**Things Fall Apart Notes**

**Chapter 1:**

* Okonkwo = wealthy, respect warrior of Umuofia clan, a lower Nigerian tribe part of a consortium of 9 connected villages, including Okonkwo’s village, Iguedo
* When he was younger he brought honor to village by beating Amalinze the Cat in a wrestling contest
* The cat had been undefeated for 7 years
* Okonkwo – complete opposite to his dead father, Unoka, who feared blood and was always borrowing and losing money so his wife and children often went hungry
* Unoka was, however, a skilled flute player and had a gift and love of language

**Chapter 2:**

* One night, the town crier rings the ogene = gong, and asks all the clansmen to gather in market in morning
* At gathering, Ogbuefi Ezeugo, a well known speaker, announces someone from village of Mbaino murdered the wife of an Umuofia tribesman while she was in their market
* The crowd is in anger and Okonkwo travels to Mbaino to deliver the message that they must hand over to Umuofia a virgin and a young man
* Should Mbaino refuse to do so, the two villages will go to war and Umuofia has a reputation for its skill in war and magic
* Okonkwo chosen to represent his clan because he is the fiercest warrior
* We have learnt about 5 human heads he has taken in battle and on important occasions he drinks palm-wine from the first head that he captured
* Mbaino agrees to Umuofia’s terms
* The elders give the virgin to Ogbuefi Udo as his wife but are not sure what to do with the 15 year old boy, Ikemefuna
* Elders decide to turn him over to Okonkwo for safekeeping and instruction
* Okonkwo tells his first wife to care for Ikemefuna
* Okonkwo is also quite wealthy – he supports three wives and 8 children and each wife has her own hut
* Okonkwo also has a barn full of yams, a shrine for his ancestors and his own hut, called an obi
* Okonkwo fears weakness, a trait which he associates with his father and women
* When Okonkwo was a child, another boy called Unoka agbala, which is used to refer to women as well as men who have not taken a title
* Because he is scared of weakness, Okonkwo is v demanding of his family
* He finds his 12 year old son, Nwoye, to be lazy and so he beats and nags the boy constantly

**Chapter 3:**

* Okonkwo built his fortune as a sharecropper because Unoka was never able to have a successful harvest
* When he visited the Oracle, Unoka was told that he failed because of his laziness
* Ill-fated, Unoka died of a shameful illness, “swelling which was an abomination to the earth goddess.”
* Those suffering from swelling stomachs and limbs are left in the Evil Forest to die so that they do not offend the earth by being buried
* Unoka never held any of the community’s 4 prestigious titles (they must be paid for) and he left many debts unpaid
* Because of this, Okonkwo cannot count on Unoka’s help in building his own wealth and in constructing his obi
* He also has to work hard to make up for his father’s bad strikes against him
* O is successful in exceeding all of the other clansmen as a warrior, a farmer and a family provider
* He begins by asking a wealthy clansman, Nwakibie, to give him 400 seed yams to start a farm
* Because Nwakibie admired Okonkwo’s hard-working nature, he gave him eight hundred
* One of Unoka’s friends gave him another 400 but because of bad droughts and downpours, O could only keep one third of harvest
* Some farmers who were lazier than O put off planting their yams and therefore avoided the grave losses suffered by O and the other industrious farmers
* That year’s devastating harvest left a profound mark on O and for the rest of his life he considers hi survival during that difficult period as proof of his courage
* Although his father tried to offer some words of comfort, O only felt disgust for someone who would turn to words at a time when either action or silence was called for

**Analysis of Chapters 1-3:**

* We are introduced immediately to the complex laws and customs of Okonkwo’s clan and its commitment to harmonious relations
* E.g. the practice of sharing palm-wine and kola nuts is repeated – emphasizes peacefulness of the Igbo
* When Unoka’s resentful neighbor visits him to collect debt, neighbor doesn’t immediately address debt – instead, he and Unoka share kola nut and pray to their ancesters
* Afterwards they converse about community affairs a lot
* The customs regulating social relations show their common interests and culture, diffusing possible tension
* The neighbor further eases the situation by introducing the subject of debt through a series of Igbo proverbs and therefore making use of a shared oral tradition as Okonkwo does when he asks Nwakibie for some seed yams
* Through his emphasis on harmony and complexity of Igbo, Achebe contradicts the stereotypical and European representations of Africans as ‘savages’
* Achebe also challenges these stereotypes through his use of language – writes in his essay on Joseph Conrad’s novella Heart of Darkness, colonialist Europe tended to perceive Africa as a foil or contradiction of Western culture and values, imaging Africa to be an ancient land of silence
* But people of Umuofia speak complex language including proverbs and literary and rhetorical devices
* Achebe’s translation of the Igbo language into English retains cadences, rhythms and speech patterns of the language without making them sound, as Conrad did ‘primitive’
* Okonkwo = protagonist and in addition to situating him within his society, first few chapters show us understanding of his nature
* 🡪 driven by hatred of his father and fear of being like him
* To avoid getting these traits, O acts violently and irrationally so often provokes avoidable fights
* He has a bad temper and rules his household with fear
* O associates Unoka with weakness and therefore femininity
* Because his behavior differs so greatly from his father’s he believes it represents masculinity
* But this strains his relationship with Nwoye and leads him to sin in Chapter 4 by breaking Week of Peace
* O’s rash behavior also causes tension within community because he expresses disrespect for less successful men
* Ikemefuna later shows that masculinity doesn’t need to prevent kindness, gentleness and affection and Nwoye responds more positively to Ikemefuna’s nurturing influence than to Okonkwo’s heavy-handedness
* Despite focus on harmony, Igbo social structure gives a greater chance for mobility than the structure of the colonizers who eventually arrive in Umuofia
* Though ancesters are respected, a man’s worth is determined by his own actions
* In contrast to much of continental European society during the 19th century, which was marked by wealth-based class divisions, Igbo culture values individuals displays of courage and skill, as evidenced by there wrestling competitions
* O is therefore able, to attain position of wealth and prestige even though his father died with no money and no title, of a shameful illness

