

**IGNOU BEGC 134 Solved Assignment Solution Below**



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**BEGC-134 | Reading the Novel | Assignment January & July 2021 Sessions |**

**(Based on Blocks 1 - 4)**

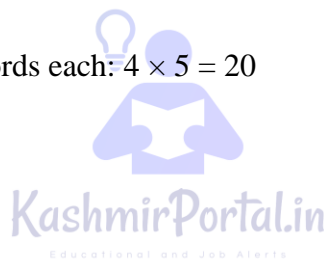
Answer all questions.

**Section A**

Write short notes in about 200 words each:  $4 \times 5 = 20$

1.

- (i) Types of the novel
- (ii) New areas of novel writing
- (iii) Third Person Narrative
- (iv) Symbolism



**Section B**

Answer the following in about 300 words each:  $4 \times 7.5 = 30$

1. How would you define writing style? Explain.
2. Is it necessary to have an understanding of an age to read a writer/ a novel? Think and answer.
3. What were some of the themes of early Odia novels?
4. How did colonialism disrupt social life in Africa? Base your answer on your understanding of Things Fall Apart.

**Section C**

Answer the following questions in about 800 words each:  $5 \times 10 = 50$

1. Comment on the themes discussed in The Awakening.
2. Write a detailed essay on the use of songs, in Paraja.
3. Discuss Paraja as a translated novel.
4. Comment on the development of the Nigerian novel.
5. Examine the use of folk material such as Proverbs, Sayings and Metaphors in Things Fall Apart.

# Solved Solutions of BEGC 134

## Section A (Solutions)

1. (i) **Types of the novel:** More people read novels rather than any other form of literature. We read popular romances, crime thrillers and many other types of fiction. Some more common types of novels are as follows:

**Picaresque Novel:** This is the earliest type of novel. It derives its name from the Spanish word *pícaro* which means rogue. The main character of such a novel may be a good hearted rogue or one who is a social outcast. S/he makes his/her way in the world by outwitting others. The novelist follows him/her on his/her various adventures and the plot is thus loose and episodic.

**Gothic Novel:** This type of novel began to be written towards the end of the eighteenth century when there was a revival of interest in the supernatural. It derives its name from a particular style in architecture. Set against a background of haunted medieval castles, it is a story of horror and terror. It features monsters and ghosts in violent and sensational adventures.

(ii) **New areas of novel writing:** At the onset of the twentieth century, Western fiction grew modern and shed many images such as Victorian, realistic, and its image of what Malcom Bradbury calls “the great instrument of social representation”. It found a place for itself when paradigms were shifting, along with expectations, desires and imagination. At the end of the twentieth century different forms of the novel had taken centre stage. By the time we entered the new millennium the novel as a genre saw striking changes.

A large number of writers who had contributed tremendously to post war British fiction had died. Novelists such as, Graham Greene (died in 1991), William Golding and Anthony Burgess (1993), Kingsley Amis (1995), Iris Murdoch (1999) and Penelope Fitzgerald in 2000, Arthur C Clarke in March, 2008. The millennium offered great cultural excitement and impetus to new writers. But what was also happening is that some essential notions of the novel and its British ness were rapidly dissolving and getting lost and the stage was now set for writers from other cultures such as from Scotland, Ireland and India to name just a few.

(iii) **Third Person Narrative:** In the third-person narrative mode, the narration refers to all characters with third person pronouns like he, she, or they, and never first- or second-person pronouns. This makes it clear the narration is done without the need for a narrator who is identified and personified as a character within the story. For the purpose of comparison to stories that have a narrator, third-person narration is described as having an anonymous narrator.

Traditionally, third-person narration is the most commonly used narrative mode in literature. It does not require that the narrator's existence be explained or developed as a particular character, as would be the case with a first-person narrator. It thus allows a story to be told without detailing any information about the teller (narrator) of the story. Instead, a third person narrator is often simply some disembodied commentary, rather than a fully

developed character. Sometimes, third-person narration is called the "he/she" perspective, and, on even rarer occasions, author/omniscient point of view.

(iv) **Symbolism:** Symbolism also comes in the form of Edna's two female friends, Adele Ratignolle and Mademoiselle Reisz. The selfless Adele represents the ideal Victorian woman by serving her husband to the fullest, adoring her children, and being the consummate "mother-woman". She urges Edna to conform to society and to think of the children. Adele as the nurturing, maternal figure filled with domestic contentment serves as a foil to Edna's rebelliousness in domestic and social affairs.

