

Things fall apart: a tragedy assignment

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Things Fall Apart contains tragic conventions throughout the novel and Ginkgo's ability to be categorized as a tragic hero due to attributes including his mixed traits, tragic fall, tragic flaw, and reversal of fortune. However, there is a lack of catharsis. Awoken is seen as " a man of action, a man of war and a member of high status in the Gobo village (Achebe 10). He holds the prominent position of village clansman, for the reason that he had shown extraordinary skill in intertribal warfare. Ginkgo's hard work had made him a wealthy farmer and a recognized individual among the nine villages of muffin and beyond.

Awoken is not all good, however, he is a character is mixed traits. He has a fiery, volatile temper and physically abuses his wives and children regularly. He sees violence as a constant, efficient answer to his problems, and has little patience with men less successful than himself. Awoken is neither thoroughly good nor evil, but of mixed qualities. The tragic fall of Awoken begins when an accidental murder of a virgin takes place and Awoken ends up adopting a boy named Shameful from another village. Awoken comes to love him like a son.

After three years, though, the ripe decides that Shameful must die. When the men of Muffin take Shameful into the forest to slaughter him, Awoken actually participates in the murder. Although he's just killed his adoptive son, Awoken shows no emotion because he does not want to be perceived as weak like his own father was. Inside, though, Awoken feels painful guilt and regret. Things only continue to become worse from there. During a funeral, Awoken accidentally shoots and kills the dead man's son and is exiled for seven years to his mother's homeland, Ambulant for his crime.

It is there that he learns of the coming of the white missionaries whose arrival signals the beginning of the end for the Gobo people. They bring Christianity and win over Gobo outcasts as their first converts. As the Christian religion gains legitimacy, more and more Gobo people are converted. Just when Awoken has finished his seven-year sentence and is allowed to return home, his son Annoy converts to Christianity. Awoken is so bent out of shape that he disowns his son.

Then, after a Christian convert desecrates an gewgaws, and in return the hurt is burnt down, Awoken and five other men are imprisoned and beaten by the missionaries until 250 bags of cowries is paid. Contemplating revenge, the Gobo people hold a war council and Awoken advocates for aggressive action. However, during the council, a court messenger from the missionaries arrives and tells the men to sojourn the conference. Infuriated, Awoken kills him. Realizing that his clan will not go to war against the white men, the proud, devastated Awoken hangs himself. Ginkgo's tragic fall also shows his reversal of fortune.

He went from a well-respected warrior to a man who takes his life and becomes an abomination among his village. Ginkgo's tragic flaw is his fear of weakness and failure. He did not want to be like his father, whom always was indebted to several people, was a poor farmer, could barely feed his family, and a lover of music. His tragic flaw makes him volatile, impulsive and always ready to pounce in order to keep a facade of virility. Awoken tries so hard to be the exact opposite of his father that he ends up making poor decisions that ultimately lead to his self-inflicted demise.

There is no notable catharsis in Things Fall Apart. This is where the novel diverges from Aristotle definition of a tragedy. The reader is not left feeling relieved or elated due to the realization that Ginkgo's resistance to the Christian missionaries was useless. His death solved nothing and the Gobo people's way of live was still expiring. Things Fall Apart shows a foreign approach to classical Western tragedy. The novel included tragic conventions and an appealing standpoint of a tragic hero. While interestingly unconventional, Things Fall Apart can be classified as a tragedy, and Awoken as a tragic hero.