**Chapter 4:**

* Clan decides Ikemefuna will stay with O
* Ikemefuna = homesick and scared first, but Nwoye’s mother treats him as her own and he is instantly popular amongst O’s children
* Ikemefuna knows many stories unheard by children and has many skills, such as making flutes out of bamboo sticks and setting traps for tiny bush rodents
* To O’s delight he also becomes like an older brother to Nwoye
* O himself grows fond of Ikemefuna but does not show any affection because he thinks this is a sign of weakness
* Ikemefuna soon begins to call O father
* During Week of Peace, Okonkwo notices his youngest wife, Ojiugo, has left her hut to have her hair braided without cooking dinner
* He beats her – shamefully breaking the peace of the sacred week
* Priest demands that O sacrifice a goat and a hen and pay fine of one length of cloth and one hundred cowries
* O truly repents for sin and does orders
* Ogbuefi sees that the punishment for breaking the Peace of Ani has become mild in Umuofia
* He also criticizes another clan’s practice of throwing the bodies of all who die during the Week of Peace into the Evil Forest
* After Week of Peace, villagers begin to clear land in preparation for planting their farms
* Nwoye and Ikemefuna help O prepare seed yams but he finds fault in their work
* He hopes criticism will drive his son to be a great man and farmer
* Ikemefuna settles into O’s family and shares his large stock of folk tales

**Chapter 5:**

* Just before harvest, village holds Feast of the New Yam to give thanks to the earth goddess, Ani
* O doesn’t care for feasts because he considers them times of laziness
* Women thoroughly scrub and decorate their huts, throw away all of their unused yams from the previous year and use cam wood to paint their skin and that of their children with decorative designs
* With nothing to do O becomes angry and comes up with an excuse to beat his 2nd wife, Ekwefi
* He then decides to go hunting with his gun
* O is not a good hunter though and Ekwefi mutters a snide remark under her breath about ‘guns that never shot’
* In a fit of fury, he shoots gun at her but misses
* Annual wrestling contest comes day after feast
* Ekwefi enjoys contest because O won her heart when he defeated the Cat
* He was too poor to pay bride price then but she later ran away from her husband to be with him
* Eznima, Ekwefi’s only child, takes bowl of food to O’s hut
* O is v fond of Ezinma but never shows affection
* Obiageli, the daughter of Okonkwo’s first wife, is already there, waiting for him to finish the meal she brought him
* Nkechi, the daughter of O’s 3rd wife, then bring meal to O

**Chapter 6:**

* Wrestling match takes place on the village ilo – common green
* Drummers line the field and the spectators are so excited that they must be held back
* The wrestling begins with matches between boys ages 15 and 16
* Maduka, son of O’s friend winds one match within seconds
* As wrestling continues, Ekwefi speaks with the priestess of Agbala, the Oracle of the Hills and Caves
* The 2 women are good friends and the woman asks about Ezinma who she calls ‘my daughter’
* They conclude that Ezinma seems to have ‘come to stay’ because she has reached the age of 10

**Analysis of Chapters 4-6**

* Whereas first few chapters highlight the complexity and originality of the Igbo language, in these chapters Achebe points out another aspect of Igbo culture which colonialist Europe tended to ignore: the existence of subcultures within a given African population
* Each clan has its own stories and Ikemefuna is an exciting addition to Umuofia because he brings with him new and unfamiliar folk talks
* With the intro of Ikemefuna, Achebe able to remind us the story we reading is not about Africa but rather about one specific culture within Africa
* Therefore he fights the European tendency to see all Africans as one and the same
* Religious values of the Igbo emphasize shared benefits of peaceful, harmonious relations
* Igbo always consult the Oracle before declaring war because they fear punishment from their gods should they declare war without just cause
* Their religion also emphasizes individual’s obligation to the community
* When O breaks peace the priest scolds him for endangering the entire community by risking the earth deity’s wrath
* He refuses O’s offer of a kola nut, expressing disagreement peacefully
* This avoiding of potential violence on the interpersonal level reflects the culture’s tradition of avoiding violence and war whenever possible
* The belief in the chi – an individual personal god – smooths possible tension in the Igbo community
* Chi allows individuals to attribute some portion of their failures and successes to divine influence and therefore lessens the shame of the former and pride of the latter
* 🡪 Belief encourages respect between individuals and men are therefore able to settle a dispute between O and a man who he insults without resorting to personal attacks
* Although traditional Igbo culture is quite democratic in nature it is also very patriarchal
* Wife-beating is accepted
* Also femininity is associated with weakness whilst masculinity is strength
* No coincidence that word that refers to a titleless man also means ‘woman’
* A man is not ‘manly’ if he cannot control his women
* O often beats his wives and only emotion he lets himself display is anger
* He does not really like feasts because he thinks they involve an idleness which makes him feel emasculated
* O’s frustration at this idleness causes him to act violently and breaks the spirit of the celebration
* O’s very overactive desire to conquer and defeat, also with his hatred of all things feminine, is suggestive of impotence
* Though he has children, O is never compared to anything organic or flourishing, instead Achebe always associates him with fire, which consumes but does not spawn
* The incident which he tries to shoot Ekwefi with his gun is suggestive of impotence
* After Ekwefi hints at O’s inability to shoot properly, O proves this by failing to hit her
* Impotence, whether of not is an actual physical condition for him, seems to be a characteristic which is related to O’s chauvinistic (excessively aggressive) behavior

**Chapter 7:**

* Ikemefuna stays with O’s family for 3 years
* He seems to have ‘kindled a new fire’ in Nwoye, who, much to O’s pleasure, becomes more masculine in his attitude
* O knows his son’s development is a result of Ikemefuna’s influence
* He often invites both into his obi to listen to violent, masculine stories
* Although Nwoye misses his mother’s stories, he knows he pleases his father when he expresses reject for women and their concerns
* To the village’s surprise, locusts descend upon Umuofia
* They come once in a generation and will return every year for 7 years before disappearing for another lifetime
* The village excitedly collects them because they are good to eat when cooked
* Ogbuefi Ezeudu pays O a visit but he will not enter hut to share meal
* Outside he tells O that the Oracle has ordered Ikemefuna to be killed
* He tells O not to take part in the boy’s death, as Ikemefuna calls him ‘father’
* O lies to Ikemefuna telling him he will be returning to his home village
* Nwoye cries
* During long walk home with men of Umuofia, Ikemefuna thinks about seeing his mother
* After many hours of walking, a man attacks him with a machete
* Ikemefuna cries to O for help
* O does not want to look weak to he cuts the boy down
* When O returns home, Nwoye understands that his friend is dead
* Something breaks inside him for the second time in his life
* The first time was when he heard a baby crying in the Evil Forest, where newborn twins are left to die

