accomplishes the mission. He knows that being part of the Akatakpa he is safe. Only Pa Okolo and Chief Ugwueze know about his plan. When Pa Okolo meets Uncle Ben, he accuses him of having destroyed Mama Oby yet they agreed that she should be taught a little lesson.

Uncle Ben is disappointed by Pa Okol’s reproach yet he executes the plan to the best of his ability. He is proud that he has been able to punish Mama Oby and that he has executed the plan thoroughly and thinks no one can trace what happens. He says that “the plan and its execution smacks of a genius…” Pg 203

Pa Okolo insists that Uncle Ben tells him where he buys the petrol he uses. Ben wonders how he gets to know about it. Instead of applauding Uncle Ben, Pa Okolo is angered at the way Ben executes the the plan. Uncle Ben is disappointed that Pa Okolo raises his voice and a stranger is able to hear that he has a hand in the setting ablaze Mama Oby’s shop.

Uncle Ben is angered by his brother’s lack of appreciation in his evil deed. He threatens the chief and Pa Okolo that they will see his ugly side. He accuses Pa Okolo of his little ambitions that drives him to do evil things. Pa Okolo cautions Ben not to mess around with Chief Ugwueze who can easily kill him.

From the look of things, Uncle Ben knows that Pa Okolo will sacrifice him but he is not ready to make it easy for Pa Okolo. Pa Okolo leaves but in a dilemma.” He felt cornered and by the wrong person” Pg 206. He pleads with Uncle Ben not to drag the name of their family into the mess. It is now evident that Pa Okolo is worried. He lies on his bed contemplating what he would do next.

Like Pa Okolo, Oby also spends a sleepless night. She contemplates doing something –that is the police investigation. The only obstacle is that the victim has to report the case but she is not even sure if justice will be accorded to her. She reflects on a “society where money could buy justice “Pg 206. She does not share her decision with her mother because she would not allow her to do such a thing.

Oby goes to the central police station in Nsukka. She is teased by the police officers, she finds at the reception. The police are unethical. Oby controls her anger and continues to ask if she could see the inspector on duty. Fortunately, the inspector comes and is able to take Oby to his office. She narrates the whole story to him and is very sympathetic.

Oby is assigned a sergent and two constables to accompany her to Isiakpu to investigate the suspected arson case. The sergent confirms its arson. At the scene of the crime, the inspector finds three bottles and sniffs into them. He realizes they smell of petrol. With that evidence, he asks about petrol dealers in Isiakpu, Mr Okeke is identified and is surprised to see the police at his house. Mr Okeke is asked to identify the bottles he uses to sell petrol. He is asked about the people he sold petrol the previous day and he says he sold it to two young twins who are sent by Uncle Ben.

When Oby learns that Uncle Ben is involved, she pleads that they leave her somewhere along the way. Meanwhile, the presence of the police in Isiakpu has already caused speculation and word begins to spread quickly. The chief gets to know that Uncle Ben is picked and shows no emotion. Uncle Ben calmly walks to the van. As they drive away, the chief sends his driver, he gives the inspector a note from the chief inviting them to the chief’s palace before going back to Nsukka. The chief accuses them of being in his territory without informing him.

Note that the chief is just putting on a brave face because he is also involved in the crime. In order to stop the investigation, he bribes the police in exchange for the release Uncle Ben.

Chief Ugwueze later in the day goes to visit Mama Oby. Incidentally, they have already learnt that the chief intervenes in the release of Uncle Ben. He comes with condolences to Mama Oby. He offers her a large brown envelope, full of money but she refuses to take it. Her refusal of his money hurts the chief and swears to deal with her. Oby enjoys the chief’s humiliation.

Uncle Ben’s release pains Oby more so when he boasts of having people in the high places. Oby’s worry is that Uncle Ben will be a threat to Mama Oby and her family if he still roamed free. Oby decides to go back to the police station to plead her case the following day.

When she gets to the police station, luckily the inpector who she talked to is in the office. She narrates the whole story to him. He is angered by the chief meddling in the investigations. The inspector is instructed to bring Uncle Ben to the police in two hours.

Uncle Ben is picked and locked up at the Nsukka police station. The villagers do not know that Oby has a hand in the arrest of Uncle Ben. The chief tries to bail out Uncle Ben but fails because the police offer cannot be compromised. He threatens the chief to disclose “the skeletons in his closet” Pg 214.

In order to save himself, the chief gets Uncle Ben to confess to the crime, promising him a lot but peppered with mild threats. All this is because he does not want to “expose his role in the affair” Pg 215

The partners in crime Chief Ugwueze and Pa Okolo do not meet eye to eye. Pa Okolo sends his senior wife to thank the chief for his kind gesture towards his brother. Pa Okolo suggests to the chief that they should not be seen together for the time being. Chief Ugwueze lets Pa Okolo know that he is not going to be in Isiakpu for a long time.

As the events unfold, Pa Okolo gets down with malaria which last a week. The chief sends for him one day latein the night with instructions that the driver should go back to the palace with him. At the palace, the mood is sombre, the chief does not look direct in the eyes of Pa Okolo. The atmosphere is tense. Chief Ugwueze discloses that he intends to ask Uncle Ben to confess to the crime. He does all this to protect himself. This shocks Pa Okolo. He tries to refute it but he is silenced by the chief.

