

Balance is Better than Extreme

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Most people believe that good literal work is perceived based on its style of writing and the plot of the novel. However, in reality, themes also contribute a lot to literal writing. This can be well illustrated in the literal writing of Chinua Achebe, “[Things Fall Apart](#),” and also in Robert Louis’ “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.” Both the stories share the same social theme concerning balance in a human being. Therefore, in this paper, we are going to illustrate that the idea of balance is better than extreme as a theme based on the illustrations from both books.

In the novel “Things Fall Apart,” the title implies that in case of no proper balance, things may end up falling apart. The notion of balancing in the book is considered to be an important theme. It starts with the excerpt from Yeast’s poem, The Second Coming; the idea of balance has been considered important since, without balance, order is lost. The novel illustrates a system of balance that was highly dependent on the Ibo culture. For instance, the authors wrote “Even as a little boy he had resented his father’s failure and weakness, and even now he still remembered how he had suffered when a playmate had told him that his father was agbala. That was how Okonkwo first came to know that agbala was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken the title” (Achebe 2.12). This shows that in the culture, the women were being considered to be weaker than men and therefore its an insult to male people to be called “agbada.” Okwonko who knew that it meant in the culture of the Igbo felt ashamed that someone might call him or relate his male relationship with the name “agbala.”

It was only the moment when the system was upset that things started falling apart. The Okonkwo, the Ibo’s autonomy, and the Ibo religion were subjected to the demise of the extreme imbalance concerning their female and the male aspects. The male and female aspects could be described in terms of the physical energy and strength of the male, the external people, and the women’s internal, nurturing, and passive strength. It’s this imbalance towards the men’s side that has led to the disruption of the culture and the people.

The distraction was witnessed through the aspect of justice, Christianity, and many more. The aspect of justice and fairness mattered most in the culture of Igbo, and it was administered by complex social institutions in the right way. The arrival of the British upset the balance that was being used since they claimed that it was barbaric, and they considered this claim to impose their laws, which were seen by the people of Igbo as inhuman and hypocritical. This eventually led to the death of Okonkwo due to the miscarriage of justice by the British District Commissioner.

The other aspect that falls in the same way is religion, which was centered on the worship of the ancestors and the male gods. The only female god was the earth goddess, but Okonkwo kept on offending this goddess in the story so that he could save his masculine image the moment he beat his wife in the week of peace and when he strokes down the adopted son. The main faction of the gods

was to help in the war and to assist in the yearly harvest of the yam crops. The moment the Christian religion was introduced in the clans, the people were dissatisfied, and they were drawn to it, including Nwoye, who converted to Christianity. This led to disagreement in different families, i.e., “[Okonkwo to Nwoye after he converts to Christianity]: ‘Where have you been?’ he stammered... ‘Answer me,’ roared Okonkwo, ‘before I kill you!’ He seized a heavy stick that lay on the dwarf wall and hit him two or three savage blows (Achebe 17.16-19).” This illustrates the disagreement and the fight that resulted due to religious conversion.

For the aspect of Robert Louis’ novel, the duality of human nature is considered to be the main theme that runs throughout the novel. The “Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” depends on their belief that the person can balance between the good and the evil halves. However, the moment they come in contact with Hyde, all of their emotions immediately start to stray from their usual behaviors. For instance, in the beginning, “...for they were as wild as harpies... I never saw a circle of such hateful face” (Louis 9). The people at this time were very proper, and they didn’t allow a lot of their emotions to show, but the moment Mr. Hyde trampled a little girl, most individuals were forced to hold back their women, calm and well-mannered. “I did not think you would have lied” (Louis 15). Utterson was always considered to be an honest and very trustworthy person. However, the moment he first meets Hyde, he decides to go against his usual norms and behaviors and then answers the questions he is being asked with lies, and then he is caught by Hyde in the act.

Other people made a tough stand, like Jekyll, who started as a constant being and thus became a good person and stuck to those norms and the usual routine until the primary instinct came up. He finally ends up cracking it under pressure and uses the knowledge he has to brew the elixir to change his alter ego and satisfy his desires. Therefore, from the paper, we have realized that, in reality, balance is better than extreme since it presents itself both in good and evil or some other ways. Therefore, a slight change in the normal manner makes a person quickly adjust to the surroundings.

Works Cited

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Paris: William Heinemann Ltd, 1958.

Louis, Stevenson Robert. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1886.