**Chapter 8:**

* O sinks into depression
* 🡪 Feels weak and he cannot sleep or eat
* When Ezinma brings him his evening she says he must finish everything
* He often wishes she was a boy and he tells himself off for acting like a ‘shivering old woman’
* He visits his friend Obierika and congratulates Maduka on his successful wrestling
* Obierika requests O stay when his daughter’s afmirer arrives to determine a bride-price
* O complains to Obierika that his sons are not manly enough and says he would be happier if Ezinma were a boy because she has ‘the right spirit.’
* He and Obierika then argue over whether it was right of O to take part in Ikemefuna’s death
* O begins to feel slightly better
* He decides that his unhappiness was a product of his idleness – if Ikemefuna had been murdered at a busier time of the year, he, O, would have been completely undisturbed
* Someone arrives to report death of oldest man in next door village
* Strangely, man’s wife died shortly after
* O asks the man’s supposed strength once he learns how attached he had been to his wife
* O sits with Obierika while Obierika bargains his daughter’s bride-price with the family of her admirer
* After, Obierika and his future son-in-law’s relatives talk about the different customs in other villages
* They talk about the practice and skill of tapping palm trees for palm-wine
* Obierika talks about hearing stories of men with skin as white as chalk
* Another man, Machi, pipes in that such a man passes through the village frequently and that his name is Amadi
* Those who know Amadi, a leper, laugh – the polite term for leprosy is ‘the white skin’

**Analysis chapters 7-8:**

* O disobeys authority and advice of a clan elder in killing Ikemefuna
* His actions are too close to killing a relative, which is a grave sin in Igbo culture
* O is so afraid of looking weak that he is willing to come close to violating trival law in order to prove otherwise
* Nobody would have thought O was weak if he had stayed in the village
* In fact, Obierika’s opinion on the matter suggests that doing so would have been considered the more appropriate action
* Instead, O’s actions seriously damage his relationship with Nwoye and also Nwoye’s loyalty to Igbo society
* Nwoye shows promise because he voices chauvinist (excessively patriotic) opinions, but his comments are really aimed at O
* In fact, Nwoye loves women’s stories and is pleased when his mother or O’s other wives ask him to do things for them
* He also seeks comfort in his mother’s hut after Ikemefuna’s death
* Nwoye’s questioning of Ikemefuna’s death and of the practice of throwing away newborn twins is understandable: Obierika, too, frequently questions tradition
* In fact, Obierika refused to accompany the other men to kill Ikemefuna, and O points out that Obierika seems to question the Oracle
* Obierika also has reservations about the village’s practice of tapping trees
* O on the other hand accepts all of his clan’s laws and traditions unquestioningly
* Interestingly, Obierika’s manliness is never questioned
* The fact that Obierika is doubtful of some Igbo practices makes us see Nwoye’s skepticism in a different light
* We understand in Umuofia, manhood doesn’t require belittling (denigration) of women
* Like Nwoye, Ikemefuna is not close to his biological father
* Instead, his primary emotional attachments to his village are to his mother and younger sister
* Although he is not misogynistic (women-hater) like O, Ikemefuna is the perfect clansman
* He eagerly takes part in community celebrations and integrates himself into O’s family
* O and Ikemefuna love one another as a father and son, and Ikemefuna is a good older brother to Nwoye
* Most importantly, he is protective as opposed to critical
* He does not allow Nwoye and his brothers to tell their mother that Obiageli broke her water pot when she was showing off - he does not want her to be punished
* Ikemefuna outlines that manliness does not preclude gentleness and affection
* In calling himself a “shivering old woman,” O associates weakness with femininity
* Although he denigrates his emotional attachment to Ikemefuna, he seeks comfort in his affectionate friendship with Obierika
* Ezinma is also a source of great comfort to him because she understands him and does not address his unhappiness directly; instead, she urges him to eat
* For all of Okonkwo’s chauvinism (excessive patriotism), Ezinma is his favourite child
* O’s frequently spoken wish of desire that Ezinma were a boy seems that he secretly desires affectionate attachment with his actual sons, though he stays clear of admitting this because he fears affection as a weakness
* Important to note O does not wish Ezinma were a boy because she shows desirable masculine traits; instead, it is their bond of sympathy and understanding which he values

**Chapter 9:**

* Ekwefi wakes up O early in morning and says Ezinma = dying
* O discovers (ascertains) that Ezinma has a fever and he tries to collect medicine
* Ezinma is Ekwefi’s only child and the ‘center of her world’
* Ekwefi is very lenient with her – Ezinma calls her by her first name and the dynamic of their relationship approaches equality
* Ekwefi’s 9 other children died when babies
* She developed habit of naming them symbolic things such as “onwumbiko” which means – “Death, I implore you,” and “Ozoemena” which means “May it not happen again”
* O spoke to a medicine man who told him that an ogbanje was tormenting them
* An ogbanje = ‘wicked’ child who continuously re enters the mother’s womb only to die over and over, causing its parents grief
* The medicine man disfigured the dead body of Ekwefi’s 3rd child to discourage the ogbanje’s return
* When Ezinma was born, like most ogbange children, she suffered from many illnesses, but recovered from all of them
* A year before the start, when Ezinma was 9, a medicine man named Okagbue Uyanwa found her iyi-uwa, the small, buried pebble which is the ogbanje’s physical link to the spirit world
* Though the discovery of the iyi-uwa ought to have solved Ezinma’s problems, every illness which Ezinma catches still brings terror to Ekwefi

**Chapter 10:**

* Village holds a ceremonial gathering to direct and deliver justice
* The clan’s ancestral spirits, known as ‘egwugwu’ come from a secret house into which no woman is allowed to step
* The egwugwu take the form of masked men, and everyone suspects that O is among them
* The women and children = filled with fear evern though they sense that the egwugwu are just men pretending to be spirits
* The first dispute which comes before the egwugwu involves an estranged husband and wife
* The husband, Uzowulu, states the 3 brothers of his wife, Mgbafo beat him and took her and children from his but would not return her bride-price
* The woman’s brothers state he is a beastly man who beat their sister remorselessly, even causing her to miscarry one
* They argue that Uzowulu must beg Mgbafo to return to him
* If she agrees, the brothers declare, Uzowulu must understand that they will cut his genitals off if he ever beats her again
* The egwugwu decide in favour of Mgbafo
* 1 elder in the village complains that such a insignificant (trifling) matter should not be brought before them