Madmoiselle Reisz is the direct opposite of Adele. Reisz represents the strong, independent, artist who has who disregards the opinions and norms of society. As Barbara H. Solomon observes, "Edna cannot emulate the example of either of her friends. Their uncomplicated identities are well suited to each of them but insufficient for Edna (Koloski, 119)"

## **Section B (Solutions)**

### **1. How would you define writing style?**

#### **Explain.**

In literature, writing style is the manner of expressing thought in language characteristic of an individual, period, school, or nation. As Bryan Ray notes, however, style is a broader concern, one that can describe "readers' relationships with, texts, the grammatical choices writers make, the importance of adhering to norms in certain contexts and deviating from them in others, the expression of social identity, and the emotional effects of particular devices on audiences."

Thus, style is a term that may refer, at one and the same time, to singular aspects of an individual's writing habits or a particular document and to aspects that go well-beyond the individual writer. Beyond the essential elements of spelling, grammar, and punctuation, writing style is the choice of words, sentence structure, and paragraph structure, used to convey the meaning effectively. The former are referred to as rules, elements, essentials, mechanics, or handbook; the latter are referred to as style, or rhetoric. The rules are about what a writer does; style is about how the writer does it. While following the rules drawn from established English usage, a writer has great flexibility in how to express a concept.

### **2. Is it necessary to have an understanding of an age to read a writer/ a novel? Think and answer.**

No, In our age, more and more people watch television, film and video in their spare time and consequently have less time for reading novels. Some critics have therefore proclaimed the death of the novel. But if you consider the number of novels that are published each year, you will agree that the novel is far from dead. On the contrary, it has diversified into newer

forms so that we now have campus novels (dealing with university life), Black novels (expressing the experience of Blacks in Africa or in America and the West), Jewish fiction, popular romances, detective novels, science fiction, and crime thrillers. The list is almost endless. For example, if you travel in local transport in London (the underground train popularly referred to as the 'tube' or in the bus) you will find most commuters lost deep in some best-seller or other. It is clear then that the novel is alive and well and thriving.

It is quite difficult to remember the exact age that I started reading books. But when I remember about the long journey, it has been quite sweet.

As early as I can remember, maybe at the age of one or two, my mother read us stories from Magic Pot and Kalikkudukka. (The local children's magazines). They came on Fridays. I remember waking up early in the morning and waiting at the gate for the newspaper boy to bring them on Fridays and pestering my mother to read them out for me.

They admitted me to a nursery when I was three. I was already in love with the art of reading. I insisted they teach me to read. I was too bored of playing. By 4, I was already reading magicpots myself.

They admitted me to a nursery when I was three. I was already in love with the art of reading. I insisted they teach me to read. I was too bored of playing. By 4, I was already reading magicpots myself.

### 3. What were some of the themes of early Odia novels?



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Odia novelist like Fakrmohan Senapati, Gopinath Mohanty, Pratibha Ray, Manoj Das and so many have contributed wonderful novels in Oriya.

The Odia Novel has been under the influence of Western literature and the literature from the neighbourhood. Bengali and British literature have played a vital role in shaping Odia literature as it is today.

The Odia language and the state of Odisha had been denied independent status till 1936 and it was only after this landmark in Odia history that its literature started gaining importance.

Although authors such as, Ramshankar Ray and Umesh Sarkar made attempts at writing novels in Odia in the late 19th century the rise of the Odia novel began with the contribution made by Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918). His trend setting novel was Chhanana Atha Guntha (1897). After Fakir Mohan Senapati however, there was no significant input by any other writer. The first Odia novel on tribals was Bhima Bhuyan by Gopal Ballav Das written in 1898 and published in 1908. The novel was based on the life of a tribal hero Bhima of the Bhuyan tribe of Keonjhar District in Odisha. It was in 1931 that Kalindi Charan Panigarhi's Matina Manisha gained popularity as it was based on Gandhian principles and ideals.

## 4. How did colonialism disrupt social life in Africa? Base your answer on your understanding of Things Fall Apart.

Long absences away from the family also caused complete disruption of family life in which each member had a certain social as well as economic role cut out for him or her. Women were forced to work on the family fields in place of their men as also able-bodied male members of the clan were forced to become wageearners on farms or in factories and mines instead of remaining farmers or cattlebreeder. The subsistence-oriented barter as the major form of trade, was now changed into a market economy with money becoming the basis of trade. In due course of time, women too were made victims of the disruption of their system of social organisation when they too had to look for jobs.

