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Conflicted Masculinities in Chinua Achebe's

Things Fall Apart (1958)

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Dedication

“If you don’t go after what you want , you will never have it”

We would like to dedicate this humble work to the most precious people in our lives:

To our beloved parents who were the reason behind our success. What we will say could never
be enough.

To the candles that enlighten our life, our daughters Ouala and Toulina.

To our dearest sisters, brothers and friends.

To my soul mate, my partner Mounir, I will never forget his support during the presentation of
this work and his encouragement in my whole life.

To all who have even a small piece of love to us.

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Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the images of conflicted masculinities in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958). The dissertation is partitioned into three chapters; the first chapter provides an overview about the concept of masculinity and its types. The second chapter reveals the pre-colonial masculinity traits and the effect of colonialism on it. The third and last chapter unveils the protraction of Achebe to the concept of masculinity. It provides a historical and descriptive analytical analysis of the different representations of masculinities in the novel. In particular, it examines the protagonists, Okonkwo and his son, Nwoye, and their opposing generational nature. Accordingly, it explores the manly traits of each of them. Further, the dissertation utilizes Connell's gender theory to scrutinize the types of conflicted masculinities in pre-colonial and colonial contexts. Thus, the current study reveals the following results: first, it proves that Okonkwo, who symbolizes the stereotype of pre-colonial masculinity, reflects a macho, hegemonic and unhealthy type of masculinity. In contrast, his son Nwoye, who is the representation of the colonial/post-colonial traits of man, represents an effeminate, non-hegemonic and healthy image of masculinity. Secondly, Achebe implements symbols that correspond with each oppositional characteristics of masculinity. Thirdly, the study reveals that the heritage of colonialism on the colonies, Nigeria specifically, affects the perception of the requirements of being man. That was uncovered through the conflicted generations and the symbols associated to their masculine qualities as depicted in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Keywords: Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, Masculinity, Conflicted Masculinities, Colonialism.

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

During the late nineteenth century, most of the African countries have witnessed paradigm shifts. Overall, this period is characterized by its rigid and strict changes in all aspects of life due to the coming of colonialism and its aftermath. One of the aspects which appears to change greatly is the concept of masculinity. As a matter of fact, the colonial regime has particularly destabilized the existing power systems and weakened the power of the elders. Therefore, African men were compelled to follow strict and severe social codes to maintain their traditional masculine traits.

With the conviction that literature is used as means to introduce or reflect the real life such as to express or convey ideas and perspectives that are linked to the period which is produced, a considerable number of African writers intended to transform their own views towards the concept of masculinity in their literary works. Each writer sought to write about 'man' in different ways. In parallel, the concept of masculinity caught the attention of many researchers and scholars as Raewyn Connell. Indeed, she is one of the scholars who is very interested in gender studies. Therefore, she has published many books which tackle the concept of masculinity. Moreover, Connell produced a theory named gender order theory, which identifies multiple masculinities that vary according to time, culture and the individual.

As far as literature is concerned, Chinua Achebe, as one of the prominent writers of the colonialism period, challenged to write about the concept of masculinity in his novel *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe intended to portray different types of masculinities through his characters who are from different generations. He tended to shed light on the conflict between the different images of masculinities, between the first and second generations i.e., father and son in which colonialism was one of the main reasons behind this conflicted nature.

2. The Statement of The Problem

Chinua Achebe is a Nigerian writer, novelist, poet and critic who is regarded as the dominant figure of African literature, which earned him the title The father of African literature. Although Achebe has received a significant number of honorable degrees and awards as well as a commonwealth poetry prize in 1972, he never gained the Nobel Prize of literature.

Things Fall Apart, Achebe's first novel, is considered as an ideal example of a postcolonial novel, through which Achebe was able to deliver the pre-existing culture of African society. Moreover, he was able to erase the misconceptions that Africans are uncivilized and inferior which the colonizer sought to trace on the reader's minds. The novel carries between its pages a wide range of themes.

