

Student Essay on Okonkwo a "tragic hero"

Okonkwo a "tragic hero" by Chinua Achebe

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Essay

I think the aspects of the "tragic hero" apply to the novel "Things Fall Apart", because the first definition of "tragedy" and "tragic hero" seem to fit. There is a serious and important action which turns out disastrously for Okonkwo. He is the protagonist and "tragic hero". His life is ruled by a great passion, he works very hard to acquire many titles or become one of the lords of his tribe. Okonkwo's life ends tragically and he doesn't achieve his dream, so his world is thrown radically off-balance. Even so he is very famous in his region and a wealthy farmer. Then a disastrous incident happens, his own gun exploded and hits a boy's heart and he dies. The change of fortune to the depths of misery is a consequence of his tragic flaw and an error of his judgement. Owing to the incident Okonkwo has to flee from his clan for seven years. He and his family lose their standard of living and have to build up a new home. Furthermore it is a long time for them and in fact things change and whites come and destroy the tradition and culture of Umuofia. In addition to that Okonkwo loses his place among the nine masked spirits, the chance to lead a war against the whites and years to take the highest title in the clan. Finally his first son leaves the family and converts his religion. It's a tragedy for Okonkwo, because he stands for the tradition and he is full of "passionate intensity", then he falls and loses his dream. The "tragic hero" Okonkwo is supposed to move the reader to pity, because deep in his heart he isn't an evil. It may be true that he doesn't achieve his dream, but he is one of the greatest men of his time, prosperous, and has many healthy wives and children. Yet I would say it is a fulfillment of a good life, but Okonkwo doesn't become aware of this. I conclude that this makes the novel a tragedy and Okonkwo a "tragic hero".