

Question 1: *Presentation of femininity (women) in Things Fall Apart.*

Answer: Things Fall Apart highlights the patriarchal nature of the Ibo community. Okonkwo continuously tries to avoid feminine qualities. Weakness, laziness, cowardice, failure, poverty, emotions are presented as qualities of women. These qualities makes Unoka an 'agbala' in Umuofia. Thus the Umufoia society gives women a secondary position. For this, during the wrestling match, women are allowed to sit on the rear rows. Wife beating is quite normal. This is shown through the beating of Ojiugo by Okonkwo.

The Umuofia culture attaches femininity to many other aspects. Yam is a male crop because it requires hard work. Women grow only female crops. Maze, melons and beans are some female crops for these people. Stories of violence, fight and bloodshed are male stories. Okonkwo narrates such stories to

Nwoye. But Nwoye is more interested in female stories ---- stories with a moral.

However, a careful reading of the novel show that women hold great strength in this society. People's lives are controlled by a Goddess --- Ani, the earth goddess.

Okonkwo's second wife Ekwefi reveals how women enjoy freedom in this society. Ekwefi is greatly impressed by Okonkwo's victory over Amalinze. But she is not able to marry him because Okonkwo has not been rich enough to pay the bride price. But later Ekwefi leaves her husband and becomes Okonkwo's second wife. The Umuofia clan also allows a woman to leave her husband. The Egwugwus delivers a judgement against a man who is found torturing his wife. Nneka shows enough courage to convert to Christianity to save her child.

Thus women and femininity occupy a core space in Umuofia culture. But Oknokwo is

never ready to look weak or unsuccessful. This remains a cause of his tragedy.

Question 2: *The title of Things Fall Apart.*

Answer: The title Things Fall Apart is taken from W B Yeats' The Second Coming. As the phrase suggests, the novel describes the disintegration of a culture under colonial invasion. Achebe's title foreshadows the events presented in the novel.

The novel describes how the culture of Umuofia, Mbanta and Abame collapse as an alien culture takes control. Things fall apart for this family at the individual level, within the family and within the Ibo people. The individual fall of Okonkwo is almost like that of a tragic hero. He rises to power and fame through hard work. But he has to leave everything and shift to Mbanta. Later he faces humiliation when his head is shaved off. He

opposes the final destruction of self respect by committing suicide.

Relationships within the family also fall apart. Nwoye gradually gets alienated from the father. The order from the Oracle takes away Ikemefuna. Nwoye cannot accept the tradition that commits murders like that of Ikemefuna. He finds solace in the new religion and Nwoye becomes Isaac.

Initially the people of Umuofia is united. People later are not able to resist outside aggression. Obierika highlights this when he says that their own brothers have turned against them. The white men have cut the thing that has held them together. Obierika says that all of them have fallen apart. The new religion, administration and economy of the colonizer have supplanted the values of the Ib people. In this way, the title highlights the effect of colonization on the native people.

Question 3: *Post-colonialism in Things Fall Apart.*

Answer: Post-colonial literature refers to the writing which display an impact of colonization. Resistance description is one feature of such writings. The writer gives description of indigenous people, places and practices. In *Things Fall Apart*, the Ibo people have a rich culture, religion and administrative set up. Umuofia is an agriculture based society. People's lives are connected to cultural events like Week of Peace or Feast of New Yam. Religion is a great force in the live of these people. Ani, the earth goddess and Agbala, the oracle provide them necessary guidance. A thriving society is presented in the novel. This makes the novel a post colonial text.

Post colonial texts use the language of the colonizers to present native identity. The colonizers language is reshaped to present native values. In *Things Fall Apart* native

terms, names and language is used for this. In Chapter two, the 'ogene' of the town crier booms 'gome, gome, gome, gome'. In the meeting, Ezeugo bellows four time 'UmuofiaKwenu' and ten thousand men answer 'Yaa'. Such descriptions make Things Fall Apart a post colonial text.

The novel includes oral poetry, native story telling and dramatic performances. Such performances are seen during the ritual of Obierika's daughter's engagement ceremony or 'uri'. People engage in a short performance. Each statement is followed by a chorus' –'Ee-e-e'. The ritual ends with the song 'if I hold her hand, she says 'don't touch.' All these make the novel a post colonial text.