Pa Okolo tries to reason with the chief but he cannot convince him. Pa Okolo begins to sweat profusely. He cannot bring himself to become a public ridicule and go to jail. He finds himself in a dilemma. The chief sarcastically tells Pa Okolo that Uncle Ben being imprisoned for a few years will teach him some lessons.

Pa Okolo is now helpless and is now at the mercy of Uncle Ben not to implicate him and asks Chief Ugwueze to assit him. To the chief, Pa Okolo is the lone criminal. The chief only promises to protect him from the society. Pa Okolo is worried that Ben might cause him problems. He resigns to his fate.

Pa Okolo surrenders his becoming a member of the council of elders because of this crime. Going to prison would be an impediment to this achievement.

When Pa Okolo reaches home, he goes to his bedroom, gets out his red cap he had bought for his initiation into the Ozo titled fraternity of which he “had been consumed by his quest for membership into this select group of respected men” Pg 220. He reflects on his memories and is on tension. Pa Okolo decides to take his life by swallowing twenty two chloroquine tablets. He washes them down with vodka.

Uncle Ben is sentenced to twelve months in prison with hard labour. Chief Ugwueze leaves Isiakpu for an extended business trip abroad. It was a strategy to let the matter cool off.

Pa Okolo does not wake up the following day. He dies peacefully is his sleep of overdose. No post mortem is done because the people of Isiakpu think post mortem “would alter their form and their destiny in the next life” Pg 221.

The famly knows Pa Okolo commits suicide but do not disclose it to the public. They tell the people that he dies of malaria. His commiting suicide would result in his being buried like a chicken. Society condemns taking one’s own life. Pa Okolo is given a befitting funeral after lacking proof of having committed suicide.

The irony is that even in death, he was denied the digninity of an Ozo man “Pa Okolo would have loved to be buried with his red cap but society could not honour his unwritten wish. Celebration of death as of birth “was a societal affair.” One had to be initiated into the ozo fraternity to be buried with a red cap. Pa Okolo goes to the grave without a red cap. Note that ambition/desire of honour drives Pa Okolo to his death and dies like a coward.

**Activity**

1. Show the significance of the following in this chapter.

i) Omnicient narrator ii) Dialogue iii) Setting iv) Irony v) Stream of consciousness

b) Analyse the character of the following;

i) Moma Oby ii) Pa Okolo iii) Oby iv) Chief Ugwueze

c) Identify and explain the themes portrayed in this chapter.

d) What lessons do you learn from this chapter?

e) Show how the moon sets in this chapter.

**PART V**

**The moon finally sets**

**Chapter Twenty Two**

The setting is now Embakassi University. Professor Akpanu Akpabio is introduced and is a professor of Social Statistics who has just returned from one year sabbatical leave at Cairo University in Egypt. His many titles reflect the status quo. That is people desiring to have so many titles. No one wants to be an ordinary person in Nigeria “Apostle that…” Pg 223.

Professor Akpanu has been an Associate professor for years now and he is still in the same position. This is due to the many complaints about his morality which affect his promotion to a full professor.

Prof Akpanu trains in Russia and when he comes back, he comes with a Russsian wife and three children. Though a university professor, he is hooked in “wine and women “-young university girls. This kind of life leads to the deterioration of his work and also affects his marriage. He would bring women in the house when his wife was on duty in the hospital near their home.

The adulterous nature of Prof Akpanu frustrates Mrs Akpanu and forces her to leave him and go back to Russia with their three children.” Out of frustration at his shameless womanizing and physical abuse…” Pg 224. Actually it is a friend of the family who helps the wife to flee.

Professor Akpanu spends most of the time at “the beer parlour noted chiefly for its cheap beer and idle girls” Pg 224. The parlour is owned by Cash Madam and on the day his wife leaves, despite the horrible weather, he goes to the joint giving an opportunity to his wife and cildren to flee.

The irony is that the description of the joint is disappointing to see a whole professor being in such place. At this place, he is one of the advertising agents. -his wife flees when he is at Cash Madam’s place. On his way back, the rain intensifies. It’s characterized by lightening and thunder a premonition of what awaits him at home Pg 226. Elena, his wife leaves him a note informing him of her decision to go back to Moscow.

Disillusioned by his wife leaving him, he resorts to womanizing and drinking, He is the one who teaches Oby ‘Sociology 210’ a paper that she has to take in her second year. Being a difficult paper, Prof Akpanu sexually takes advantage of the girls in the bid to give them marks.” It was an annual ritual for him and no one denied him the privilege.” Pg 228

Oby returns to the university for her second year after a traumatic holiday in Isiakpu. After the fire, Mama Oby tries to put her business back on its feet with the help of Uncle Amechi. He also provides most of the money for Oby to go back to the university.

Oby has learnt to separate the two worlds, that is the university and Isiakpu. She notices that in both worlds men dominated though the form of treachery took a different course. Mama Oby can endure the treachery but her daughter wonders if she can manage on her own.

