

Citizenship and the community



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Name: Course: Lecturer: Date: Citizenship and the Community Chinua

Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" is the story of Okonkwo, a man adamant in retaining his own culture, and doing everything he can to oppose change, including murder.

Okonkwo is the protagonist in the story. He is the typical African leader, who has shown his bravery and courage in war, and who owns substantial wealth. He is well known and respected within his community, and in the surrounding villages. In an attempt to differentiate and distinguish himself from his father, who was a weak and not very wise man, Okonkwo develops a macho attitude. He does things that are contrary to his culture, and he rejects the advice of the wise men in the village.

Because of his stubborn nature, Okonkwo refuses to accept the changes that are happening to his community once the white man arrives, and this contributes to his shameful end through suicide. These changes include the establishment of a government according to white man's standards, and the introduction of Christianity and education, changes that contribute to the problems that the community is facing. The community in Umuofia faces the challenges and struggles of maintaining and upholding their traditions, while at the same time accepting the changes that the white man brings to the land. This is the greatest challenge facing the community, and it is especially hard for those who do not have an open mind, and who are not ready to accept the changes. When the missionaries build a church on cursed land in the evil forest, the community expects trouble to befall them, but when nothing happens they begin to wonder about the magic of the white man. They perceive that the white man's ways are to some extent better than

their own ways, and that the white man's spirit or magic is more powerful than theirs are. This conviction compels some of them to convert to Christianity.

The people have accepted Christianity, which advocates serving God and Jesus, yet they cannot stop the practice of revering their ancestral spirits. Some of them struggle to practice their new Christian lifestyle while at the same time hold their age-old traditions. The white man has also brought changes that have affected the governing system in Umuofia and other villages. While the missionaries are responsible for the introduction of Christianity to the people, the colonizers are largely responsible for the changes in government. Both groups have ensured the spread of education in the land. This education has changed the people's perception of their traditions. Those who have been educated have neglected their own traditions and customs, and they have accepted the introduced changes.

The system has introduced new rules of governance, which include the courts, as opposed to the council of elders, and the prison, which is opposed to traditional punishment such as fines. People like Okonkwo struggle with these changes. Okonkwo does not understand why the people have to accept these changes so quickly. He does not understand why the white man brings in his own rules, yet he is the foreigner in the land. The black people in the south suffer many challenges, most of which have to deal with racial discrimination and oppression. However, they do not seem to have a defined way of dealing with their problems. Some of the people have realized that they have to fight for their freedom. This has caused division among the black community in the south.

In his letter from prison, Martin Luther King Jr., addresses these issues. He addresses the clergymen, who had written to him accusing him of being an extremist and inciting the people to violence. King addresses them noting the weaknesses in their perception of the struggle.

He notes that the greatest challenges facing the black community in the south are injustice and division among the oppressed. In his letter, King observes that there is injustice everywhere, especially in the south, against the black people. King notes that demonstrations do not have to take place in the land, but the white man has made it hard for the black people not to demonstrate.

There is much injustice in Birmingham as the region is highly segregated. King highlights action of injustices such as ugly records of brutality, unfair and unjust treatment of the black people in courts, unsolved bombings of black people's homes and churches, and the mistreatment of prisoners. Although some of the black people have sought to solve their problems through negotiations, they lack the support of the administration or the economic community. This has compelled them to seek other means of having their voices heard, and they have resulted to holding protests and demonstrations. King addresses the division that has occurred in the black community. The clergymen oppose his efforts of uniting the people, and they call him an extremist. King points out that many divisions have occurred among the people.

He points out that some blacks have become complacent and they are not willing to fight for their freedom. They have accepted segregation and they

have adapted to it. Others have become insensitive to the suffering of their brothers and sisters, as they have gained security in their economic status and academic qualifications. Others have endured severe oppression, to the extent that they have become bitter, and they have developed hatred for the white people. They advocate violence, and they have lost their faith in America. King solves to reconcile these divisions by uniting the people King notes that there is a solution to these problems. He notes that the black community has to let other people hear its voice, and unless they engage in protests, the white people will remain complacent, and will continue oppressing them.

He calls for the people to unite, advising the clergymen that they should not see others as outsiders. Everyone born in America has the right to demand for his or her freedom and justice. Achebe's solution to the problems facing the community is that they have to accept the changes that the white man has introduced. They have to find ways of implementing the changes, while at the same time upholding their cultures.