

Okonkwo and sonjara

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The definition of hero is a man admired for his achievements and qualities, especially one displaying great courage. The presence of a hero has been around in nearly every novel of some nature. Throughout the book, *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe presents many aspects of how the tragic hero, Okonkwo, portrays the author's own characterization of a tragic hero.

Okonkwo is a tragic hero in the typical sense: although he is a superior character, his tragic flaw, the equation of manliness with rashness, anger, violence, and arrogance brings about his own destruction. Okonkwo, the main protagonist of the novel, expresses many stereotypical personality traits of a hero.

The narrator states, " At an early age he had achieved fame as the greatest wrestler in all of the land. "(27). In the village Umuofia, where he lived as well as the other tribal villages, this title was held with great esteem. Gaining this title was a huge indicator of one's manliness. Another characteristic of being manly is how well one performs in war. He was not afraid of war. He was a man of action, a man of war.

("). Early in Okonkwo's life, he had shown incredible proficiency in two inter-tribal wars. War is where generally a young man like Okonkwo grows to be a hero. At a young age, Okonkwo was supporting his family instead of his father, Unoka, supporting his own family. Okonkwo had started a farm of yams in his early teens and survived through one of the worst drought seasons the elders of the tribe could remember. Although, because of these accomplishments happening at such a young age, Okonkwo took the success to his heart and became very arrogant in every aspect of his life. Okonkwo had achieved great success when most kids his age were helping their

fathers, " An old man said about Okonkwo 'looking at a king's mouth, one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast'"(26).

The arrogance in his life was focused in and around his tribe and daily life. When at a meeting to discuss the next ancestral feast, Okonkwo stated to a man with no title, " This meeting is for men"(26). Arrogance is characteristic of a tragic hero because near the end of the novel, Okonkwo kills the messenger to the courts in hopes that the tribe will stand behind him in a war. Violence to Okonkwo is the only way he knows how to enforce his rules around his house. " Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children. "(13).

He had not gained anything from his father. Not so much as a barn or even a yam. Okonkwo despised his father for everything he did and did not do. So, when he got a hint of any trait of his father in his family, especially his oldest son Nwoye, he would beat his son, " Okonkwo's first son, Nwoye, was then twelve years old but already causing his father great anxiety for his insipient laziness. At any rate, that was how it looked to his father, and sought to correct him by constant nagging and beating. "(13). The destruction of Okonkwo was revealed slowly throughout the book.

His inability to have patience towards anyone with a trait like his fathers was a slow leak of his sanity throughout the book, " He had no patience with unsuccessful men"(4). Okonkwo had grown up so fast that he had learned the conservative views of the elders before the white missionaries had come. His personality did not allow change. His view was that hard work, effort, and

what you had in terms of material values was the true way of living and if you didn't have any of those you were not worthy for his praise or acknowledgement. For him to witness the values and beliefs of the tribal elders be diminished by the European culture and see that his society, the one where you earned your life, be turned to one that is totally different was incomprehensible. The idea of a tragic hero over just a hero is that they have all of the behavioral traits that a hero does but in addition, they have a trait like violence or arrogance to pull away and terminate all of the heroic traits. Okonkwo's death of hanging himself depicts the irony in that a man of such high esteem and tribal values would kill himself.