

-2-

## Plan: Question 6

✓ Intro → dystopian 1984, George Orwell  
 → post-colonial TFA, Chinua Achebe

✓ Topic 1: Find courage to drive change / keep culture.

1984: - Winston uses courage and the act of rebellion in attempt to drive change / resolve problem.  
 ✓ join brotherhood "will you commit suicide if needed?"  
 → Goldstein's "interrupts the narrative": "YES" (long list)  
 ✓ talking to the Proles "tried to see if the old man could remember what London was like before"  
 ✓ relationship with Julia "the words I love you..."

2 ✓ TFA: - Okonkwo uses courage in attempt to stop the white missionaries from changing their culture → keep his thriving culture.  
 ✓ shows strength when killing Ikemefuna "oracle decreed he must be killed"  
 ✓ keep role of masculinity "titles, yams, wives"  
 ✓ ~~evil~~ forest his son - impotent, roaring fire.



08AB02

Topic 2 : Both protagonists are defeated.

⑤ 1984: ✓ Winston gives up "victory had ~~been~~ won over himself, he loved big brother"

✓ Julia → sacrifices her. "Take Julia, not me"

✓ Rats → fears overtake his ambition

④ JFA: ✓ Men go to jail for sticking up for their own culture

✓ Okonkwo kills himself → irony → "that man was one of the greatest" - Obierika

✓ Nwoye converts his own son - similarly

✓ context: 1984 → ideas of distorting the truth from working in the BBC ✓  
 → inspiration from dictators such as Hitler & Stalin made ✓  
 him hate communists, but not communism.

✓ JFA → - Achebe grew up in Nigeria ✓  
 with a Christian upbringing.  
 - some Christian bias. ✓



08AB03

- 4 -

□ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Literary works often show men and women struggling to resolve problems and not succeeding very well, as this is a common occurrence in real life situations that readers can relate to. In 1984, a dystopian novel written by George Orwell, and Things Fall Apart, a post-colonial novel written by Chinua Achebe, readers follow the stories of the two protagonists, Winston and Okonkwo, who are struggling to resolve problems in their society but fail to do so with much success. Both Winston and Okonkwo are characters that are 'alienated' from their societies and are trying to resolve problems they believe have changed and ruined their society. Winston lives under a totalitarian government that is attempting to obtain full control over all of Oceania. Winston uses courage in attempt to resolve the changing lifestyle of Oceania, but is not successful. Orwell obtained inspiration for this totalitarian society through exposure to dictators such as Hitler and Stalin. He developed a hatred not for communism as a system, but for communists and the way it was enforced. Similarly, Okonkwo uses his dedication to the Ibo culture to prevent the white missionaries from converting his tribe to the Christian culture. Okonkwo also fails to be successful in this attempt, and Achebe used personal experiences to gain this inspiration; he was raised with a Christian upbringing in Nigeria. These two protagonists demonstrate the struggle to resolve problems



08AB04

- 5 -

in controlling societies.

In 1984, Winston uses courage and the act of rebellion to drive change and resolve the problems he feels that INGSOC has brought to Oceania. Winston's first attempt to resolve problems is through interacting with the Proles, as he believes that "if there is hope, it lies in the proles". Winston visits the Proles district, which is an act of courage itself as outer party members are not typically found in this area, and meets a man named Mr. Charrington, a supposed prole. Winston tries to see if "the old man could remember what London was like before INGSOC", but does not have much success. Throughout the middle of the novel, Winston develops an intimate relationship with a woman named Julia. They commit crimes against the party such as 'thoughtcrime' and 'sexcrime', in order to express their individuality and act against the Party. They commit these crimes in Mr. Charrington's shop, which is a motif initially for freedom, but later emphasizing the concept that "you can always be overheard" by Big Brother. Additionally, Winston shows courage and rebellion to the Party through his interest in joining the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood is a supposed group of outer party members that obtain the same views as Winston and want to resolve problems in Oceania. The inclusion of Goldstein's Book interrupts the narrative of 1984, emphasizing its significance to Winston in driving change. O'Brien,



08AB05

- 6 -

who acts as a role-model to Winston, lists of numerous tasks and responsibilities Winston would have to abide by were he to join the Brotherhood, including the question "will you commit suicide if needed", and Winston responding with a stern "yes". This shows Winston's dedication to resolving problems in this society, as he is one of the few who is still aware of them. Through Orwell's experience fighting in the Spanish Civil War and Burma, he was exposed to fascist and socialist governments, giving him this inspiration for the problematic ideologies of INGSOC.

Okonkwo also attempts to resolve problems and drive change, but does so through his dedication to the Ibo Tribe. Okonkwo is deemed as a man of high status and power in his society, prior to the entry of the white missionaries. A man is measured "through his possession of yams, titles and wives", and Okonkwo is plentiful in all three amenities. Yams is a motif that is constantly referred to throughout the novel, as it symbolizes strength and power. Even once the white missionaries begin to alter the clan's perception of masculinity, Okonkwo never loses his status in his mind, preventing change. Okonkwo is referred to as a "roaring fire" and his son Nwoye is seen as an "impotent ash". These metaphorical statements demonstrate the differences between these two characters.