One of these controversial themes is gender perspectives. In order to shed light on the traditional traits of masculinity that, in turn, has been threatened by the coming of colonialism, Achebe depicted two characters, Okonkwo and Nwoye, who belong to different generations. Each one of these two characters has different views towards masculinity. Accordingly, this dissertation seeks to investigate the different representations of conflicted masculinities in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

3. Aims of the Study

This work will analyze the conflicted masculinities in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, putting more emphasis on the types of masculinities that both Okonkwo and Nwoye represent. Achebe reveals through his work the different views that the two aforementioned characters have in terms of masculinity and the conflict between them as well.

4. Research Questions

To outreach the current research's objectives, the following questions are asked:

1. How does the meaning of masculinity change through time and context?
2. What are the representational characteristics of Nigerian masculinity?
3. How does Chinua Achebe portray masculinity in *Things Fall Apart*?

5. Hypothesis

To answer the aforementioned questions, the following hypotheses are formulated as follows:

1- Depending on the context and background, masculinity can take different meanings.

2- The characteristics of Nigerian masculinity may be characterized differently according to historical background effects.

3- Chinua Achebe addresses the different representations of masculinity in *Things Fall Apart*.

6. Research Methodology

The study under investigation is qualitative in nature. It adopts the descriptive analytical method, to answer the stated questions and attain the objectives of this study. The analysis depends on selected corpora from the novel, *Things Fall Apart*, and Connell's theory of classification of the types of masculinity.

7. Literature Review

Things Fall Apart is considered the first and the most famous novel of Chinua Achebe. It narrates the story of the pre-colonial Nigerian life and the coming of European colonizers during the nineteenth century. It encompasses several themes as well as the self and the other, hybridity and conflicted masculinities. It is viewed as an archetype to modern African

novels in the English language. Therefore, a considerable number of researchers have studied and interpreted it in different manners.

Countering Masculinity: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and the rise of feminist assertiveness of the female Nigerian writers is an article which was written by the authors Akingbe Niyi and Ogunyemi Christopher Babatunde in 2017. The writers tackled the point of view of the third generation of the female Nigerian writers against the masculine violence derived from Okonkwo's tempestuous trajectory. This article is useful in the case of explaining how toxic masculinity affects humans and society. However, it fails to reveal the positive side of this masculinity in the case of defense.

Masculinity and cultural conflict in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is an article written By Tobalase Adegbite O. It reviewed the discourse of masculinity and culture clash by gendering the two societies in focus –western culture and African traditional culture in order to ascertain what is masculine and what is feminine. Tobalase tackled this point according to the personal beliefs of Okonkwo on the handling and treatment of issues. The beating of women, the involvement in the killing of Ikemefuna, the agitation to wage war against the white missionary both in Umuofia and Mbanta are some issues where Okonkwo does not receive support from other men in the society, and his reason for calling them effeminate. Moreover, the author presented Okonkwo versus Nwoye. This research is helpful because of its large amount of information about masculinity and especially the conflict between its representations, but it does not focus on mentioning the other part of conflicted masculinities as well as Okonkwo versus Unoka.

8. The Structure of the Dissertation

The present work is threefold. In the first chapter that is entitled “Masculinity Studies: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework, historical overviews of masculinity with special focus on the western views of aforementioned concepts are provided in order to

understand the reason behind its emergence. More accurately, several definitions of masculinity according to different scholars are presented as well as Connell and Michael Kimmel. Following that, several perspectives of masculinity are intentionally discussed. Also, the chapter focuses on exhibition of the various types of masculinity.

The second chapter is entitled “Masculinity in Nigeria: A Postcolonial Context, a brief account of African societies and cultures before colonialism and the effects that have been made during colonialism are tackled. In addition, the chapter demonstrates the concept of masculinity according to the Nigerian people before and during the colonial oppression through focusing on different studies that have been done to understand how this concept is constructed. Then, it presents Nigerian literature which is divided into three generations to tackle the issue of masculinity and show the different visions of some writers towards the concept and how they depict them in their writings.

In the third chapter; the practical one, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is analyzed according to what has been mentioned before in order to elaborate the different images of conflicted masculinities, in particular Nigerian society. It discusses the images of these conflicted masculinities through the two main characters Okonkwo and Nwoye.

