Things Fall Apart 6 Essay, Research Paper

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The book Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe definitely has a fitting title. It explains how two cultures with different ideas and beliefs can clash and be intolerant towards one another. Most of the theme is developed through the plot of the story and through a man and his struggle against fear and anger (the main character, Okonkwo). Throughout the book he tries to resolve the problems that develop all around him and within himself. As the story progresses, conflict overwhelms him and leads to his downfall and the downfall of the Ibo culture.

One part of the book that shows how the title is developed is when Okonkwo s character is introduced and explained to the reader. The author tells how he is shameful of his father and that he is belligerent and cold-hearted. Pointing out these flaws in Okonkwo s character seems to foreshadow his downfall. Since Okonkwo probably represents the intolerant culture , that culture s downfall is also foreshadowed. Later more obvious instances occur. Okonkwo kills Ikemefuna, who is like a son to him. His decision of killing the boy is definitely unreasonable, and he only acts on what he was told was right. Just like the rest of the clan he follows these customs that seem immoral and unjust to other cultures.

In another part of the story, Okonkwo is banished from his fatherland. This incident is the first where he is punished greatly for his actions. It marks a turning point in Okonkwo s downfall, and therefore the downfall of the traditional culture that he stands for. His hopes and aspirations are almost forgotten while he is away from Umuofia, and he desperately tries to regain his status when he returns. During this period of time, Okonkwo also discovers that his son has converted to his enemy s ways and beliefs. He abandons his son, and doesn t want to be his father any longer. This shows that his relationships with family and other people are beginning to fall apart .

The most obvious development of the theme and title takes place at the end of the book, when the final clash of cultures occurs. Perhaps it is more of a clash between Okonkwo and the new culture, since the rest of the clan seems to have deserted him. When the Christians finally take over the clan, Okonkwo is dead and the traditional Ibo culture has fallen apart. This incident is the final conflict between the two cultures, and it s the best example of what can happen to a society if its people are ignorant about others beliefs and untrue to their own.