Student One>>>(Kathrin Hoque)

Heart of Darkness is a novel of fantastical origins. As the narrator tells the story of his adventures to a group of sailors aboard a shipped docked in London, he reminisces on a man named Mr. Kurtz saying, “I looked at him, lost in astonishment. There he was before me, in motley, as though he had absconded from a troupe of mimes, enthusiastic, fabulous. His very existence was improbable, inexplicable, and altogether bewildering. He was an insoluble problem. It was inconceivable how he had existed, how he had succeeded in getting so far, how he had managed to remain” (Conrad). In this portrayal, the successful European businessman is someone to be looked up to and respected. Conversely, in Things Fall Apart, the author portrays the invading Europeans by saying, “The missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. There was a source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan” (Achebe). In the second novel, the perspective is from that of an African, and the white Europeans are portrayed in a very different light. Instead of being idolized and looked upon with reverence, they are seen as the invading people who bring their religion and culture in an aggressive and unwelcome way. This portrayal is symbolic of the African’s struggle with colonialism. For hundreds of years, African peoples were subjugated by Europeans eager to exploit their lands natural resources as their expanded their empires. How the Europeans were seen depended greatly on the perspective from which one had, whether it be European or African.

In “An Image of Africa: Racism in the Heart of Darkness” the author is keenly aware of western prejudices of Africans. During one encounter, the author recounts one American man saying, “It always surprised him, he went on to say, because he never had thought of Africa as having that kind of stuff” (Achebe, An Image of Africa: Recism in the Heart of Darkness). The underlying message behind this work is to convey that the Heart of Darkness was written from a racist perspective. Given that Heart of Darkness is written from the perspective of a white tradesman, the author does not have to stretch in order to find examples of bias and racism within the work. Look no further than the main character, contrasted to the local populace, and one can see the author’s perspective (Conrad). Contrast this to the perspective of Things Fall Apart, where the author writes from the perspective of the local populace, and the difference is truly stark (Achebe, Things Fall Apart).

Student Two>>>(ESTARLIN CRUZ NUNEZ)

How do the Christian missionaries change Igbo people? and, is Okonkwo heroic?

The Christian missionaries were changing many people's mind in Mbanta. People with low status mostly known as minorities were the first clans in converts. The Christian missionaries' promises fill a blank in the lives of such converts. The Christian song was very motivational for the Igbo people, for example, "the silent and dusty chords in the heart of an Ibo man" (Achebe 16). Ibo is the word on the text, but the new version of spelling is Igbo. In Christianity, Nwoye discovers satisfaction for things that have long disturbed him. In any case, religion additionally gave him an approach to rebel against his dad. Furthermore, the social impacts of Christianity were as awful as the Igbo fear. The new religion undermines the chains of command of their culture. According to Achebe, the new religion gave hope to individuals who suffered under Igbo law. In addition, Achebe mentioned that a white Christian man said "We have been sent by this great god to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn him so that you may be saved when you die" (Achebe 16). Those were other ways to attract more people to follow the new religion.

Okonkwo was known to be a hero, because he tried to follow the values of his culture, which he was part of it. He demonstrated loyalty to his tribesmen by displaying his cultural values, even when his tribesmen were against his feelings. He also demonstrated that he did not wanted to be part of the new religion like many other people in his clan. A tragic hero holds a position of power and prestige, chooses his course of action, possesses a tragic flaw, and gains awareness of circumstances that lead to his fall. Finally, Okonkwo was also called the tragic hero, since he killed one fellow clansman by accident. This situation caused him to change his status from hero of the clan to being the black sheep of the clan (Korang 14).