In the university, Oby is on her own though she has Chike. Oby goes through a lot in the one year she has been at the university but the” test is yet to come…” In her first year her performance is just average and is determined to work harder if she is to graduate and also get the scholaship award. She narrates her holiday ordeal to Chike who is stupefied by the events. Pg229

Chike talks about ambition that consumes. He points out the accounts of great men being destroyed by their ambition. I. e Chike’s ambition to have sex with Oby. He almost kills her which would have caused him problems.

The narrator uses Oby to portray the plight of the widows. They are looked at as the fair game for anyone interested. They have no right to their husband’s property. Sometimes their children are taken away from them. It’s ironic that Pa Okolo according to Oby is the only one who would have protected Mama Oby from the wolves. Oby is worried that her mother is now exposed and alone with Oby away at the university. She fears that Mama Oby might be susceptible to mistreatment from the chief. The events she experiences in the vacation continue to worry Oby.

Meanwhile, Oby is growing fond of Chris day by day. She wants to share what she goes through to get his opinion. Chris continues to get her admiration and respect.

Oby is determined to improve in her studies. One paper that challenges her is the one of Professor Akpanu-”social statistic “She’s to present a term paper. She hopes to approach Prof Akpanu for assistance as a bid to improve her academic performance. She is however skeptical after what she has heard about the professor’s womanizing character. She fears that “approaching him would tantamount to giving a hungry lion a goat to watch over.” Pg 233

After one lecture, it is raining, Oby walks, and she is requested by Prof Akpanu to escort him to his office. His action while they walk together, leaves many male students whistling. Oby is very uncomfortable. When they reach office, he invites her inside to talk about the term paper. Oby’s discussion is a free ticket to Prof Akpanu’s manipulations. He tells Oby that she must be prepared to pay the price to get through. It is “Exactly the sort of situation Prof Akpanu preferred” Pg 233

Note that Oby is uncomfortable discussing with him owing to his womanizing record at the campus. She is the next target. Prof Akpanu gives her the topic and promises to give her more materials. The narrator portrays the lack of morals the professor exposes. He sexually exploits girls claiming that “you had to use what you had to get what you needed “Pg 235. He always gives the girls who complied “grade A” in his course. Those who denied him sexual favours, he would just give them “grade C”. As Oby leaves his office the professor exclaims with admiration.

The narrator presents Chike, Okoro and Chris who are now in their final year. He emphasizes their thesis in which Okoro is really finding challenges with his professor. It is real tough for Okoro. The narrator reveals that Okoro’s degree is a means to fulfill a”family dream” Pg 237 thereby bringing out the role of education- a symbol of respect, liberation and prestige. Okoro is also to lead the company after his father. His father portrays the respect which comes with a degree “no one would call his son money miss road as they often referred to him for his lack of formal education” Pg 237. With education one’s class changes. Okoro’s father is “described as classless, with strange tastes.”

Okoro, Chike, and Chris meet to discuss the next edition of ‘The Bee’, the university magazine, which is going to have an article about Oby and Chike’s saga that happened on the night of the Economics Association dinner. The trio have got wind about the article. Chike and Okoro are surprised when Chris asks how the information leaked. Chike, on the other hand is not surprised, this infuriates Chris who says such information will devastate Oby. It‘s ironic that Chike is not bothered claiming that “appearing in The Bee is a rite of passage” Pg 238. Chike is not protecting Oby at a time when he should have. Chris’concern about Oby almost results in a bitter argument. Chris’ concern creates suspense to his friends.

Okoro’s shrewdness is portrayed when he suggests that they steal the master copy of ‘The Bee’. Sarcastically, Chike says it should be Chris to execute the plan since he is so bothered. Okoro says the matter should be professionally executed. He suggests bribing the security claiming “I know what they eat” Pg 240. This is in the bid to save Oby from public embarrassment. Okoro suggests using his girlfriend from the Nursing School to get the master copy. Not being a student of the university, the university authorities cannot discilpline her.

**Activity**

1. Analyse the character of the following;

i) Okoro ii) Oby iii) Chike iv) Chris

b) Show the effectiveness of the following techniques;

i) Omniscient narrator ii) Dialogue iii) Setting iv) Style

c) Identify and explain the themes portrayed in this chapter.

**Chapter Twenty Three**

On Saturday at 7. 30 am, Oby is at Professor Akpanu’s office because she has an appointment with him. Being a Saturday, many students are not on the campus. Oby is uncomfortable but the professor insists that they meet on Saturday.

Oby gets a comment from Prof Akpanu that shows she is not performing well academically. This scares Oby so she has to comply to what the professor says. Actually Akpanu gives her such a comment to beat her “psychologically”. Oby is willing to do anything to see to it that she improves on her performance.” If her work was below average, the grade in this course depended on this term paper, the student would do anything…” Pg 242. Her winning a scholarship depended on her good performance.

His appointment with Oby is very important to him. In a rush, he forgets Oby’s paper at home so he says. Ironically it’s his plan to get Oby to his house. Oby begins to be alert wondering the level of commitment from the lecturer.

