

# Rivki eckstein

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



Rivki Eckstein Mrs. Skaist Things Fall Apart 10/23/12 In the novel Things Fall Apart, by Chinua Achebe, Okonkwo portrays his masculinity, even if it means cheating people close to him. Things Fall Apart is about the main character, Okonkwo, who is a respected leader in the Umuofia tribe of the Igbo. Throughout his life, Okonkwo does everything he can to never show signs of his father, who was known for his laziness and weakness. In the end of the novel Okonkwo's bad traits overshadow his good traits and he kills himself. Okonkwo's perspective of a successful is one who is a brave, fearless, strong person. Okonkwo thus " had no patience with unsuccessful men. He had no patience with his father" (3) Okonkwo did not want to be like his father because his father was not what Okonkwo thought was a man, he had feminine characteristics. His father was not a successful, brave, fearless or a strong person. Okonkwo's wives and children lived in fear of his temper. For example, If his wives wouldn't prepare dinner on time he beat them. " Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness"(13). Okonkwo's mistaken concept of masculinity often leads him to foolishness. He believes it is womanly to show signs of weakness, which is why he ruled his house with a heavy hand. Yet this often leads him to hurting his beloved family. Okonkwo fell in love with a boy, Ikemefuna, whom he was asked by his tribe to guard over. Ikemefuna was like a son to him which he never had. When it was time for Ikemefuna to be killed " Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down" even though he was told not to (61). " Okonkwo never shows any emotions openly, unless it be the emotion of anger. To show affection was a sign of weakness; the only thing worth demonstrating was strength."

Okonkwo ends up killing someone he loved, just because he does not want people to see his love, because it was a sign of weakness. Okonkwo's interpretation of masculinity often gets him into choosing a foolish path. He works hard his entire life to be nothing like his father that he ends up being worse than his father. Okonkwo turns into a weak man who fears to show his true feelings towards the ones he loves. At the end of the Novel he turns weak and gives up on life.