**Chapter 11:**

* Ekwefi tells Ezinma a story about a greedy, cunning tortoise
* All of birds have been invited to a feast in the sky and Tortoise persuades the birds to lend him feathers to make wings so that he can attend the feast also
* As they travel to the feast, Tortoise also persuades them to take new names for the feast according to custom
* He tells the birds that his name will be ‘all of you’
* When they arrive, Tortoise asks his hosts for who the feast is prepared
* They reply ‘for all of you’
* Tortoise proceeds to eat and drink the best parts of the food and wine
* The birds, angry and disgruntled at receiving only scraps, take back the feathers which they had given to Tortoise so that he is not able to fly home
* Tortoise persuades Parrot to deliver a message to his wife: he wants her to cover their compound with their soft things so he can jump from the sky safely
* Spitefully, Parrot tells Tortoise’s wife to bring out all of the hard things
* When Tortoise jumps, his shell breaks into pieces
* A medicine man puts it together again, which is why Tortoise’s shell is not smooth
* Chielo, in her role as priestess, tells Ekwefi that Agbala, Oracle of the Hills and Caves, wishes to see Ezinma
* O and Ekwefi are scared and try persuade Chielo to wait until morning but Chielo angrily reminds O he must not disobey a god’s will
* Chielo takes Ezinma on her back and forbids anyone to follow
* Ekwefi overcomes her fear of divine punishment and follows anyway
* Chielo, carrys Ezinma and makes her rounds of the 9 villages
* When Chielo enters Oracle’s cave, Ekwefi resolves that is she hears Ezinma crying she will rush in to defend her – even against a God
* O startles he when he arrives at cave with a machete
* He calms her and sits with her
* She remembers when she ran away from her first husband to be O’s wife
* When he answered her knock at his door they did not speak
* He led her to his bed and began to undo her clothing

**Chapters 9-11 Analysis:**

* Relationship between Ekwefi + Ezinma = not typical parent-child relationship – more like one of equals
* Ekwefi receives great deal of comfort and friendship from her daughter and due to losing so many children, she loves and respects daughter all the more
* Although motherhood regarded as the most achievement of a woman’s life, Ekwefi prizes Ezinma so highly, not for the status motherhood brings her, but rather for the love and companionship which she gives
* Between them they have a supportive interaction and this mutually between women receives more focus as the novel progresses
* For example, O’s wives often try and protect one another from his anger
* Before Ezinma’s birth, Ekwefi was not jealous of O’s first wife; she only expressed bitterness of her own misfortune
* While O collects medicine for fever, his other wives try to calm Ekwefi’s fear
* Ekwefi’s friendship with Chielo, too = example of female bonding
* The incident with Chielo creates real dilemma for Ekwefi, whose fear of the possible repercussions of disobeying her shows that Chielo’s role as a priestess is taken seriously – not just ceremonial
* But Ekwefi and O’s love for their child strong enough that they are willing to disobey religious authority
* Though she has lost 9 children, Ekwefi has been made strong by suffering and when she follows Chielo, she chooses her daughter over the gods
* In doing this, Ekwefi contradicts O’s ideas of femininity and shows that strength and bravery are not only masculine attributes
* O also disobeys Chielo and follows her to the caves
* However he is also careful in showing respect to Chielo
* She is a woman, but a priestess, she can order and discipline him openly – her authority is not to be taken lightly
* Unlike narration Chielo’s kidnapping of Ezinma, the narration of the egwugwu ceremony is ironic 🡪 narrator makes many comments to reveal to us that the villagers show that the egwugwu are not real
* E.g. narrator says: “O’s wives, and perhaps other women as well, might have notices that the second wgwugwu had the springy walk of O. And they might have notices that O was not among the titled men and elders who sat…But if they thought these things they kept them within themselves.”
* Narration of the incident of the medicine man and the iyi-uwa seems likewise to contain a trace of irony
* Following discussing the iyi-uwa and egwugwu in a tone which approaches mockery on few occasions, the narrator, remarkably, says nothing which seems to undermine the villager’s perception of the strength of Chielo’s divine power
* The story Ekwefi tells Ezinma about Tortoise and the birds is one of many instances we are exposed to Igbo mythology
* The tale also seems prepare us, like the symbolic locusts which arrive in Chapter 7, for the colonialism which will soon come upon Umuofia
* Tortoise convinces birds to allow him to come with them, even though he does not belong
* He then takes all of their food
* The tale shows 2 different ways of defeating Tortoise: first, birds strip Tortoise of the feathers which they had lent him
* This strategy involves cooperation and unity among the birds
* When they refuse to admit to Tortoise’s desires, Tortoise becomes unable to overpower them
* Parrot’s trick suggests a 2nd course of action: by taking advantage of the position as translator, Parrot outwits Tortoise

**Chapter 12:**

* Chielo exits shirne with Ezinma on her back at dawn
* Not saying anything, she takes Ezinma to Ekwefi’s hut and puts her to bed
* O was v worried night before but did not show it
* He forced himself to wait a bit before walking to Oracle’s shrine
* When he found it empty, he realized that CHielo was making rounds to the nine villages, so he returned home to wait
* In all, he made 4 trips to and from the caves
* By time he left cave for the last time, O was ‘gravely worried’
* O’s family begins to prepare for Obierika’s daughters uri, a marriage ceremony
* Villagers give food to the festivities and Obierika buys a huge goat to present to his future in laws
* Preparations interrupted when the women take an escaped cow and the cow’s owner pays a fine for setting his cows loose on his neighbours’ farms
* The admirer’s family members arrive and settle the clan’s doubts of their generosity by bringing an impressive fifty pots of wine to the celebration
* The women greet the visitors and the men exchange ceremonial greetings
* Feast = success

**Chapter 13:**

* Ogbuefi Ezeudu’s death = announced to surrounding villages with a musical instrument
* O shudders
* Last time Ezeudu visited him was to warn him against taking part in Ikemefuna’s death
* Since Ezeudu was a great warrior who took 3 of the clan’s 4 titles, his funeral is large and extravagant
* Men beat drums and fire their guns
* O’s gun accidently goes off and kills Ezeudu’s 16 year old son
* Killing a clansman is a crime against the earth goddess, so O must make amends by taking his family into exile for 7 years
* O gathers his most valuable belongings and takes his family to his mother’s birth village, Mbanta
* According to the authorities of tradition, the men from Ezeudu’s quarter burn O’s buildings and kill his animals to cleanse the village of his sin
* Obierika questions why a man must suffer so much for an accidental killing
* He then mourns the death of his wife’s twins, who he was forced to throw away, wondering what crime they committed

