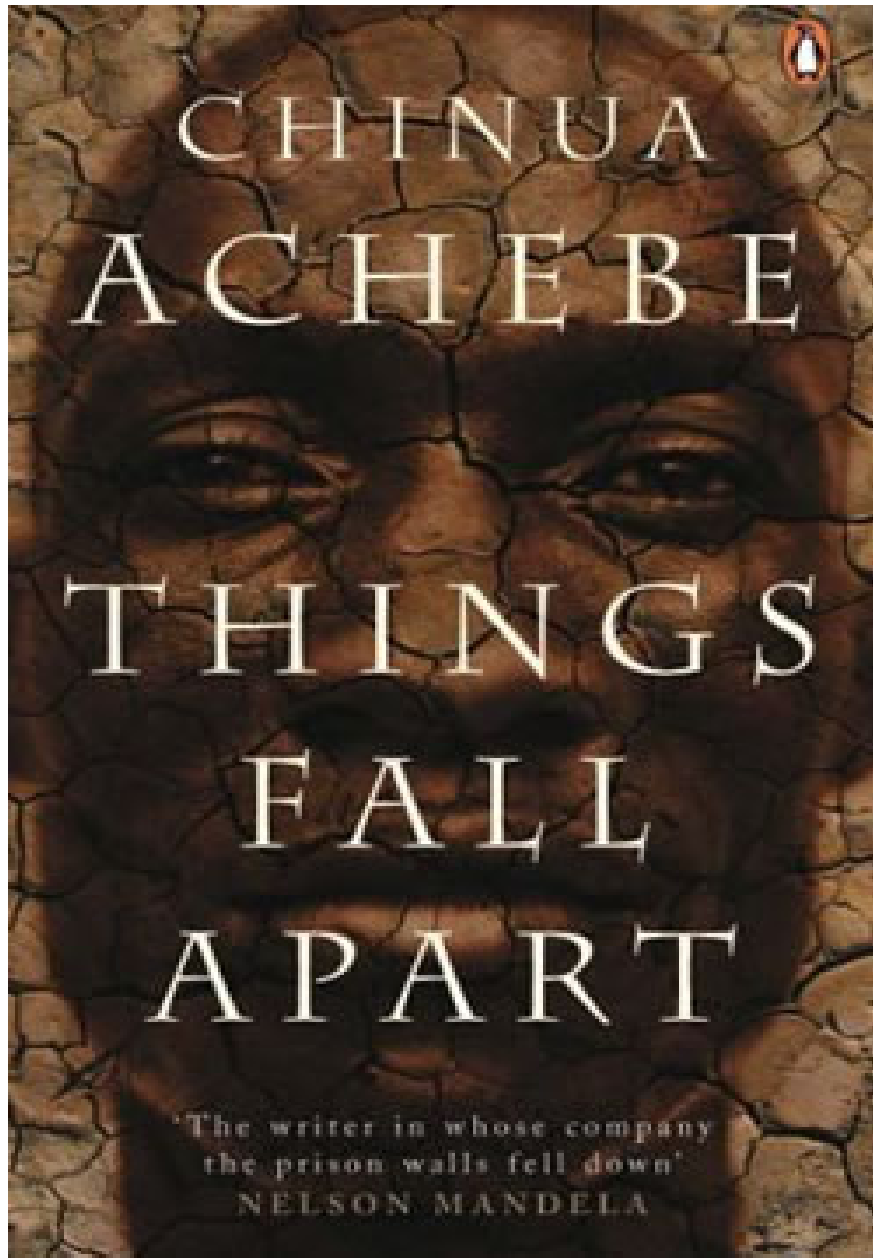


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A Book Review on 'Things Fall Apart'



Author: Chinua Achebe
Publisher: Penguin Random House
Year of Publ.: 1958
Genre: Tribal Fiction, War

Introduction:

Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" is an amazing work of fiction. It tells the story of the village of Umuofia and the people's lives in that village and their culture. Their societal nature and view of the world are vastly different from ours. These differences in views are what make the book so interesting to read and the plot twists major character deaths, character development, and flaws make the story seem real and the characters of the story feel real due to their flaws. We mainly follow the life of Okonkwo, who is a famous warrior in all of West Africa. From a small age, he had the drive to fend for himself, gain strength, and overpower his enemies. He wanted to be the person his father was not. His father, Unoka was the village's failure. All he ever did was increase his loans and never pay them back. The one thing he was good at was playing the flute and that's all he needed in life. But Okonkwo wanted to achieve bigger and better things. In his eyes, Unoka was a failure and the one thing Okonkwo feared in life was ending up like his father.