Immediately Oby enters, Prof Akpanu apologises to her for having forgotten her paper at his house. Oby tells him that they will meet on Monday but he tells her that he can drive her to his house and they pick the paper. Conscious of her dignity, Oby wonders what people will think seeing her in Prof Akpanu’s car. She is conscious of the campus gossip. Pg 244

When they get to his house, Prof Akpanu takes his time to open the door wanting his fellow lecturers to see his “latest conquest.” A few male university lecturers see this as a game.” The younger the victim, the more the kudos you received” Pg 244. The irony is that the custodians of knowledge are actually misbehaving with the students they are expected to mould into better citizens.

Professor Akpanu gives her the paper and to her disappointment the paper is full of red marks and is termed a substandard paper. Oby is emotional as she checks her paper and tears begin to flow down her cheeks.

While taking tea, Prof Akpanu begins to caress Oby, no longer minding about the paper. Oby asks him what to do to improve. In response, he begins to unbutton his shirt. In Akpanu’s vocabulary, you can either have a good grade or one can do other things to get a good grade.

Looking at the paper is not on the professor’s mind now. He wants to have sex with Oby. She tries to “wrestle her way out but in vain” Pg 246. He confesses that he just wants to have sex with her claiming that she does not need a degree. Being beautiful, she can get a rich man to marry her. The author criticizes a whole professor who thinks that Oby does not need education because she is a beauty.

Out of despair, Oby pretends not to know what the professor is up to. The irony is that a whole professor is giving free marks to female students after exploiting them sexually. He tells Oby “If you give me what I want, I will give you what you want. Term paper or no term paper.” Pg 247

Oby puts up a spirited fight to free herself and tells him she is not that type of girl. Oby uses the trick of appreciating his family and this does the trick. Prof Akpanu comes to reality wondering what a man without family is worth. He forgets Oby for a moment. The narrator presents a professor now destroyed by women and alcohol.

Oby realizes that if she is to leave this house, she has to change the tactics. She decides to be cooperative recalling her mother’s advice on lecturers and boys. She wonders if this is what a university girl should go through to get a good grade. Oby is determined to figtht this vice. She devises means of extracting herself from the problem.

She goes to the professor and apologises for making him upset. He assures her that she will be sorry for what she has done saying that “No one plays with Professor Akpanu and gets away with it” He threatens Oby claiming that he holds a key to her success. This whole incident portrays the plight of girls in the universities. Oby symbolises those young girls who are sexually exploited by their lecturers in order to let them pass against their will “You know…” Pg 249

In order to escape, Oby lies to him that it is not possible for her to have sex because she has her menstral period. Professor Akpanu accepts but cautions her not to play games with him. He tells her to meet him in his office in two weeks time and Oby accepts. He drives Oby back to the university.

Finally Oby gets to her hostel. She quickly notices that all eyes are on her. The Bee, the notorious campus magazine “had hit the campus” with a big story about Oby and the evening of the Economics Assosiation dinner. She becomes the center of gossip in all corners of the campus.

The magazine tries to play around with the actual people but it is always evident about the intended victims. When Oby gets to the hostel hell breaks loose. When she gets to her room, she finds a copy of the magazine on her bed –placed there by her roommates. Her appearance in The Bee is considered “a rite of passage” by her roommates. Note the level of moral decay at the university. This brings out the effect of formal education.

It is ironic that Oby survives Prof Akpanu only to be welcomed by humiliation. Symbolicaly, The Bee acts as the tool for initiating a girl at campus to become a “fully licensed bus with identified particulars with your boyfriend…” Pg 251

While in the quiet of her room, Oby recollects the events of that night she lost her virginity. The details are accurate much as they are exaggerated” Suprisingly, there was so much detail,so much accuracy with lots of exaggeration. .” Pg 251. She becomes suspicious that Chike might have confided in someone who might have leaked the story to The Bee. This hurts Oby and she is devastated.” She burst out crying…” Pg 251. She is surprised to note that in this university there is no respect for privacy.” An academic community with non –academic manners” Pg 251

Chike on the other hand is more prepared for the sting since it is not the first time he appears in The Bee. More so, Chike is a man and Oby is a woman.” Each was viewed through a different tense” On his side he is a “hero for deflowering Oby” Pg 251. Oby is portrayed as an immoral girl for allowing it to happen. Society judges Oby but not Chike. To The Bee, it does not matter whether she does it out of love or not.

In order not to experience the episode of drumming and whistling, Oby opts to miss dinner because it is too much for her to bear. Late in the evening, Chike comes to check on her.

Note that Oby spends the best part of the Saturday at Prof Akpanu’s house where she survives being sexually exploited only to come back to her hostel and find that The Bee has stung more so about the thing she does out of love. This leaves her completely disillusioned and devastated. With her mother far away in Isiakpu, she has no one to comfort her, leaving a lonely girl.

When once comes to her room, he persuades her to go out as hiding in her room would not solve the problem. The situation outside as the two walk to the canteen is now different. The two are applauded by the ladies appreciating Chike’s bravery- that is coming to take Oby out. Many have suffered the sting of The Bee at one moment or the other. Most girls admire Chike’s courage.

They head to the canteen where they find few students. Some cheer Chike while others do not know what to say. Ironically, even the members of The Bee are there in the canteen.