CHAPTER ONE

Masculinity Studies: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

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Introduction

Defining masculinity tends to be an obvious matter since the term has been taken for granted. It is easily known from a series of characteristics: muscular, strong, brave and hard. Also, it can be simply defined as the opposite of Femininity. The rise of feminism and its confrontations with men developed the sense of how both genders can be defined. Thus, as the meaning of femininity becomes theoretically identified, masculinity turns to be limited just to feminist descriptions and characterizations. Consequently, conceptualizing masculinity starts to have more scientific standards that are not limited to one's beliefs, culture and tradition. The current chapter primarily views the various meanings of masculinity through history. Several definitions will be highlighted about masculinities according to different scholars. Moreover, the perspectives of masculinity will be discussed namely; biological, anthropological, psychological and sociological. Also, it sheds light on various types of masculinities.

1.1 Historical Overview of Masculinity

Masculinity is the qualities, attributes, or behaviors that are considered typical of and appropriate for men or boys. The standards and measures of masculinity are changeable according to different cultures, subcultures, races and historical periods (Kimmel and Aronson xxiii). Moreover, what is meant to be masculine is varied by time and place (Reeser 2); therefore, Raewyn Connell has emphasized the concept of masculinities rather than a single masculinity. In her book *Masculinities*, Connell argues that masculinity is not a coherent concept. Thus, it is difficult to produce a generalized scientific definition. In this sense, it is possible to find different standards and meanings of masculinity through different history periods.

Since femininity has appeared in America in the 1848 and masculinity emerged as a reaction to it, this study intentionally focuses on the western views of masculinity. Commonly, masculinity is associated with force and physical strength, therefore, in the 19th century, boxing was professionalized throughout America and Europe. It focused on the physical and

confrontational aspects of masculinity (Thrasher 51). Moreover, boxing did not just reflect the bloodiness of life, rather this sport shaped violence into art, Bare-knuckle fighting without gloves showed the manly art and prize fighting also defined masculinity (Gorn 145-146).

Afterwards, the traditional views that have been associated with masculinity are gradually changed in 1963. The social theorist Erving Goffman's seminal work on stigma management showed a list of characteristics specified to American masculine men. In America, there is only one complete unblushing male: a young, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of college education, fully employed, married, white, civilized, of good skin, weight and height, and a recent record in sports (128).

In 1974, Writing, R. Gould focused on the importance of the men's role in the identities of adult men, as masculinity is often measured by how much a man contributes economically to the family. Masculinity is also guaranteed by denying any semblance of feeling, fineness, femininity, or any traits related to women. Predominantly, the construction of masculinity became most valued in the later part of the 20th century.

With the turn of the 21st century, masculinity has become one that is independent, sexually assertive, and energetic among others considered to be normative markers of manhood like strong, aggressive or dominator. There are some evidences of this construction developing slightly. In 2008, a study was done by Julia Heiman, the director of The Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, it included interviews with more than 27,000 randomly selected men from eight countries (Germany, U.S., U.K., Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Italy and France). The study displayed that men frequently rank good health, a harmonic family life and a good relationship with their partner as more important to their quality of life than physical attractiveness and success with women.

1.2 Defining Masculinity

Herbert Sussman argued that "Not all men are men" i.e., not all men born male become real men according to many social standards related to manliness or masculinity (1).

Masculinity is not a single model valid for all contexts, periods and cultures. It can take different shapes according to a given culture and change over time (Kimmel as cited in Alvarez 49).

The concept of masculinity is complex and unstable. Defining masculinity is a complicated process. Basically, masculinity is associated with sex and gender. However, the difference between them is not clear for all and can mistakenly be used interchangeably. Thus, it is necessary to shed light on the difference between sex and gender.

Sex and gender are two different concepts. Herbert Sussman, in his book *Masculine Identities*, differentiates between them. According to him, sex refers to the biological basis of the self. One is born with the female or male organs, chromosome and hormonal features while gender refers to the social expectations or the definitions that are associated with being male or female (12).