**Analysis Chapters 12-13:**

* Previous section, we see O behavior the night of incident with Chielo as it appears to Ekwefi: O shows up with his machete and fulfills the role of the strong, manly protector
* However, at beginning of chapter 12, narrator focuses on O’s internal state and we see his true feelings as opposed to his seeming ones
* Because O sees affection as a sign of weakness, he forces himself to wait before following Chielo
* Each time he makes trip to caves and finds her missing, he returns home again to wait
* It is not until 4th trip that he encounters Ekwefi
* O is not the cruel, heartless man which he presents himself to be; instead, he is gravely worried about Ezinma’s welfare
* His exaggerated understanding of manliness – the result of his tragic flaw – prevents his better nature from showing itself truly
* Chielo’s actions make O realize how important his wife and child are to him
* The importance of family (kinship) bonds show itself in the consequences of the breach of such bonds
* When Ikemefuna enters O’s family as a surrogate son, he starts to fix the tension which exists already between O and Nwoye
* 🡪 As a result of O’s difficulty in dealing with the memory of his father
* Ikemefuna is therefore presented as a possible solution to O’s tragic flaw
* O fails to overcome his flaw and in killing the boy who has become his son, he damages his relationship with Nwoye forever
* Also, he seriously damages Nwoye’s respect for and belief in Igbo culture tradition
* O’s accidental killing of Ezeudu’s son seems as more than just coincidence
* We sense it is a form of punishment for his earlier damage to family bonds
* Just before the incident occurs, the one-handed spirit calls out to Ezeudu’s corpse – “If your death was the death of nature, go in peace. But if a man caused it, do not allow him a moment’s rest.”
* Although explosing of O’s gun moments later isn’t evidence that O is in fact responsible for Ezeudu’s death, it appears to suggest O’s killing of Ikemefuna has been hurtful to the well-being and unity of the clain and its traditions
* O’s punishment draws attention to importance of harmonious and strong relations within the community
* Though Obierika questions the harsh punishment which O receives for such an accident, the punishment which O receives for such an accident, the punishment in a way, helps avoid anger, resentment and therefore revenge
* Despite the accidental nature of death of Ezeudu’s son, it is understandable for Ezeudu’s close relatives to be angry with O
* The burning of O’s compound displaces this anger onto his property, whilst O’s exile separates him momentarily from the offended community
* Over 7 years, any left over anger and resentment from Ezeudu’s relatives will dissolve and the offender’s place in community will be restored

**Chapter 14**

* O’s uncle, Uchendu, and rest of his relatives receive him warmly
* They help him build a new area of huts and lend him yam seeds to start a farm
* Soon rain which indicates beginning of farming season arrives, in unusual form of huge drops of hail
* O works hard on new farm but with less enthusiasm than before
* He has worked hard all his life because he wanted “to become one of the lords of the clan,” but now that possibility is gone
* Uchendu recognizes O’s disappointment but waits to speak with him until after his son’s wedding
* O takes part in ceremony
* Next day, Uchendu gathers together his whole family including O
* He points out one of the most common names they give is Nneka, meaning “Mother is Supreme” – a man belongs to his fatherland and stays there when life is good, but he seeks refuge in his motherland when life is harsh
* Uchendu uses analogy of children, who belong to their fathers but look for safety in their mothers’ huts when their fathers beat them
* Uchendu advises O to receive the comfort of the motherland gratefully
* He reminds O that many have been worse than him – Uchendu has lost all but 1 of his 6 wives and buried 22 children
* Even so, Uchendu tells O “I did not hang myself, and I am still alive.”

**Chapter 15**

* During 2nd year of O’s exile, Obierika brings many bags of cowries to O
* He also brings bad news: village named Abame has been destroyed
* Seems a white man arrived in Abame on an ‘iron horse’ (which we discover later is a bicycle) during planting season
* The village elders told their oracle, which predicted that the white man would be followed by others, who would bring destruction to Abame
* Villagers killed the white man and tied his bicycle to their sacred tree to stop it from getting away and telling the white man’s friends
* Later, a group of white men saw the bicycle and guessed their friends fate
* Weeks later, a group of men surrounded Abame’s market and destroyed almost everybody in the village
* Uchendu asks Obierika what the first white man said to the villagers
* He replies that he said nothing or the villagers did not understand
* Uchendu says Abame was foolish to kill a man who did not say anything
* O agrees villagers were stupid, but he believes they should have paid attention to the oracle’s warnings and armed themselves
* The reason for Obierika’s visit and for the bags of cowries which he brings O is business
* Obierika has been selling the biggest of O’s yams and also some his seed yams
* He has given others to sharecroppers for planting
* He plans to continue to bring O the money from his yams until O returns to Iguedo

**Chapter 16:**

* 2 years after his 1st visit (3 years after O’s exile), Obierika returns to Mbanta
* He has decided to visit O because he has seen Nwoye with some of the Christian preachers who have arrived
* Most of the other believers, Obierika finds, have been efulefu men who don’t have a status and who are generally ignored by the clan
* O will not talk about Nwoye but Nwoye’s mother tells Obierika some of the story
* The narrator tells the story of Nwoye’s change: 6 missionaries, headed by a white man, travel to Mbanta
* White man speaks to the village through an interpreter who we later learn is calld Mr Kiaga
* The interepreter’s local language encourages cheerful laughter because he always uses Umuofia’s word for ‘my buttocks’ when he means ‘myself’
* He tells the villagers they are all brothers and sons of God
* He accuses them of worshipping false gods of wood and stone
* The preachers have come, he tells audience, to persuade the villagers to leave their false gods and accept the one true God
* The villagers do not understand how the Holy Trinity can be accepted as one God
* They also cannot see how God can have a son and not a wife
* Many of them laugh and leave after the interpreter asserts that Umuofia’s gods are incapable of doing any harm
* The preachers then burst into a biblical song
* O thinks these newcomers must be insane, but Nwoye instantly captivated
* The ‘poetry of the new religion’ seems to answer his questions about the deaths of Ikemefuna and the twin newborns, soothing him ‘like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry palate.”

**Analysis chapters 14-16:**

* O’s exile forces him into his motherland
* He does not deal well with his exile because he is so focused on being as successful and influential as his father was poor and powerless
* His first lack of gratitude toward his mother’s relatives is an offense of Igbo cultural values
* His exile also upsets him as he is forced to spend time in a ‘womanly’ place
* He remains unwilling to admit to, or come to terms with his feminine personality
* Unoka’s words about the bitterness of failing alone are important considering O’s present situation
* Like Unoka, Uchendu reminds O that he does not suffer alone
* Uchendu mourns the loss of 5 of his wives, honestly saying his strong attachment to the women who have shared his life and given him children
* He talks about is remaining wife who is a young girl who ‘does not know her left from her right’
* Youth, beauty and sexual attractiveness are not the only things one should value in a wife he argues
* Uchendu also values wisdom, intelligence and experience in a wife
* Each and every death has caused him pain
* Although we would not know it from O, a father grieves for lost children just like a mother
* The introduction of the European preachers is not shown as a tragic event – it contains some comical elements
* E.g. the villagers mock the interpreter’s local language
* They neither see the preachers as a threat or react violently like the village of Abame, even though the preachers call their gods ‘false’ outright
* The preachers also do not force Christrianity on the villagers
* Taking into account emphasis which Igbo place on thinking carefully before acting violently, O’s belief that the people of Abame should have armed themselves and killed the white men demonstrates O’s rash and violent nature which seems to disagree with fundamental Igbo values
* Throughout TFA, Igbo customs and social institutions emphasize the wisdom of seeking a peaceful solution to conflict before a violent solution
* Uchendu says this social value when he states the killing of the first white man was stupid for the villagers were not even aware of what the man’s intentions were
* The language which Achebe uses to descrive the pleasure which Nwoye finds in Christianity reflects Umuofia’s seeming need to be calmed physically as well as spiritually
* Achebe sets up, from the beginning of the novel, a system of images which focus attention on both the dry land and also the tense atmosphere in the village
* The image of the words of the hymn as raindrops relieving Nwoye’s ‘parched soul’ refers not only to relief from the hot, desertlike hear with which Africa is often associated with but also the act of bringing Nwoye out of his supposed ignorance and into enlightenment through Christianity
* It begins to quench his thirst for answers which Igbo religion has not been able to provide him

