



*Class Notes on*

# *Things Fall Apart*

FOR  
B A  
ENGLISH  
SEM - VI  
ENGL3016

Mr Balande Chandoba N  
Department of English  
Mahatma Gandhi Central University  
Bihar

# *THINGS FALL APART*

- ❖ Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was published in 1958
- ❖ Three parts divided in twenty-five chapters
- ❖ Part 1 – till chapter 13 part 2 – from 14-19 part 3 – from 20– 25
- ❖ The novel is about Iboland which situates in the eastern region of present day Nigeria
- ❖ The novel covers the precolonial and colonial period in this part of West Africa.




# THEME

---

- ❖ The conflict between two African tribes
- ❖ The conflict between African tribes and the European colonialism





# SETTING

---

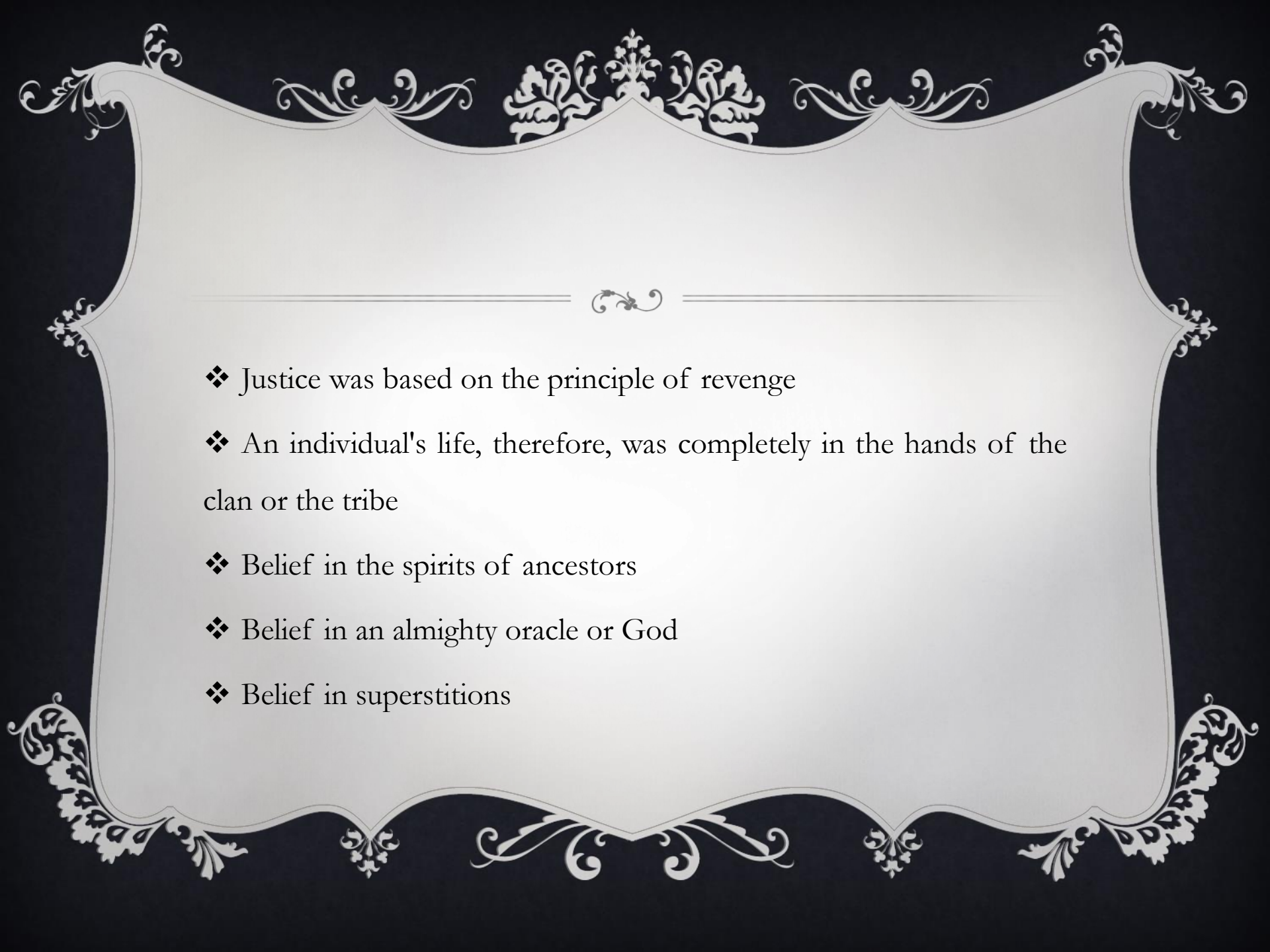
- ❖ Umuofia, a cluster of villages
- ❖ Mbaino, a cluster of villages

# CHARACTERS

- ❖ Okonkwo – the strongest man in the Ibo tribe
- ❖ Unoka – Okonkwo's father
- ❖ Nwoye – Okonkwo's son
- ❖ Ekwefi - Okonkwo's second wife
- ❖ Okoye – Unoka's friend
- ❖ Ikemefuna - the ill-fated boy from Mbaino
- ❖ Ezeugo -
- ❖ Ogbuefi Udo – A Member of Ibo whose wife is murdered
- ❖ Nwakibie – a wealthy farmer

