

Things fall apart: the community in umuofia

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



Things Fall Apart: The Community in Umuofia Community in tribal cultures is tight knit and deep-seated. The men must follow the laws and traditions that have come long before current generations. The rules come from nature and no one seems to know where or how they started the men just know the actions must be carried out precisely or the community would be punished. The tribal community has a responsibility to ensure that all are following the laws of the set forth or the entire village will be punished. A very important feature of any community is the hierarchy of leaders. The men of the Umuofia village must earn titles that governed the people. These titles were not voted upon, but obtained because of certain aspects or strengths the men possess. The responsibilities range from tree tapping to serving as board members for " trials" among members of the clan. Men of titles are held to high expectations and are prohibited from engaging in specified activities. Okonkwo, himself had acquired titles and felt they were important to him, but it was not a highly discussed topic in the novel. The villagers respected the title and with the exception of the medicine man the importance of a man's title position was not significant to relationships within the novel. The medicine man and the gods were the only persons in which the author placed notable recognition. This community of villagers was no doubt like many others in their governing body with leaders that rule according to old traditions and practices. Every community has its own set of rituals and ways to show respect, worship, and celebrate. The rituals of Umuofia were long standing traditions and were performed for specific reasons although sometimes unknown. One important element of the story was the accidental murder of a fellow clansman that prompted the exile of

Okonkwo. His exile was punishment but no one in the clan clearly understood or agreed that Okonkwo should be exiled. His action was not of deliberation, but of misfortune and had to be punished according to old tribal laws. The clan members did not completely forsake him during his exile and remained friendly visitors throughout the seven years. Other rituals of importance focused on the dead and proper and unfavorable burials. A particular disturbing ritual performed by many members of the community was the mutilation and cruel treatment of the babies that had died. The most troubling violent rituals were against the children lost by one of Okonkwo's wives. The violent treatment was meant to prevent the evil child from returning and causing the woman more pain. All of these customs were instilled in their life with no one questioning or daring to change the practice. A person or community's value is hard to define in non-monetary means. Typically, a person's worth is determined by the value of their bank account. The people of this clan have places little or no value currency. The values the community hold close are respect for one's tribe, one's family, and one's personal code of honor. The personal code of honor was a man's title or position held within the tribe. Each title had different level of respect associated with it and certain responsibilities. Community members' honor was also judged in accordance to behavior and respect for their gods. The gods held were held in high regard and some walked among the earth. Even though the community did not place high value on a man's currency level, Okonkwo did. He believed highly that a man must work hard and not owe a person anything. He felt embarrassed because of his father's misfortune or beggar status and refused to be that way himself. This value of tangible

items prevented Okonkwo from experiencing a true joy of his most valuable possessions, his family. Each and every community has a set of traditions and rites that are passed on through generations. Some of these are practical such as agricultural advice, and some are nonsensical. The tribal community of Umuofia was no different in regards to the root of kinship. These people thrived as a strong and reliable entity with little outside interference. This strength carried a community in all times, even when things changed because of missionary invasions. Community is defined and appears different by all accounts, but the core bonds of the group are the same regardless of its location, language, or ethnic backgrounds. Works Cited Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. New York: Random House, 1994.