**Chapter 17:**

* Preachers ask for a piece of land to build a church
* Village leaders and elders offer them a plot in the Evil Forest, saying that the preachers won’t accept it
* To the elder’s surprise, the preachers are very happy with the offer
* However elders are sure that the forest’s sinister spirits and forces will kill the preachers within days
* To their surprise nothing happens and the church soon wins its first 3 changes
* The villagers point out that occasionally their ancestral spirits allow an offending man a grace period of 28 days before they punish his sins but they are completely astounded when nothing happens after 28 days
* The church therefore wins more converts, including a pregnant woman, Nneka
* Her 4 previous pregnancies produced twins and her husband and family are not sad to see her leave
* One of O’s cousins notices Nwoye amongst the Christians and informs O
* When Nwoye returns, O chokes him by the neck, demanding to know where he has been
* Uchendu orders him to let go of the boy
* Nwoye leaves his father’s compound and travels to school in Umuofia to learn reading and writing
* O wonders how he could ever have fathers such an womanish/effeminate weak son

**Chapter 18:**

* Church wins many converts from the efulefu (titleless, worthless men)
* One day, many outcasts come to church
* Many of the converts move away from them, though they don’t leave the service
* Afterwards, there is an uproar, but Mr Kiaga firmly refuses to deny the outcasts membership to the church
* He argues they will not die if they cut their hair or break any of the other bans which have been imposed upon them
* Mr Kiaga’s firm conviction persuades most of the other converts not to reject their new faith simply because the outcasts have joined them
* The osu soon become the most devoted members of the church
* To clan’s disbelief, one boasts that he killed the sacred royal python
* O urges Mbanta to drive Christians out with violence, but rulers and elders decide to exclude them instead
* O bitterly says that this is a ‘womanly’ clan
* After announcing new policy of exclusion, the elders learn man who boasted of killing snake has died of illness
* The villagers trust in their gods is thereby reinstates and they attempt to exclude the converts

**Chapter 19:**

* O’s 7 years of exile in Mbanta coming to an end
* Before he returns to Umuofia, he provides large feast for his mother’s relatives
* He is grateful to them but secretly regrets missed opportunity to have further raised his status and influence amongst his own clan
* He also regrets having spent time with such un-masculine people
* At the feast, 1 man says he is surprised O has been so generous with his food and another praises O’s devotion to the relative bond
* He also expresses concern for younger generation because Christianity is winning people away from their families and traditions

**Analysis chapters 17-19:**

* Nwoye = drawn to Christianity because it seems to answer his long-held doubts about his native religion especially abandonment of twin newborns and Ikemefuna’s death
* Also, Nwoye feels himself exiled from his society because of his disbelief in its laws and the church offers refuge to those whose society has cast out
* The church’s value system will allow twins to live, for example, which offers comfort to the pregnant woman who has had to go through the casting away to die of her four sets of newborn twins
* Also, men without titles turn to Christianity to find confirmation of their individual worth
* The osu are able to dispose of others perceptions of them as members of an excluded class and enter the church as the equals of other converts
* O, on other hand, has good reason to reject Christianity
* Should Mbanta not drive the preachers away, his killing of Ikemefuna would lose part of its religious justification
* The damage to his relationship with Nwoye also seems more pointless than before
* Both matters become his mistake rather than the result of divine will
* Also, men of high status such as O see the church as a threat because it undermines the cultural value of their accomplishments
* Their titles and their positions as religious authorities and clan leaders lose force and prestige if men of lower status are not there – the great cannot be measured against the worthless if the worthless have disappeared
* Nwoye’s conversion really upsets O
* Although he has always been harsh with his son, O still believes Nwoye’s potential to become a great clansman
* Nwoye’s rejection of Igbo values, however, strikes a terrible blow to O’s hopes for him
* Additionally, Nwoye’s actions undermine O’s own status and prestige
* It is, as O thinks at the end of the Chapter 17, as though all of O’s hard work to distance himself from the legacy of his father has been destroyed
* He sighs and thinks to himself: “Living fire begets cold impotent ash.”
* Despite the challenges the church represents, Mbanta is committed to peace and remains tolerant of the church’s presence
* Even with the converts’ obvious disrespect of Umuofia’s customs – rumour has it that a convert has killed a royal python – the clan leaders vote for a peaceful solution, deciding to ostracize rather than attack the Christians
* O is not happy with their decision and suggests a violent reaction
* His mentality somewhat ironic – he believes the village should act against its cultural values in order to preserve them
* The arrival of white colonists and their religion weakens the kinship bonds so central to Igbo culture
* Ancestral worship plays an important role in Igbo religion and conversion to Christianity involves a partial rejection of the Igbo structure of family ties
* The Christians tell the Igbo that they are all brothers and sons of God, replacing the literal ties of kinship with a metaphorical kinship structure through God
* The overjoyed response of a preacher to Nwoye’s interest in attending school in another village – “Blessed is he who forsakes his father and his mother for my sake” – shows that the Christian church obviously recognizes Igbo kinship bonds as the central obstacle to the success of its preachers
* Achebe doesn’t show an evident division of the white religion as evil and the Igbo religion as good
* All the time, the descriptions of many of the village’s ceremonies and rituals have been ironic/ insincere
* But the Christian preachers increasingly win converts just by pointing out the delusion of Igbo beliefs – for example, those about outcasts
* When the outcasts cut their hair with no bad consequences, many villagers come to believe that the Christian God is more powerful than their own
* Achebe himself is the son of Nigerian Christians and this situation is thought of in Chapter 17 when the narrator points out O’s worry: “Suppose when he died all his male children decided to follow Nwoye’s steps and abandon their ancestors?”

