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**Things Fall Apart**

Things Fall Apart is a novel written by Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian novelist. It was his first novel and also the main reason he is called “the patriarch of the African novel.” The novel is renowned as one of the seminal works of the African literature and has been translated into more than 50 languages. Achebe published the novel in 1958. The central theme of the novel is the clash of the native Africans and their culture with the influence of the white Christian missionaries and their colony in Nigeria. The novel Things Fall Apart is the story of a man Okonkwo who is ambitious and works hard in his life to achieve what his father could not, but the flaws in his personality take his happiness and he is devastated. The protagonist of the novel is Okonkwo and through the story and the plot, the conflict of the Africans and the White Christians is made clear.

The protagonist of the novel Okonkwo is having a struggle within himself. That struggle of him is against the possibility of becoming like his father that was known to be lazy and effeminate. At a very young age, he realized that his father was a laughing stock for the people of the clan. Even as a young boy he used to begrudge his father's failure and flaw, and even now he still recollected how he used to suffer when a friend told him that his father was agbala (Achebe, 1958). The term agbala translated to woman, because he was idle and was afraid of war and the sight of blood, and used to drink all the time and play his flute. Okonkwo did not want to end up like his father. He wanted to be respected and worked really hard for that. The struggle that he put in getting respect from the people worked for him, as Okonkwo was popular all over the nine villages and even outside. His prominence rested on hard personal accomplishments (Achebe, 1958). He gained this respect by defeating a wrestler Amalinze who was unbeaten for the past seven years. As he was only eighteen at that time and brought this huge fame to his village this being the reason the victory opened the doors of success for him. Okonkwo fears to end up like his father, whom people made fun of. To overcome this fear he tried his best and works really hard so that the people around him don’t call him agbala, and his hard work is fruitful as he gets the fame and respect that he was longing for.

Okonkwo earns respect and success. He is a fearless chap and a man of actions. He never fears anything. However there is a tragic flaw with his nature that does not let him move forward, and that is his rigidity and unforgiving nature. In his struggle of becoming the opposite of his father, he shaped his personality in a way that he grew a deep-lying fear of weakness and failure. It was not outside but was profound inside himself. It was the dread of himself, in case he would be found to look like his father (Achebe, 1958). Okonkwo was not afraid of the usual things like magic and invisible stuff, that people are usually scared of, rather his fear grew out of the fact that he may end up becoming like his father. This fear of him lied deep inside him and became a permanent part of his personality. This created a desire in him to not be like his father and to be the real man and a macho. In his opinion, he was a success as he owns a barn full of yams and also has three wives (Achebe, 1958). Finally, he succeeded in achieving all that his pitiful father could not. This was a big achievement for him because all of his desires revolved around his wish to be the opposite of his father.

Okonkwo achieved all the things that he wanted to and that made him think that a man cannot be defeated if he is firm in his ambitions. This idea of him is related to the concept of free will and fate. The belief that he is in absolute control of his own destiny is of the central importance to him. There was a proverb famous among the people of Ibo that when a man says yes his chi says yes also. Okonkwo said yes very strongly; so his chi agreed (Achebe, 1958). The fate was nowhere a part of his victory against the famous wrestler, rather the credit was given to the strong will of Okonkwo. It was his determination and aggression that led him this far and lifted him up from the status of being a son of a debtor to the leader of the clan. However, he came too far in his determination and aggressive attitude. His aggression and rash behavior gets him evicted out of the village after that things start getting sour for him. He rejects the new beliefs and systems introduced by the white colonials and their Christian missionaries. Though his intentions were not ill, he just wanted to keep the tradition and the dignity of the clan alive. He kills one of the officers of the British district office out of aggression, his people back away in fear. This makes him realize that none of them will support him in his stubbornness. Realizing his defeat at the end, he commits suicide and dies a disgraceful death just like his father.

Okonkwo was not a bad person rather he was a good person, who had manly qualities and was determined to achieve high aims in his life. He only had a tragic flaw that leads to his fall, and that was his stubbornness and the quality to not forgive. He was so firm that he could not accept the change and this became the reason for his fall.

# Works Cited

Achebe, C. (1958). THINGS FALL APART. New York, 1994: ANCHOR BOOKS.