

Things fall apart and the spirit world

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



When turmoil comes about, many have merely one attribute to rely on to help them overcome certain disasters: their faith. The characters of Things Fall Apart are no exception. The people of Umuofia call upon representatives of the spirit world as a means of hospitality. They rely on their religion to settle resolutions with other tribes and to answer questions. They depend on the spirit world also to take care of punishments and in addition play a significant role on new born babies. Unfortunately, the strong reliance with the spirit world collapse when the White Christians invade. It is clearly seen just how important the spirit world is to the people of Umuofia. The kola nut is used as a social ritual of hospitality among the tribe. Representing vivacity, the nut is used as a welcoming snack. The kola nut is passed back and forth between the guest and the owner of the hut until one does the honor of finally cracking the nut. The people of Umuofia believe these actions will please their gods. They believe that " He who brings kola brings life." The people of Umuofia depend on the spirit world to help them with troubles or problems. When a nearby village has killed an Umuofian woman, they turn to their gods to see what is fit as punishment. The gods order that the village do penance for their sins towards their people. Mbaino offer a boy and a young virgin as payment. Another example of when members of the clan call upon the representatives of the spirit world is when consulting with Agbala, the Oracle of the Hills and Caves. Asking for her help is a common part ritual of their religion. Villagers come to the oracle when they have questions of their future or hardship and get answers through its priestess. Many beliefs follow the religion that the people of Umuofia practice. The people rely on the spirit world to provide punishments when sacred laws of

their religion are broken. Okonkwo is forced to make sacrifices to the earth goddess when he violates the Week of Peace. Twins are thought to bring bad luck for parents, therefore are left to die in the Evil Forest to please the gods. Ekwefi, Okonkwo's daughter is forced to find the stone that is linked to the spirit world. The people rely on this because it is thought that the spirit of an evil child re-enters its mothers womb, as punishment they are mutilated, but if the stone is found, then the cycle of dieing babies cease. Another punishment thought of by the spirit world is when Okonkwo is exiled for seven years after accidentally killing a boy. The people of Umuofia depend on representatives of the spirit world to help them with their problems specifically help with punishments. Towards the ending of the novel, the reliance of the people of Umuofia falls apart. Umuofia is no longer a strong village but has been beaten by the intruding White Christians. Okonkwo kills himself after killing a messenger. Achebe may have been tying to show that the people of Umuofia's various times of reliance on the spirit world were not enough to keep the clan together. Achebe tries to show that White Christians thought that their faith was better but in fact they show that change does not always happen and old habits and traditions should not be tainted.