Things Fall Apart is the debut novel by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, first published in 1958. It depicts pre-colonial life in the southeastern part of Nigeria and the arrival of Europeans during the late 19th century. It is seen as the archetypal modern African novel in English, and one of the first to receive global critical acclaim. It is a staple book in schools throughout Africa and is widely read and studied in English-speaking countries around the world. The novel was first published in the UK in 1962 by William Heinemann Ltd., and became the first work published in Heinemann's African Writers Series.

### Section C (Solutions)

## 1. Comment on the themes discussed in The Awakening.

The Awakening by Kate Chopin is a bildungsroman, or a novel of moral or intellectual revolution. Set in 1899, it follows Edna Pontellier as she vacations with her family on Grand Isle in Louisiana, a popular destination for wealthy Creole and French-descent families. It is about her awakening to sexual consciousness, her discovery and assertion of this new 'self' through rebellion against the conventional role of being a wife and a mother and the consequences thereof. The novel is about self-expression and a woman's right to be herself, and to be an individual.

Edna is locked in a typical marriage to Leonce Pontellier, a marriage of convenience made when she was very young, not made with love or romance though he is a good man and a caring husband. Her romantic urgings and physical longings have at this stage hardly been articulated and certainly not satisfied. The family goes to Grand Isle for the summer where she meets and spends a lot of time with Robert Lebrun, an unattached young bachelor, talking, swimming, being together (and of course the Creole husband is never jealous, but you will find out more about this in the section on Creole background). Before they know it, both Edna and Robert begin to feel an attraction towards each other and an intensity of emotion they perceive as unusual, unmanageable and somewhat threatening in the context of their lives and conventional reality. This emotion is passionate and all consuming, leaving no

room for thought or sensible action. Robert realises the impossibility of the situation, and not knowing how to deal with it, flees to Mexico to ‘make money’ (we will discuss if he is an escapist, a coward or an honourable man, or all of the above). Once he’s gone, the truth confronts Edna with further starkness and clarity. The summer just like the flirtation, has come to an end and Edna and her family return to their posh home on Esplanade Street, in the city. But things can never be the same for Edna as she is a changed person, as a result of her encounter with Robert and her new self.

This new Edna is a painter. She does not care about her wifely responsibilities or about keeping up appearances by observing the customs. This new Edna refuses to stay home on Tuesdays to receive her callers, as her husband accepts her to, but goes out just because she prefers to do so. Her husband complains about her lack of supervision of the servants, and he leaves in the middle of a badly cooked dinner to go out to the club to eat. She becomes careless, and disinterested with regard to domestic affairs, letting everything on the home front slide as it is no longer of any significance to her. Her family by now is meaningless and distant for her, her desire to fiercely possess her identity and be her own person being now her primary focus. She wants to feel a sense of being financially independent, not answerable to anybody for her actions, in other words, completely autonomous. She refuses to go for her sister’s wedding and has no thoughts about propriety or ‘what the world will say’ with regard to any of her actions. Mr Pontellier worries about his wife’s health and her strange behaviour, consulting the doctor about both. Although she appears to be in robust health, a disconnect has happened which gives the appearance that she’s not quite all there.



## 2. Write a detailed essay on the use of songs, in Paraja.

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Songs and dance are a vital part of the oral tradition and of tribal life. The songs in oral literature are narrative and reflective as they broaden our horizons on the traditions and folklore of that tribe and the age as well. The songs are also termed as ‘oral formulaic poetry’ that means ‘poetry that is composed and transmitted by singers or reciters’. Its origins are pre-historic and it continues to flourish amongst population that is illiterate. Additions and deletions take place in the narrative as it is passed by word of mouth, from one generation to another orally. Despite the fact that these oral compositions have no fixed variation yet these poems or songs incorporate verbal formulas – set words, word patterns, and refrains which help to recall, repeat and readjust to changing times. The themes of the songs vary from traditional folk epic subjects like tribal heroes, love, romance and day-to-day routine chores.

Orality and literacy are interrelated and mutually interactive. Mohanty incorporates songs in his novel Paraja as they form an inevitable part of tribal life and culture. The songs touch upon all areas of tribal life. These songs underline the deep-rooted-ness of the tribal’s relationship with his/her surroundings, rituals, customs, Gods and supernatural forces. Their simplicity is reflected through these songs and their intentions are mirrored in these orations. The songs are an inseparable part of the text and one has to understand the theoretical concerns highlighted through them. These songs correspond to the lives of the various characters of the novel and exhibit their emotions. They help to build the atmosphere of the novel. The novel makes use of love, ritual, festival, work, seasonal, and miscellaneous songs.