As male gender is related to one's cultural and social associations, it is hard to limit masculinity to one definition or even a generalizing scientific one. That is why Connell postulates that "All societies have cultural accounts of gender, but not all have the concept of masculinity" (67). He asserts that even if a culture of a given society pinpoints the characteristics of gender and gender role, yet not all accounts give a clear concept of what it means to be masculine.

Masculinity, in its modern usage, presupposes contradicted type of person is the reason behind any one's attitudes or behaviors as well as the one who is not a masculine person may act differently by being peaceable rather than violent, propitiatory rather than authoritative and uninterested in sexual conquest. This conception presupposes belief in individual differences and personal agency; it was improved in early modern Europe in the period of the growth of the colonial Empire and capitalist economic relations (Connell 67-68).

Moreover, Connell argues that masculinity is inherently relational. She means that masculinity does not exist alone and its nature could never be found except in opposition with

femininity. Additionally, the culture that does not treat men and women as bearers of polarized character, it does not have the concept of masculinity (Connell 68).

Definitions of masculinity have mostly taken the cultural point of view for granted, but have followed different strategies to characterize who is masculine and who is not. Accordingly, four main strategies have been set out, they view masculinity from different perspectives (69).

1.2.1 Essentialist Definition of Masculinity

Essentialism claims that behavior is determined by innate biological qualities (Sussman 13). The essentialists prescribe a set of traits that may have been used to define the core of the masculine, and take into consideration the lives of men on that. In other words, the essentialists define masculinity by relating it to fundamental traits that supposedly shape the essence of masculinity. The psychologist Sigmund Freud used the essentialist definition when he compared masculinity with activity as contrast to feminine passivity (236). He attempted to take the meaning of masculinity in relation to the taints of risk taking, aggression, and responsibility. Therefore, the concept of masculinity in this sense becomes arbitrary which leads to the failure of essentialist approach (69).

1.2.2 Semiotic Definition of Masculinity

Semiotic approaches abandon the level of personality and define masculinity as a system of symbolic differences in which masculine and feminine places are contrasted. The approach yields to more than an abstract contrast between masculinity and femininity. Moreover, masculinity is an unmarked concept, the place of symbolic authority. However, the semiotic approach is limited to its scope of masculinity/femininity binaries (70).

Connell also argues that masculinity is not just a character type or a behavioral norm, rather it is considered as part of the relationships' process between man and woman through which they perform gendered lives (71). Finally, the writer briefly defines masculinity as an area

which could be found in gender relations. Men and women may engage on that area in gender through doing different actions which, in turn, affects personality, bodily experience and culture (71).

1.2.3 Social Construction of Masculinities

The social construction is the belief that the behavior of each sex is constructed or shaped by the society (Sussman 3). According to social constructionists, such as Michal Kimmel and Michal Messner, men make themselves, through actively constructing their masculinity within a social and historical context. Masculinity is not the manifestation of inner essence, but it is constructed socially. Likewise, it does not flow into reality from biological foundations, but is generated by culture (xvii).

Kimmel and Messner argued that "Men are not born; they are made" (xvii). They view that being a man is to act in society as a man, as a gendered being. In other words, being born with a male sex does not mean that the person has an identity of a man. Accordingly, the meaning of masculinity is neither fixed nor universal as it varies from culture to culture. The conceptualization of masculinity is culturally related. Therefore, the males become men in the United States in a way that is very different from men in Asia or Africa.

Moreover, masculinity varies historically by accepting the dynamics of change through time. Additionally, the meaning of masculinity is not constant over the course of any man's life, for it changes as he grows and matures. The issues, such as education, work, marriage or fatherhood that a man faces during his life leads him to prove himself and feel successful. The social institutions in which he attempts to enact his definitions of masculinity change during his life. Therefore, the meaning of masculinity varies intra-physically, what means to be man keeps changing through time. Thus, the term masculinities is preferred over masculinity because masculinity means different things to different people in different cultures and in different historical periods (Kimmel and Messner xvii-xviii).