**Chapter 20:**

* O has planned since his first year in exile to rebuild his complex on a larger scale and he also wants to take two more wives and get titles for his sons
* He has managed to recover from Nwoye’s disgraceful departure, but he still is in regret that Ezinma is a girl
* He asked that she wait to get married in Umuofia, once his exile is over, to which she said yes
* She even persuaded her sister, Obiageli, to do the same
* O hopes to attract interest when he returns with 2 beautiful, marriageable daughters
* But, after 7 years, Umuofia has changed
* The church has grown in strength and the white men treat the villagers to their legal system and rules of government
* They = harsh and arrogant, O cannot believe his clan has not driven out white men and their church
* Sad, Obierika explains church has weakened the family ties and it is too late to drive the white men out
* Many of the clansmen are now on the white man’s side
* O sees that the white man is very intelligent because he came in peace and seems to have only benevolent (kind) interests in the Africans, who therefore permitted him to stay
* They talk about the story of Aneto, who was hanged by the government after he killed a man with whom he has an argument
* Aneto has been unsatisfied with the new court’s ruling on the dispute because it ignored tradition
* Obierika and O conclude their discussion on a fatalistic note, sitting in silence

**Chapter 21:**

* Many people in Umuofia aren’t that happy with white men’s influence on their community
* They have set up trading posts and money is flowing into the village
* Mr Brown, the white preacher, prevents his flock from alienating and annoying the clan
* He and Akunna, one of the clan’s leaders, meet often to debate and discuss their respective religious views
* Akunna explains the clan also only has one God – Chukwu – he created the world and other gods
* Mr Brown replies saying there are no other gods
* He points to a carving and says it is not a god instead it is a piece of wood
* Akunn agrees it is a piece of wood, but wood created by Chukwu
* Neither changes the other, but each leaves with a greater understanding of the other’s faith
* Mr Brown builds hospital and a school
* He pleads villagers to send their children to school and warns them if they don’t, strangers who can read and write will come to rule over them
* His arguments are quite effective and his hospital wins praise for its treatments
* When O first returns to Umuofia, Mr Brown goes to tell him that Nwoye is in a training college for teachers
* O chases him away with the threats of violence
* Not long after this, Mr Brown’s health starts to fail and sad, he leaves his flock
* O’s daughters attract many admires, but to his great disappointment, his clan takes no particular interest in his return
* The ozo initiation ceremony occurs only once in 3 years meaning he must wait 2 years to initiate his sons
* He deeply regrets the changes in his once warlike people

**Analysis Chapter 20 and 21:**

* O’s status as a warrior and farmer and his clan’s view of him have changed since his exile
* His increasing loss of power and status makes him highly anxious
* Any remaining doubt that O is slightly crazy is put to an end when we learn he has been fantasizing and planning for a triumphant return to his village since his departure
* O has great expectations for himself – in chapter 20 – we are told “se saw himself taking the highest title of the land.”
* Though O still wishes Ezinma = boy, she remains a comfort to him throughout his troubles
* Ironically, she understands the most about the dilemma of weakened manhood which her father faces
* She sees how important her marriage is to O’s position in the community and she has a substantial influence over her sister who quickly agrees to postpone her marriage as well
* After Nwoye leaves, O shows no sign of changing his practice of lecturing his sons about the rash and violent nature of true masculinity, showing his continued refusal to accept fact that aggressiveness and thoughtfulness aren’t gender defined and mutually exclusive traits
* Already having dealt with the missionaries in Mbanta, Okonkwo is now forced to deal with them in his own village
* However, Mr Brown – their leader – is far more enlightened than the average white colonitst
* But he doesn’t really understand Igbo beliefs he is still capable of respecting them and he does not want his crowd to alienate the clan
* In rare occurrence of cross-cultural understanding, he seems to share clan’s value of peaceful, harmonious relations and he debates religion with Akunna without insults or violence
* His influence is largely kind and Achebe uses Mr Brown as a foil for the preacher who ultimately takes his place, the more revolutionary Reverend Smith
* TFA is not biased in its portrayal of colonialism
* It presents economic benefits of cross culture contact and shows villagers’ delight in the hospital’s treatmet of illnesses
* Mr Brown = sympathetic as he urges Igbo to send their children to school because he knows the colonial government will rob the Igbo of self-government if they do not know the language
* 🡪 He urges Igbo to adapt so that they won’t lose all independence
* Even so, it is difficult to view colonialism in a positive light as suddenly the Igbo must relate to the colonial government on European terms
* The story of Abame and discussion of new legal systems shows how different the European frame of reference is from that of the egwugwu
* The colonial government pushes individuals according to European cultural and religious values
* E.g. without first making an effort to understand the cultural and religious tradition behind the practice, the government pronounces the abandonment of newborn twins a punishable crime
* End of chapter 20 – Obierika points out there is no way the white man will be able to understand Umuofia’s customs without understanding its anguage
* This idea mirrors one of Achebe’s purposes in writing TFA – book serves not only to remind west that Africa has language and culture but also to provide an understanding of Igbo culture through language
* 🡪 Achebe shows us the extent to which cultural and linguistic structures and practices are intertwined and he is able to re-create in English the cadences (rhythm), images and speech of the Igbo people
* By the time things begin to ‘fall apart’ it becomes clear that what the colonialists have unraveled is the complex Igbo culture

**Chapter 22:**

* Reverend James Smith, a strict and intolerant man, replaces Mr Brown
* He demands obedience to the letter of the Bible and doesn’t approve of Mr Browns tolerant and unorthodox policies
* The more passionate converts are relieved to be free of Mr Brown’s policy of control and restriction
* One such convert, Enoch, tries to unmask an egwugwu during the annual ceremony to honor the earth deity, an act which is = to killing an ancestral spirit
* The next day, the egwugwu burn Enoch’s compound to the ground
* They then gather in front of church to confront Reverend Smith and his fellow Christians
* They tell Christians that they only wish to destroy the church in order to cleanse their village of Enoch’s horrible sin
* Smith replies that he will stand his ground
* He forbids them to touch the church but his interpreter alters Smith’s statement for fear that the unvarnished truth will be too harsh and he will suffer as the messenger of bad news
* He tells the egwugwu that Smith demands they leave the matter in his hands
* They ignore Smith’s orders and burn the church

**Chapter 23:**

* O = almost happy again even though his clan did not agree to kill the Christians or drive them away
* Even so, he and rest of villagers are on their guard and for next 2 days they arm themselves with guns and machetes
* District Commissioner returns from his tour and requests that the leaders of Umuofia meet with him
* They go, taking only their machetes because guns would be ‘unseemly’
* The commissioner talks to them in patronizing terms and says they should discuss the church’s burning ‘as friends’
* No sooner after they put their machetes on the floor a group of soldiers surprises them
* They are handcuffed and put in jail for many days where they suffer insults and physical abuse
* A type of bail is set at 2 hundred bags of cowries
* The court messengers tell the people of Umuofia that they must pay a fine of 250 bags of cowries otherwise their leaders will be hanged – by upping the price these messengers will make a profit as negotiators
* The town crier announces an emergency village meeting
* Even Ezinma returns home from her 28 day visit to her future in laws
* The next morning they decide to collect cowries necessary to pay the fine

