PROVERBS, ADAGES, AND FOLKTALES

HOW ACHEBE USES TRADITION IN HIS NOVEL
a few definitions...

**PROVERB:**
- a short pithy saying in common use, a concise sentence, which is held to express some truth;
- a wise saying or aphorism

**FOR EXAMPLE:**
- All’s fair in love and war
- Do or do not; there is no try
- Only the good die young
- Dead men tell no tales

**ADAGE:**
- a traditional saying expressing a common experience or observation;
- a principle bequeathed, or handed down, from the past; becomes universal through long use

**FOR EXAMPLE:**
- Birds of a feather flock together
- Better safe than sorry
- Don’t judge a book by its cover
a few more definitions...

**FOLKTALES:**
- a tale or legend originating and traditional among a people or folk, especially one forming part of the oral tradition of the common people.
- author is usually anonymous; is founded in superstition or religion, and often makes some sort of commentary about life

**EXAMPLES:**
- Paul Bunyan
- The “Trickster” or Coyote of Native American lore
- Rumplestilskin
- Bloody Mary, or the Killer in the Back Seat
- Hansel and Gretel

**ARCHETYPE:**
- a typical character, an action or a situation that seems to represent such universal patterns of human nature;
- the initial version, or original model, that molds a text and its characters
- examples: the hero/heroine; the outcast; the underdog; the wise sage
- also: the “Flood” story; the trials of a hero; the reluctant killer; a journey home

**SYMBOL:**
- something which is itself yet stands for or means something else;
- tends to be singular and fixed within the text
- examples: the bunnies, a bald eagle, the grecian urn
a few proverbs and adages...
and my favorite...
Unlike this saying, what similarities did the other sayings have in common? What adds to their credibility?

(not a proverb. or adage.)
what does this folktale tell us? what makes it significant?

Why do we have folktales and oral traditions?

Why do we pass these down from generation to generation?

Examine for characters, setting, plot, symbols and archetypes, to try and make meaning of the tale.
WHY WOULD ACHEBE EMPLOY SUCH SAYINGS AND STORIES? WHAT PURPOSE DO THEY SERVE?

It takes a whole village to raise a child.

~African Proverb ("Ora na azu nwa"

from Igbo, Nigeria)