Oby is subdued but cheerful. Chike does this to let Oby “shake off the effects of the sting.” Note the moment Oby and Chike sit down, the boys from The Bee leave wondering at his audacity and fearing that he is up to something.

While still in the canteen, Okoro walks in and asks Chike why he is hiding just because The Bee had stung. Ironically, the sting of The Bee is regarded as ‘a rite of passage. ’ Now Oby has qualified to be a senior girl. Joyously, Okoro calls for celebration.

When Okoro calls for celebration, Oby says it is not necessary. She is concerned about the university being useless since people do not mind their own business. Oby is disappointed with her experiences at the so called ‘Ivory Tower ‘. Okoro explains to Oby that The Bee is part of the culture of the university. To Okoro, The Bee is useful in controlling certain excesses in the university. Pg 255

The author uses Okoro to bring out the moral decadence in the university. Without The Bee the university “would be Sodom and Gomorrah” Pg 255. He reveals the wrecklessness of both boys and girls. What he sees makes him wish to be born again. Okoro’s conversation helps Oby drop her sombre mood. The marginitude of The Bee is portrayed by Okoro who comments that at campus people fear The Bee more than they fear the Vice Chancellor. Pg 257. His only problem, he points out, is its exaggeration and humiliation.

By the time they leave the canteen, Oby is feeling a lot better. She is persuaded by Chike to go to his room. She asks Chike to tell her what Okoro meant saying they “tried but it was too late”. When Chike explains everything to her, she is surprised that they keep all this from her.

Note that Oby is getting interested in Chris, at the mention of Chris getting a new girl friend, Oby responds with a tone of jealousy.

After their love making, Oby composes herself and comments that it has been a black Saturday for her-The Bee and Prof Akpanu. She relates to Chike what she experiences with Prof Akpanu. Chike cautions her to be very careful with him. Oby tells Chike that Prof Akpanu is ready to fail her if she does not accept his sexual demands.” He is prepared to fail me.” Suprisingly, Chike cannot help Oby, he just refers her to the other girls to find out from them how she can deal with the professor. Actully, he does not offer any solution to Oby’s problem.

The author portrays a university system that cannot protect young girls from the lechery of the lecturers. This is confirmed by Chike‘s comment that “No student has had the courage to bring this up. I guess they fear that the system will not protect them” Pg 260.

Oby feels that Chike’s advice is not enough. She is in a dilemma. In her hour of despair, she turns to her Bible and reads Psalm 120.

**Activity**

1. Show the effectiveness of the following narrative techniques;

i) Dialogue ii) Setting iii) Omniscient narrator iv) Characterisatoin v) Irony vi) Contrast vii) Foreshadow

b) Identify and explain the the themes portrayed in this chapter.

c) Analyse the character of the following

i) Oby ii) Okoro iii) Chike iv) Prof Akpanu

d) What role do the following characters play?

i) Okoro ii) Prof Akpanu iii) Chike iv) Oby

e) Show the author’s concern about university education.

f) What moral lessons do you learn from this chapter?

**Chapter Twenty Four**

After the Black Saturday, Oby takes long without seeing Chike. This is probably a way of Chike avoiding her and partly due to his busy schedule. As a finalist, he has a deadline to meet. Chris on the other hand thinks that Oby is still in pain due to the sting of The Bee. In the bid to protest, Chris burns the copy of The Bee. Note that many students have never supported the activities of The Bee. The narrator portrays The Bee as a magazine that humiliates women. It is “the naked aggression against women …” Pg 261. Nothing is done to save the victims from “pain and aggression” Pg261. To some readers The Bee, it is just entertainment.

On the black Saturday, Chris decides to go to Oby but emotions fail him. It is ironic that Chris feels pain but Chike just tells Oby to endure as the storm would pass soon.

A week after the fateful Saturday, Chris gets the courage to go and meet Oby. He is bothered by the lack of protection Oby is exposed to. When Chris and Oby meet, she asks him where he has been. Chris’ response portrays his strong love for Oby.

Oby confesses to Chris that he is the only person she has longed to see and talk to. She wonders why Chris has not been there for her. Chris confesses that he feared to see Oby devastated. She assures him that she has now matured and portrays the society of Embakassi of “man eat woman” asserting that she has become immune.

Chris is surprised at Oby’s bravery but she confesses to him that she cried like a baby but praises Chike for having been supportive. Oby assures him that she has got over it and says she has a “greater burden than The Bee” Pg 262. She discloses to Chris about Prof Akpanu who wants to have sex with her and if she does not accept then she will fail her.

Chris is infuriated by Prof Akpanu. The author contrasts Chris with Chike through his response to Oby’s problem. Chike just warns Oby to take care but Chris is agitated and shows that he cannot allow such a thing to happen to Oby and swears “he will kill him first” if he dares molest her.

Oby is worried but Chris assures her that she can courageously defeat that rogue of a professor. He advises her to “kick him as hard as you can between his legs” Pg 264. Oby is so desperate, she fears that if she does not comply she “will fail his course and…never graduate” Pg 264. Seeing Oby cry, affects Chris and “struggles to control his tears” Pg 264 but he has to be strong and vows to do whatever it takes to assist her. This is a golden opportunity for him to establish himself. This was a defining moment” Pg 264. He is ready to save the women from the likes of Prof Akpanu.