# IBO SOCIETY

- ❖ People were respected and publicly honoured for physical strength.
- ❖ A person is judged on his or her own performance and not on the basis of the status of the parents.
- ❖ Titles and number of wives were the signifiers of one's wealth
- ❖ Usage of proverbs in day-to-day conversations
- ❖ Very rigid and cruel society in many ways

- 
- 
- ❖ Justice was based on the principle of revenge
  - ❖ An individual's life, therefore, was completely in the hands of the clan or the tribe
  - ❖ Belief in the spirits of ancestors
  - ❖ Belief in an almighty oracle or God
  - ❖ Belief in superstitions



# OKONKWO IS INTRODUCED

- ❖ The Protagonist of the novel, Okonkwo, is introduced in the first chapter
- ❖ Okonkwo was known for being the strongest person in and around the village
- ❖ When he was eighteen he had defeated the strongest man, Amalinze, in a wrestling contest.
- ❖ Now he is thirty eight and he is still considered to be very strong person.
- ❖ Short tempered and had very little patience.
- ❖ Looked down upon those who were physically weak.





## CONTRAST BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON

---

- ❖ Okonkwo's father, Unoka, was physically weak therefore Okonkwo had no respect for him.
- ❖ Unoka was lazy, and bad at managing household affairs but he was famous for his musical qualities
- ❖ Borrowed money from friends and neighbours and was in debts
- ❖ Okonkwo was good at managing his household affairs and he had become quite rich



# MURDER IN THE VILLAGE

---

- ❖ Residents of Umuofia to gather at the market place the next day
- ❖ The next morning saw about ten thousand men gathered to listen to Ezeugo,
- ❖ Wife of Ogbuefi Udo, had been murdered by residents of Mbaino, a neighbouring cluster of villages.
- ❖ Compensation of a virgin girl and a young man or the onslaught of a war.

## MBAINO TO PAY COMPENSATION

- ❖ Mbaino to pay the compensation as the Ibo tribe is so strong and knows black magic
- ❖ The girl was to replace the murdered wife of Udo
- ❖ While the boy's fate would be decided by the residents of Umuofia later
- ❖ Ikemefuna, came to live in Okonkwo's house during the interim period
- ❖ Okonkwo handed over Ikemefuna to the charge of his second wife whose own son Nwoye was of the same age



# OKONKWO'S HARD WORK

- ❖ Okonkwo was hard-working and optimist
- ❖ Okonkwo has no resources of his own
- ❖ He borrows 800 yam seeds from a wealthy fanner Nwakibie and 400 from another friend of his father.
- ❖ The practice of sharecropping - Okonkwo would be entitled to only one - third of the total crop.
- ❖ First time, No rain, crops failed.
- ❖ Second time, a scorching sun, crops failed
- ❖ Third times, excessive rains, destroyed everything.
- ❖ Worst year for Okonkwo but he was optimistic



❖ After initial resistance, Ikemefuna feels at home at Okonkwo's household

❖ He becomes friendly with Nwoye, Okonkwo's son

❖ He earns the love of Okonkwo himself,

❖ Okonkwo never shows his emotions openly as he considers this to be weakness of a man.

❖ Ikemefuna calls Okonkwo his father.

# THE FEAST OF THE NEW YAM

- ❖ The Feast of the New Yam in Umuofia which is held just before the harvesting begins
- ❖ It coincides with the beginning of the new year.
- ❖ Ani, the goddess of earth and fertility is honoured.
- ❖ There is a lot of feasting on this occasion.
- ❖ Okonkwo's household also celebrated the feast
- ❖ The second day of the celebrations was for wrestling





## IKEMEFUNA'S POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON NWOYE

---

- ❖ Ikemefuna's stay in Okonkwo's home for three years
- ❖ has had a very positive influence on Nwoye.
- ❖ Nwoye was lazy earlier but now quite enthused about undertaking difficult masculine tasks like splitting wood or pounding food
- ❖ Okonkwo considered this change to be a result of Ikemefuna's company.
- ❖ He had grown quite fond of Ikemefuna.



## CLAN'S ORDER TO KILL IKEMEFUNA

---

- ❖ Ogbuezi Ezeudu brought him the unhappy news that the clan had finally decided to kill Ikemefuna.
- ❖ Ogbuezi suggests not to be party in this as Ikemefuna is like his own son
- ❖ The next Ikemefuna was informed that he would be taken home the next day.

# IKEMEFUNA IS KILLED

- ❖ In the morning of the next day, Ikemefuna Okonkwo and other men left for Mbaino
- ❖ At sunset they were in the midst of a jungle. One of the men struck Ikemefuna with his machet (a kind of sword).
- ❖ Ikemefuna cried and appealed to Okonkwo for help but Okonkwo too struck him down with his machet.
- ❖ Okonkwo proves to his tribe men that he is not weak man

**❖ End of the first part**



An ornate, light gray decorative frame with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns, set against a dark background. The frame has a central horizontal line with a small decorative flourish in the middle.

**THANK YOU**