The songs are an expression of their deepest emotions – the rasa and the bhava – love, fear, hope, hatred, anguish, pain, ecstasy, be it at work or in relationships; be it at the altar of God or at the change of seasons or celebrations of festivals.

### **3. Discuss Paraja as a translated novel.**

A novel set among the primitive PARAJA tribe has been translated into English by Bikram Das and has been published by Oxford University press & later by Faber & Faber.

Language: One of the most significant aspects for observation in Paraja is the use of various kinds of language. The language of the preliterate contrasts with the language of the literate, colloquial language rubs shoulders with refined literary language and prose lends towards poetry. By and large the role that language plays in structuring the novel is considerable.

The language of the preliterates is totally different from that of the literate characters, and Gopinath Mohanty makes use of a number of expressions from the tribal languages; he sometimes inserts into the text a couple of sentences, a phrase, a few words and expressions taken from the tribal language. At many points he has carefully explained some of these expressions and at certain other points he leaves it to the reader's imagination, and in such situations the context provides the explanation. Imagine a sentence where half of it is in a tribal dialect and the other half in standard Odia; pitted against each other both the languages by emphasis on each other's importance and identity go a long way in enhancing the meaningful possibilities of the situation in question. These snatches of tribal language occur naturally in the text but this kind of an effect cannot possibly be brought over to the translated version.

Colloquialism: Colloquial language refers to words and expressions that belong to familiar speech and not to standardised or elevated speech. In dialogues between different characters in the novel you find innumerable colloquial expressions that are deeply rooted in the culture of the place, and the translator can at best make an effort towards approximation due to the lack of equivalents in the target language. If some of the colloquial words and expressions are given literal translation, then there might be misrepresentation, the import and its effect remaining in the original. To render colloquial expressions that have their roots deep in the tradition and culture of a people into other language is in fact, extremely difficult because another language means another people, another culture, and another tradition.

### **4. Comment on the development of the Nigerian novel.**

The Northern part of Nigeria is very different from the south and the east and this difference is not due to geography and climatic condition alone. The people living in the northern parts of Nigeria were called the Hausa people and were primary farmers. They were conquered by the Berber people from further north around the eighth century ADE. It was around this time that people from the Middle East and northern Africa came into the continent, primarily with the aim of spreading Islam. Another group of Berbers came to the area a little later and completed the task of conquering the remaining states of northern Nigeria.

Around ADE 1000, these Berbers even ventured to the south, which is the land of the Yorubas and conquered part of it as well. However, they could impose on the Yoruba people neither their language nor their religion.

In the early parts of the 19th century, the Hausa people in the north were overrun by the Fulani who waged a holy war against them in the name of a purer and truer Islam under the leadership of Usman Dan Fodio (1754 – 1817), who was a Fulani religious teacher, revolutionary, military leader, writer, and promoter of Sunni Islam and the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate. The Fulani divided the area into small states called emirates and ruled over them through emirs. These emirs also conquered Ilorin in the south and began to trade in slaves towards the end of the 19th century, thereby providing the British who were present on the west coast with an excuse to intervene. By 1903, the northern part of Nigeria had been brought under the British protectorate and was ruled through the emirs without any interference in the social, cultural, religious and educational affairs of the Hausa people.

## **5. Examine the use of folk material such as Proverbs, Sayings and Metaphors in Things Fall Apart.**

One of the unique strengths of Things Fall Apart is the use of folk material employed by Achebe in his narration. As stated elsewhere in this block, Ibos were renowned for the extensive use of proverbs, sayings and metaphors in the communication. In fact, communication had been fine tuned to be an art and there were contests held to choose outstanding communicators. The art of conversation itself is described with the help of the following proverb:

Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.

Achebe builds this into his own narrative by weaving these folk elements into the tapestry of his narrative. Among the Ibo, proverbs are used to describe a person's interaction and relations with others, focussing especially on his/her status or place in the society. Among them, for instance, they had a saying "if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings" meaning thereby that one could raise one's social status by one's behaviour.

Okonkwo is shown to be such a person. Another proverb that fits Okonkwo is -A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness. Okonkwo's potential is recognised by his fellow villagers because you can tell a ripe corn by its look. While his father could not raise a loan because lending him was full like pouring grains of corn into a bag of holes, Okonkwo had no such difficulty when he went to borrow yams for planting. When showing temper to an untitled person, Okonkwo is reminded by an Elder that, "those whose palm-kernels were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble".

In another situation when Okonkwo is being dissuaded from participating in the killing of Ikemefuna, especially because the latter called him 'father', Okonkwo tries to allay the fears of those who were apprehensive that retributive Wrath would be on him, and says: A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm.





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