It is evident that Chris loves Oby and cannot hide it any more. He is ready to save Oby from the sex manipulation of Prof Akpanu. He praises Oby for being a special person.

Chris advises Oby to be bold and dare do something courageous. He intimates her that if she fearlessly attacks the professor, it will mark the end of his habit of molesting female students in exchange for marks. He uses the story of Rosa Parks who disobeys the instruction to leave her seat at the front for the white man. This brings out the civil disobedience that changes America since then.

At a certain point, Oby contemplates compromising her dignity giving reason that failure to get a degree would devastate her mother. Chris assures her that may be God wants to use her to rid society of such evil people and tells her that it needs one person to start a revolution. Chris reassures her that everything will be fine. Chris steals a kiss on Oby’s lips and she does not refuse.

Oby is scared but Chris encourages her to give it a try. Chris reflects on true justice and justice must Oby receive and the many girls that have been failed for refusing to be sexually manipulated.

The following day, Oby receives a letter from her mother. The narrator portrays that Mama Oby is an illiterate who values education. She cannot write English. Despite Oby‘s problems at the university, she is concerned by what happens to her mother back in Isiakpu. Also Mama Oby is worried about Oby so the purpose of the letter is to inquire how Oby is faring at Embakassi.

In the letter, Mama Oby informs her how she is rebuilding her shop and that business has picked up. She is even contemplating expanding the shop but she is still waiting for her to come back and advise her. Ironically, the burning of the shop just brings luck as she says that “everybody wants to buy from Mama Oby.” Mama Oby is appreciative for her brother’s help and requests Oby to write to him and thank him for everything.

She informs her daughter that the adverseries –the uncles and their wives –are now friendlier than they were before, commenting that it was Pa Okolo who was responsible for the cold reception they received when they came back to Isiakpu.

Mama Oby informs Oby that Fr Damian has left Isiakpu for further studies in Rome. Fr Damian is replaced by a much older priest Fr Micheal Anayo who has taken steps to reconcile everybody. The Catholic Church is now one family.

Mama Oby advises her daughter not to sell her dignity for a university degree. She enncourages her to trust God and says “prayers will conquer anything.” She advises her to be alert being in a strange land.

In the letter, Mama Oby informs her that Amechi is continuing with his education and they are waiting for his University admission. Oby’s mother advises her to always turn to God whenever she has problems. After reading the letter, Oby is happy that her mother is happy. She wishes that her mother is with her to help fight for her.

When she sleeps, she gets a night mare of the professor forcing himself on her. This dream is significant ‘she had lain …to yell and kick” Pg 268. She remembers her mother‘s advice to pray. In her despair, Oby wonders who will fight for her and the meeting with Prof Akpanu is drawing closer. She is in a dilemma wondering whether she should go or not. Oby wishes for divine intervention.

Soon it is Saturday and Oby has to go and meet Prof Akpanu in his office. She is determined to go in order to save her course which is portrayed in the dress she decides to wear. “…she wore a flowery dress, it would be easy to get over with it. She walks dejected like a lamb led to the slaughter house.

By the time she gets to the office of the professor, his car is already parked in front of his office a sign that he has been waiting for her. “He was ready for the appointmet” Pg 269. He asks her to come in and offers her a drink but Oby refuses. He presents a gift to her “A cheap make-believe,gold-coated bangle almost as expensive as the wrapper.” Pg 270

Not wasting time, the professor begins to kiss Oby as he slowly removes her clothes. She neither responds nor objects to his advances. Professor Akpanu praises Oby but all this falls on deaf ears. After removing her pants to the knee, he begins to unzip his trousers which drop on the floor. He is now ready for action. All this while Oby is like an object. All of a sudden, she gets courage, ” had a sudden surge of energy” she hit him between his legs “the kick was packed with such strength, the force of it sent the man rolling back crotching his groin and writhing in pain” Pg 271. Oby gets up quickly and puts on her pants and grabs her bag to leave the office. She leaves the professor in serious pain.

While runimg for her dear life, he collides with Chris who runs to Professor Akpanu’s office and begins to take his photographs in the nude. He takes several pictures “He took a dozen pictures of the professor lying naked on the floor with both hands between his legs” Pg 271. Chris aims at photographing his face. This marks” …the end of the road for Professor Akpanu.” The village girl, all the way from Isiakpu rewrites the rules of the game in which Akpanu becomes the villain.

Out of despair, Prof Akpanu laments on how Oby sets him off. He swears to get her. Professor Akpanu is left in anguish and pain. Chris finds Oby in one of the empty classrooms worried that her university education will not yield anything.

When Chris finds Oby, she runs to him and inquire if the professor will be okay. She feels guilty of having hurt the professor. Oby is surprised to see Chris. As they head to the restaurant, Oby is worried about her future at the university. Chris on the other hand is not sure of how to translate his feeling to Oby, though it is evident that they love each other.

Oby asks what she is going to do but Chris assures her that her troubles are over because he will send him pictures that will silence him so that he wiil never trouble her again or any other female students. Note that Chris has been supportive to Oby compared to Chike.