1.3 Perspectives of Masculinity

Diverse conceptualizations have been developed by different schools of thought to identify the meaning of masculinity. Since the early 1990s, there have been several approaches to the study of masculinity in Europe, Australia and North America, and recently in Africa. In Europe and North America, researchers have examined masculinity for a long time (Mutunda 21) from different theoretical perspectives: biological, anthropological, psychological and sociological. Each of these perspectives contributes to the comprehension of the meaning of masculinity and bounded in demonstrating how gender works in certain cultures (Kimmel and Messner xiii).

1.3.1 Biological Perspectives

Biological theorists, like D.F Swaab, have focused on the ways in which connate biological differences between males and females form different social behaviors (Kimmel and Messner xiii). Gender behavior should be linked with genetic factors. Such a view is explained by Steven Goldberg who advances the notion that the inferior or dependent position of women is the result of the innate differences between males and females. In *The inevitability of Patriarchy*, Goldberg also asserts that the hormones affect males to become aggressive. Therefore, he turns into a dominator toward women (as cited in Mutunda 21).

John Beynon states that masculinity is "a standardized container, fixed by biology, into which all men can be placed, something natural that can even be measured in terms of physical attributes" (2). This view assumes that, according to the biological theory, men are born with masculinity as part of their genetic make-up. Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner disagree with Beynon insisting that although biological differences between men and women influence one's attitude, they do not exactly determine our behavior as men or women as the

"psychological and social differences are more the result of the way cultures interpret, shape, and modify these biological inheritances" (Kimmel and Messner xiv).

1.3.2 Anthropological Perspective

Anthropologists embrace different points of views regarding masculinity. Some anthropologists, such as Margaret Mead, have assumed that certain cultural adaptations to the environment cause the universality of gender differences. Others have argued that the cultural variations of gender roles attempt to explain the fluidity of gender and the priority of cultural organization (Kimmel and Messner xiv).

Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox assert that the notion of sexual division of labor is universal because of the different nature of males and females. They argue, in their work *The Imperial Animal*, that nature sought for mother and child to be together since the mother is considered the source of emotional security and food; therefore, many cultures have specified multiple behaviors for women that mostly focus on nurturance and emotional connection (304). Many scholars have challenged this specific anthropological school of thought. The American anthropologist Margaret Mead's work is the best-known challenge to this anthropological argument. Mead insists that the diversity among cultures in their prescriptions of gender roles is the reason behind these differences (Kimmel and Aronson xx).

In her classical study, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, the writer argues that there were no ultimate personality differences between men and women. Among the Arapesh of New Guinea, for instance, it is not just the women but the men too, who are kind, soft and non-aggressive, while, among the Mundugumor, also of New Guinea, both sexes are offensive and aggressive. Yet, in another New Guinean society, the Tchambuli, the stereotypes are reversed; it is men who decorate themselves, are heeded in art, theater, and petty gossip, whereas women are unadorned, active, and are interested in such practical tasks as raising children and fishing. Mead concludes that such information leads to great doubt on the biological

or anthropological basis of gender behavior and strongly supports the argument that sex-linked behavioral characteristics and activities are the result of social conditions (310-322).

The American anthropologist Patricia Draper asserts that there are societies where there is little division of labor. In such societies, men and women may engage in multiple activities, but women remain doing their domestic chores. In her study on the Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, she shows that women expand from 60 to 80 percent of the daily food supply. Their tasks require a great effort, since they go far from their camps. Both women and men are likely to be absent from the camp. The women are able to understand the meaning of animal tracks and provide precious information for male hunters "the women also have the ability to discriminate among hundreds of edible and inedible species of plants at various stages in their life cycle" (83).

All in all, it is equitable to say that the different behavioral characteristics are not the outcome of biological differences between men and women. In other words, the biological determinism is merely another kind of arm used to maintain inequalities.

1.3.3 Psychological Perspective

Psychological models have contributed to the discussion of gender roles. They have specified the developmental sequences for both males and females. Psychological theorists, such as Freud, Erikson and Kohlberg consider independence and autonomy the outcome of psychological distancing from the mother, or proposed a sequence that placed the ability for abstract reason as the developmental stage behind relational reasoning. Since, according to these scholars, it is logical for males to show independence and the capacity for abstract reasoning (Kimmel and Messser xiv). Males are more successful at negotiating these psychological stages while women fall behind men in developmental success (xv).