08AB06

-7-

Nwoye is not seen as a strong man, as he obtains many female characteristics. Although the white missionaries accept Nwoye in the end, Okonkwo never does showing his dedication to his culture and his reluctance to change. The Oracle is a character who acts as a mentor to the Ibo tribe. When the Oracle decrees that "Ikemefuna must be killed", Okonkwo takes it upon himself to perform this task to show power rather than weakness. These examples show Okonkwo's devotion to the Ibo culture, and demonstrate how he is reluctant to change. As a role-model in society, his ambition was to resolve the problems the white missionaries brought to Umuofia by showing his pride in Ibo culture and hoping others feel the same way. As this novel was written prior to Nigeria gaining independence, many people at the time were trying to accomplish the same things.

Although Winston obtained courage, his struggle to resolve problems is clearly seen in his lack of success and eventual capture. Characters who Winston believed were helping him resolve problems, such as Mr. Charrington and O'Brien, were in reality working against him leading to his capture. His courage in trying to find help and supporters led him to his downfall. When in Room 101, a setting which signifies fear and control, Winston is tortured by the use of



08AB07

- 8 -

rats. Rats are a recurring motif that demonstrate Winston's greatest fear, leading to weakness. This fear overtakes Winston's ambition to resolve problems with their society. Winston knows that "a victory had won over himself. He loved Big Brother", showing his lack of success in changing his society to how he believes it should be. The relationship between Winston and Julia is the only aspect left that is capable of resolving problems, but the party is even capable of enforcing both Winston and Julia to sacrifice each other through manipulation and fear. The Party enforces the statements that "two and two make five" and "freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" into the mind of Winston, emphasizing his lack of success in resolving conflict. Through Orwell's work at BBC in London, he was exposed to how the media is able to distort the truth, which is where the idea of false information in 1984 came from.

Similarly, although Okonkwo had the prospect of resolving problems as Winston did, his struggle overtook his ambition, leading to his eventual lack of success. When Okonkwo's son Nwoye converts to Christianity, this is the first indicator of Okonkwo's defeat. Nwoye tells Okonkwo he has "signed up for the white missionary school", showing that Okonkwo's attempts to change Nwoye and make him more of



- 2 -

□ 6 a man have failed. This is an example of a man in society who has a sincere relationship with him to go against him. Once Okonkwo returns to Umuofia from his seven year exile to his Motherland Mbanta, the changes that have occurred in his fatherland are extremely clear and prominent. When Okonkwo and his fellow clansman are following a traditional custom of the Ibo culture, showing their dedication to their tribe, they are sent to a prison controlled by the white missionaries. This shows the struggle Okonkwo now has with keeping his thriving culture, and that the missionaries have been successful in destroying Okonkwo's ambitions. Ultimately, at the end of the novel, Okonkwo commits suicide demonstrating his ultimate defeat and inability to resolve the problems brought by the white missionaries. This act of suicide is an example of irony in the novel, as Okonkwo who was once seen as a man of great power and strength, has now committed an act of great weakness. Obierka, one of Okonkwo's closest friends, tells the missionaries "he [Okonkwo] was one of the greatest men in Umuofia", showing how once a man of high status has given up hope, the entire tribe should. In the middle of the novel, Okonkwo takes note of the locusts flying in to Umuofia. This foreshadows that the white men are coming, informing the reader



04AB02



- 3 -

of Okonkwo's ultimate defeat. As Achebe grew up with a Christian upbringing, and being taught English in school, he was greatly criticized for including too much Christian bias in this novel. At the end, it appears as though once Okonkwo had no success, no one can deem the Nigerian people to be weak and powerless. This concept may obtain Christian bias from Achebe, as the Nigerians may not view themselves in this way.

In conclusion, both texts depict the story of two protagonists with the ambition to resolve problems in their society, but we see how their struggle to do so led to an ultimate defeat. Winston's courage and act of rebellion are not enough to change the ideologies of the Party, or to solve the issue of the lack of freedom and individuality in Oceania, and Okonkwo's devotion to the Ibo culture is not enough to maintain its strong presence in Umuofia, or to resolve the problems the white missionaries brought such as a changing the culture, schooling system and government. Both of these literary works are extremely applicable to our society today, as the issue of control is prevalent in all governmental systems around the world. All governments work based on the



04AB03

- 4 -

notion of having control over a society, whether it be democratic or communist. The media controls what we know and what we don't know, and influences the way we live. These texts have taught readers that although it is important to have faith, courage and dedication to resolve problems, sometimes the struggle may overtake one's ambition. These texts show readers that it is extremely difficult for one person to resolve problems, but that it may be more possible for a group of people with the same beliefs and ideologies. Based on the stories of Okonkwo and Winston, the statement that literary works often show men and women struggling to resolve problems and not succeeding very well is extremely true and well supported.



04AB04