Oby appreciates Chris especially his help with Prof Akpanu and she looks at him as a dear friend. Chris regrets not meeting Oby before Chike. To Chris, Oby is a”beautiful, intelligent, warm, cultured and very considerate” Pg 275

Oby accepts that Chris is a dear friend but Chris sees this relationship more than a mere friendship. He asks her if she has ever thought of the two being a couple and her answer is affirmative.

A week after the incident in Prof Akpanu’s office, Chris sends him two copies of the pictures with a warning. Meanwhile, Oby revises her term paper and hands it in. Finally, she gets a ‘B’in the course which she thinks is the right grade she deserves.

**Activity**

a) Compare Chike’s and Chris’ reaction to Oby’s encounter with Prof Akpanu.

b) Show the significance of the following narrative techniques.

i) Omniscient narrator ii) Dialogue iii) Setting iv) Rhetoric questions

c) Show the significance of Mama Oby letter in this chapter.

d) Analyse the character of the following;

i) Mama Oby ii) Oby iii) Chris iv) Chike

e) What feelings are aroused in you after reading this chapter?

g) Show how the author brings out moral decay in this chapter.

g) What other themes are potrayed in this chapter?

**Chapter Twenty Five**

Oby’s menstral period delays to come for a week. She is alarmed as it has always been regular. At first she attributes it to the anxiety due the troubles she has had lately. She assures herself that “A week’s delay would not be unusual. But two weeks was quite unusual” Pg 277.

Oby is worried that she might be pregnant. The narrator portrays Chike’s self centeredness when he does not use condoms but insists that Oby should be on the pill. Oby is hesitant after consulting the physician Dr Inyang – an ardent supporter of women rights.

Being a conservative lady, Dr Inyang wants to know why Oby wants to be on the pill. She advises Oby to ask her partner to use a condom. It is ironic that the day The Bee stings is when the lovers get carried away and forget taking precaution, as a result Oby concieves. The narrator points out that “Nature had a way of playing tricks on women. You are most vulnerable when you are most unsafe.” Pg 277

Worried that she might be pregnant which means she must marry Chike and give birth to the baby. She banks on her mother to look after the baby as she completes her university education. To her, abortion is out of question. She recalls her mother’s dream which showed Oby dying if she ever had an abortion.

To erase all doubts, Oby goes to take the pregnancy test. (Oby is worried about the repercussions back in Isiakpu). The narrator portrays the inhumanism at the university where getting pregnant is a non issue, you simply just get the rid of the pregnancy. To the university community, pregnancy or abortion is not a “moral quagmire” Pg 278. Ironically abortion is legal “no anti abortion movement yet on paper its regarded illegal. In practice, “everyone did it and no one got prosecuted. “Even the doctors have lip service to its illegality simply because they charge highly the victims.

Oby knows it is a sin to have an abortion. She is helpless as she fails to get answers to the many questions she has. Sleep eludes her that night despite her weakened body. Due to anxiety, she goes to the clinic first. The doctor confirms that she is pregnant. Oby is in pain and anguish. The doctor sarcastically tells her that its just a mistake which leaves Oby in a dilemma. The doctor advises her to talk to the father of the baby.

Oby is warned by the doctor of how men can change when they are faced with a scenario of the girlfriend becoming pregnant. When Chike comes back in his room, he is suprised to see Oby. When Oby tells him she is pregnant, he is shocked and in disbelief. When Oby tells him about delivery, Chike is quick to say” she is jumping too fast” Pg 282

Chike is not happy with the news of Oby’s pregnancy and she notices it. Actually Chike confirms his being unhappy. He tells her that they are not married claiming that it will disrupt her education. With determination Oby assures him that when they marry, her mother will look after the baby and she will continue with her studies.

Oby insists that they should get married before she gives birth but Chike says he is not ready to get married. The fear of something terrible happening to her preyed on her mind. She recalls her mother’s dream. Chike tells Oby his future dreams excluding getting married before securing a better future. He tells Oby to have an abortion. She is heartbroken and feels betrayed by the person she has trusted. She realizes that all Chike used to tell her were just empty words.

Chike later shares with his friends Okoro and Chris. He tells them about Oby’s pregnancy. Chris is shattered by the news but as usual Okoro is happy. He congratulates Chike on his being a man now. Once again Okoro‘s villagish character manifests. Chike reveals to his friends that he wants their advice on what to do because he does not want the baby yet.

Chris’ love for Oby is hanging. He knows that if Oby has a child with Chike, it would erase away all his optimism. He also does not want Oby to be hurt.

As usual Okoro comes out with what he calls Plan A-talking to Oby to see reason -that is accepting to have an abortion. If she insists on having the child then they will try Plan B, that Okoro knows it cannot fail, bragging that he is from Aba. Chris cautions them to handle the issue with utmost care and advises Okoro not experiment his crude ideas on Oby. Note that Okoro is suspicious of Chris’relationship with Oby.

After persuading Oby to change mind in vain, Okoro comes out with Plan B. This is a concotion that he gets from Aba. Chris is not told about Plan B. Chris is in the dilemma as he could not warn Oby about Plan B because he is kept in the dark.” He did not have any clue what it was” Pg 287.