**Analysis of Chapters 22-23:**

* Reverend Smith = causes a lot of conflict between church and clan with his refusal to understand and respect traditional Igbo culture
* Mr Brown, by contrast, is more lenient with the converts’ retention of some of their old beliefs and he does not draw as clear a line between the converts and the Igbo community
* Smith, however, demands a complete rejection of the converts’ old religious beliefs
* The text ironically comments that he ‘sees things as black and white’
* Whilst on the one hand this comment refers simply to an inability to grasp the gradations in a given situation, it also refers to race relations and colonial power
* Enoch is a double for O, although they have different beliefs
* But they are similar in temperament and each man rebels against the practices and legacies of his father
* Like O, Enoch feels above all others in his tradition and he also feels contempt for them as he imagines that every sermon is ‘preached for the benefit of his enemies’ and in the middle of church, he gives knowing looks whenever he feels that his superiority is being affirmed
* Most important, in his blind and unthinking support of Christianity, he allows violent desires to take over just as O often does
* O desire to react in violence to the Christian church is not only motivated by a desire to keep his clan’s cultural traditions
* He has been fantasizing for a long time about making an entrance with his return to his village but the church has changed things so much that his return fails to incite the interest which he has anticipated
* He has also hoped that his daughters marriages would aid in bringing him glory but his daughters’ admirers brought him no attention in Umuofia
* The opportunity to take back being a warrior represents O’s last chance to take back some of his former glory
* His motivations for wanting revenge, including being humiliated in jail, are deeply personal

**Chapter 24:**

* After release, the prisoners return to village with worrying looks that the women and children of the village are scared to greet them
* The whole village is overcome with a tense and unnatural silence
* Ezinma takes O some food and she and Obierika notice whip marks on her back
* The village crier announces another meeting for next morning and clan is filled with sense of anxiety
* At sunrise, villagers gather
* O has barely slept due to anticipation and excitement
* He has thought about it and decided on a course of action which he will stick to despite what the village decides
* He takes out his war dress and assesses his smoked skirt, tall feather headgear and shield in perfect condition
* He recalls his former glories in battle and thinks how the nature of man has changed
* Meeting is packed with men from all of clan’s 9 villagers
* First speaker whines about the damage which the white man and his church has done to the clan and he expresses regret that the treating of disrespect to the god and ancestral spirits
* He reminds clan that it could have to spill clansmen’s blood if it enters into battle with the white men
* In the middle of speech, 5 court messengers approach crowd
* Their leader orders meeting to end
* No sooner have the words left the messenger’s mouth than O kills him with 2 strokes of his machete
* An uproar rises in crowd, but not the kind O had hoped for
* 🡪 The villagers allow the messengers to escape and bring the meeting to a conclusion
* Someone even asks why O killed the messenger
* Understanding that his clan will not go to war, O wipes his machete free of blood and leaves

**Chapter 25:**

* When District Commissioner arrives at O’s compound, he finds a small group of men sitting outside
* He asks for O and the men tell him he is not home
* The commissioner asks another time and then Obierika repeats his first answer
* The commissioner begins to get angry and threatens to imprison them if they do not help
* Obierika agrees to lend him O in return for some help
* Although the commissioner does not understand this exchange, he follows Obierika and a group of clansmen
* They proceed to a small bush behind O’s compound, where they discover O’s body dangling from a tree
* 🡪 He has hanged himself
* Obierika explains that suicide is a grave sin and his clansmen may not touch O’s body
* Though they have sent for strangers from a distant village to help take the body down, they also ask the commissioner for help
* He asks why they cannot do it themselves and they explain that the body is now evil and only strangers can touch it
* They are not allowed to bury it but strangers can
* Obierika shows an uncharacteristic flash of temper and lashes out at commissioner, blaming him for O’s death and praising his friend’s greatness
* Commissioner decides to accept the request but leaves and orders his messengers to do the work
* As he leaves, he congratulates himself for having added his store of knowledge of African customs
* The commissioner, who is in the middle of writing a book about Africa, imagines that the circumstances of O’s death will make an interesting paragraph or 2, is not an entire chapter.
* He has already chosen title – The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger

**Analysis Chapters 24 and 25:**

* It is in O’s nature to act rashly and his slaying of the messenger amounts to an instinctive act of self-preservation
* Not to act would be to reject his values and traditional way of life
* He cannot allow himself or the clan to be viewed as cowardly
* There is definitely an element of self-destructiveness in this act, a kind of death which O embraces because the alternative is to submit to a world, law and new order with which he finds himself inexorably at odds
* Unoka’s words regarding the bitterness of failing alone come to have real significance in O’s life
* In fact, they can be seen as a passive foreshadowing of the bitter losses which overtake O despite his efforts to distance himself from his father’s model of irresponsibility
* He values his personal success and status over the survival of the community and, having risen to the top of the clan’s economic and political heap alone, he fails alone
* O’s lack of concern for the fate of his community is displayed when, before the clan-wide meeting, he does not bother to exchange the greetings with anybody
* He is not interested in the fate of anyone other than himself
* Despite his great success and prestige, he dies in shame like his titleless, penniless father
* The solitude persists even after life ends as the supposed taking over of his body by evil spirits makes his clan unable to handle his burial
* A way of understanding O’s suicide is as the result of a self-fulfilling forecast regarding his fear of failure
* He is so afraid of ending up precisely the way that he does end up that he brings about his own end in the worst manner possible
* No one forces his hand when he slays the messenger and instead, the act amounts to a desperate attempt to reassert manhood
* The great tragedy of the situation is that O ignores far more effective but less masculine ways to resist the colonialists
* Ultimately, O’s sacrifice seems empty and pointless
* Novels’ ending – dark and ironic
* District Commisioner = a pompous man who believes to understand indigenous African cultures
* Achebe uses commissioner to demonstrate the inaccuracy of accounts of Africa such as Joseph Conrad’s
* The commissioner’s misinterpretations and the degree to which they are based upon his own shortcomings are evident
* He comments, for example, on the villagers’ ‘love of superfluous words,’ attempting to mock their language
* Achebe’s novel seeks to in part provide an answer to stereotypes
* O is not perfect, one can argue that his chi is to blame and his tragedy is of his own making
* But as a societal tragedy, TFA places no blame on Igbo people for the colonialism which they were exposed to