

THINGS FALL APART BY CHINUA ACHEBE

THEMES IN THE NOVEL



IBO CULTURE/ TRADITIONS

- Polytheism – worship different gods and goddesses
- Father-son inheritance – Unoka, Okonkwo, Nwoye
- Farming traditions – Yams “king of crops”
- Wrestling, titles, multi-marriage
- Proverbs – in Ibo, proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.
- beliefs and evil spirits – superstitious, evil forest,
- feasts and festivals – New Year Feast

MASCULINITY

- Masculinity – a virtue in African society
- Weaknesses of Unoka
- Okonkwo's fear of failure and weakness
- Ikemefuna's murder
- Nwaye peaceful nature – similar to his grandfather
- Titles decide power

COLONIALISM AND IT'S IMPACTS

- Multi-culture, decultural and cross-culture
- Centre and periphery
- Start of Christianity
- Change in traditions
- Government officials – District Commissioner
- Things Fall Apart - 'He has put a knife on the things that hold us together and we have fallen apart' (Achebe)

FEMINISM

- Women in African society
- Oppressed by patriarchal society
- No right to speak or ask
- Character of Ezinma and Ekwefi
- Beating woman is common in Ibo Culture
- Inferiority complex
- Freedom and rule in religion – priest

FATE AND FREE WILL

- Chi – when a man says yes his chi says yes also
- Hard work of Okonkwo – “If a child washed his hand, he could eat with the kings
- Murder of Ikemefuna – Okonkwo blames Oracle
- Kill the son of – Okonkwo’s fate
- Dominance of fate – tragic flaw of Okonkwo
- Okonkwo says, “A man could not rise beyond the destiny of his chi”

INTERPLAY OF LANGUAGE

- A new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in Worldwide language.
- Representation of Ibo society in foreign language
- Uses the language of colonizers – English
- Maintain the richness of Ibo language – by using exact names, titles and proverbs
- Flavor and variety – folk tales, hymn, poems of Africa in English