Okoro goes to Aba and secures “touch and go” which is an abortion inducing concoction. Not wanting to take chances he asks for a ‘potent on. ’Touch and go’ is an illegal drug which is sold under strict “confidential rule “Pg282. Okoro has used it before and has always been happy with the results. It is administered in any drink as it dissolves quickly.

The plan is to convince Oby that Chike has changed his mind that he will now have the baby and is going to marry her. This is basically to ease the tension and bring her back closer to Chike. ’Touch and go’ is to be mixed in punch that Okoro buys from Aba to conceal any “lingering taste from the powder”

Chike’s change of attitude softens Oby’s heart. She goes to his room and they have a romantic evening. When Oby asks him why he changes his mind, he says he has prayed about it. His hypocritical nature is portrayed. Oby is suspicious of Okoro wondering how he would have supported Chike on the decision he pretends to have made.

When Oby asks for a drink, Chike uses this opportunity to give her the one that is already mixed with’touch and go’. Oby senses an unusual flavour but Chike assures her that it’s “peach punch” Ironically, she says she likes the drink. Immediately Chke finishes administering the concoction, he gives an excuse of going to see his professor about his thesis. Having assignments to complete, Oby decides to go to her room.

Before long the ‘touch and go’ begins to work. Oby feels very uncomfortable and she cannot sleep. She experiences pain like “menstrual crumps” which intensifies every moment that passes. When she goes to the toilet, she notices the “first blood spots” and the blood becomes heavier by the minute. Pg289

Oby is confused; she cannot tell what is happening. She begins to worry that she is having a miscarriage but has no idea. In her despair, she starts praying reciting Psalm 23. When the flow of blood intensifies, Oby wakes up her roommates. When she tells them she pregnant they are not shocked and they know very well she ia having a miscarriage. Suscipiciously, her roommates ask if she has taken anything to induce an abortion and she says she has not.

Not wanting to attract attention, the three walk to the campus gate heading to her gynaecologist. As they go to the clinic, they decide to inform Chike. Chris’ hostel is near the gate, Ada goes to his room and asks him to inform Chike about Oby’s condition. When Dr Inyang sees Oby, she immediately suspects that something is amiss. The effect of the abortion leaves Oby with a fever and during the interview she passes out.

Dr Inyang suspects that this is not a normal miscarriage. She tries to revive Oby and performs a D&C. She also controls the flow of blood. Chris is the first to reach the clinic. He also suspects foul play but lacks proof. He knows that Plan B was administered. Chike comes and joins Chris. He is sweating profusely despite being very early in the morning. When Okoro hears what has happened, he decides to make an emergency visit to Aba.

After operating on Oby, Dr Inyang calls the police. She interrogates both Chris and Chike. Chris discloses the Plan B which he never knew about. At first Chike denies but accepts under pressure of having executed Plan B. When the doctor tells him that what he has confessed would save Oby, Chike narrates everything claiming that he only feared hurting their future. Chris listens in disbelief.

The doctor sarcastically tells Chike of his intention to kill Oby to save his own future without considering Oby. Chike confesses that he loves Oby. Chris reminds Chike of his warning him against Okoro and his crude ways /ideas. Chike says Okoro is not to blame and says he is “solely responsible for everything.” Pg 290

The doctor assures Chike that he is going to jail. Chike is in disbelief at the turn of events. Dr Inyang tells him that she is “compelled by the law to report attempted murder” Pg 291. She accuses Chike of wanting “to kill an innocent girl who loved you unconditionally.”

Note that out of despair, Chike pleads with Dr Inyang not to report him to the police claiming he is the first son of his mother to go the university. The selfishiness of Chike is portrayed. He cares for his own interests. Chike cries for help but Dr Inyang could not hear of it.

Soon a police sergeant comes to take Chike to the police. The doctor instructs him to “charge him with procuring an illegal abortion and attempted murder” Pg291. All his pleas fall on deaf ears. Chike is “led away in the handcuffs towards the police van…” Pg291, claiming his love for Oby.

Oby recovers slowly, Dr Inyang tells her of Chris wanting to see her. She smiles and opens her eyes. Oby is happy to see Chris and shows signs of acknowledging his love for her, Chris confesses his love for her and Oby’s answer is positive.

Later in the night the two sit together holding each other. Oby looks up at the sky and remembers a mad man at the beach who reminded Chike and Oby that “the moon also sets”. She also remembers Psalm 121.” The sun cannot hurt you during the day and the moon cannot hurt you at night. The lord will protect you from all dangers. He will guide your life.”

**Activity**

a) Analyse the character of the following;

i) Oby ii) Okoro iii) Chike iv) Chris v) Dr Inyang

b) Identify and explain the themes portraywd in this chapter.

c) Show the effectiveness of the following narrativetechniques

i) Irony ii) Omniscient narrator iii) Dialogue iv) Setting

d) Show how the moon sets in this chapter.

e) What feelings are aroused in you in this chapter?

**Discusion Questions**

1. With relevant examples from the novel show how the moon sets

2. Show how the university education disrupts the cultural set up in the novel.

3. Discuss the clash of cultures as portrayed in this novel.

4. What lessons do you learn in the novel TheMoon Also Sets?