Plot Summary:

Ikemefuna is a boy who was brought in by the village of Umuofia. He was just a normal boy living idly in his village but one day, some people came to his home and took him away from his family. He was brought to the village of Umuofia and from that point onwards, he started to live in Okonkwo's home. Okonkwo assigned one of his wives to take care of Ikemefuna. Nwoye was the son of his new caretaker and they got along well after some time. The relationship between Ikemefuna and Nwoye was a strong one. They always took care of each other and had a brotherly relationship. As they matured, they would talk about how they wanted to be warriors as soon as possible and they talked about how women's stories were 'all talk and no show'. These acts of maturing touched Okonkwo and he felt proud of them both, especially Ikemefuna.

Ikemefuna also got accustomed to his new home. He was very scared at first since he missed his family very much, but as time went on, he got used to his new family and forgot his old one. He forgot his father, mother and sister. He started calling Okonkwo "father". Even Okonkwo was flustered by this but he never expressed it since he isn't the kind of person who expresses his emotions. He liked his new home, he liked Nwoye and also his other brothers and sisters. One day, while getting water one of Okonkwo's daughters attempted to place the water pot in her head and dance in a womanly manner which consequently caused the pot to fall and break. When they returned home, Ikemefuna would lie to her mother and tell her that it was an honest mistake, for he didn't want to get her in trouble with her father who would beat her severely if he found out. His brotherly instincts and protective nature reaches not only Nwoye, but all of his siblings.

One day, the village chief meets Okonkwo and tells him something that changed his life and had a long-lasting effect. He still looks back at this event with deep sorrow and regret. The village chief told him that the oracle had commanded his death. Even though Okonkwo didn't want Ikemefuna to die, he didn't want to be rejected by society and seen as weak so he complied. He made up a cover story and told Ikemefuna that he was going to be taken to his parents. Upon

hearing this, Ikemefula was filled with mixed emotions. On one hand, he was going to be taken to see his parents. But on the other hand, it had been years since he was taken away from his home and he had almost forgotten his real parents. He even started referring to Okonkwo as his father. When Nwoye heard about this, deep down he knew that nothing good could come from this and Ikemefula's fate was already sealed.

Ikemefula was escorted by Okonkwo and a few other men in the village and he wanted to see his parents soon. He was already pondering what to tell his parents when he met them. When he was wondering about this thought, a man swung his sword at him. Crying, Ikemefula ran towards his Okonkwo, who slayed him in an instant. This is another brutal example of the superstitious tribal culture in Umuofia and how the words of the so-called "Oracle" are blindly followed. Even though Okonkwo had a fatherly bond with Ikemefula, he still followed the orders of the oracle.

Critical Review:

This story takes place in a superstitious and rural society. Society is still backward while maintaining its values and wisdom. In their culture, gender roles are enforced. The men become warriors and providers and the women are caretakers. Although by modern standards, it may seem toxic, this reinforced role and culture is what makes the village of Umuofia so successful and powerful compared to other villages. The strengths of this society are the wisdom and power that come along with the beliefs whereas the weakness of it are unnecessary deaths of many people who are killed due to the command of some "Oracle".

Conclusion:

Overall, this book was fun and interesting to read. Achebe's brutal and gore-filled storytelling maintains the dark nature of the story and his excellent way of handling emotions keeps it wholesome at times, although very rarely. I rate this book a 7 out of 10. It was a splendid mix of world-building, seamless character development and introduction, and a masterful way of expressing gore and emotions in the heated parts of the story. I recommend this book to anyone who likes tribal stories filled with a deeper message that needs to be interpreted by the reader.