Many feminist theorists, as Nancy Chodorow, have contested by this psychological model, specifically those who do not believe that male children have higher capacity for abstract reasoning. Instead, they have related gender differences with the social context. For instance,

Chodorow explains the reason why females are able to take care of children and develop stronger emotional ties with them than males do. She suggests that the identification is complicated for boys, since they must psychologically separate from their mothers and model themselves after the father who is mostly absent from home.

As a result, boys become more emotionally separated and suppressed than girls, while girls are far from this psychological separation since mothers and daughters sustain a continuing relationship with one another. Hence, daughters gain the psychological capability for mothering, and "feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does" (Chodorow 44). Chodorow refused the idea of a biological construct of male superiority; she rather argues that the fundamental differences between the sexes are socially constructed and, hence, subjected to be reviewed and altered (15-16).

1.3.4 Sociological Perspective

Besides the aforementioned perspectives that help to understand the meaning of masculinity, sociological models have stressed how socialization of boys and girls involves accommodations to sex roles specific to one's biological sex. Functionalist theory advances that the established institutions of society is the source of learning to people such as family, schools, and religious organizations. Therefore, they act in ways that are socially suitable and agreeable to their biological sex (Mutunda 27).

Sex role theorists assert that there are ranges of attributes, behaviors and attitudes which are appropriate for males and females. Likewise, the reproductive role of women has evolved that their gender role to a domestic one involves caring, rearing, and nursing children, because they remain at home whereas the biology of men fits their role of the economic provider and family protector (Kimmel and Messer xv).

The essential explanation for the distribution of the roles between the males and females lies in the fact that the caring and nursing of children sets a strong primacy of the connection between the mother and her child. This in turn confirms the assumption that the man who is excluded from these biological functions should be specialized in alternative directions (Parsons 23).

However, sex-role-based gender concepts have resulted in number of problems. Different schools of thought have questioned this theory as it does not address the fact that masculine characteristics are valued more than the feminine ones, and suppose that gender forms are the substance of one's identity. The greatest challenge comes from feminist scholars who have noticed the way scholars and critics denied the traditional notions of sex roles as biological or pre-existing norms. Instead, they argue that masculinity is a socially and culturally constructed ideology (Mutunda 28). Feminists view gender as a set of anticipations or expectations that is created within the context of a particular social and economic structure and is reproduced and transmitted through a process of social learning. Thus, these expectations become fundamental components of our characters.

Following the feminist argument, many sociologists like Raewyn Connell in Australia and others in North America and Europe assert that masculinity is a social construct rather than a biological category. Moreover, they posit that masculinity is defined in relation to femininity. In addition, masculinity is a site of interconnection and tension with other sources of social differentiation, including age and class (Mutunda 28). Although all the hereby perspectives involve in the process of understanding the meaning of masculinity, each has limited capability to demonstrate how gender really works in any culture (Kimmel and Messner xiii).

1.4 Types of Masculinity

Recently, masculinity studies have expanded largely. Whitehead and Barrett comment on the situation stating: "Today there are no areas of men's activities that have not been subject to some research and debate by both women and men" (1). Indeed, this aspect can be viewed especially for Western countries. Masculinity has been defined variedly in several academic disciplines, therefore Connell asserts that there is an overarching concept of masculinity, instead there are various masculinities. Hence, this leads to the emergence of different types of masculinity which are conflicted in nature.

1.4.1 Hegemonic Versus Non-Hegemonic Masculinity

Two decades ago, the concept of hegemonic masculinity was formulated. It has affected recent thinking about men, gender and social hierarchy. The concept has provided relations between the growing research field of men's studies, popular apprehensions about men and boys, feminist accounts of patriarchy, sociological models of gender, and it has been used in applied spheres ranging from education and antiviolence work to health and counseling (Connell and Messerschmidt 830). Additionally, non-hegemonic masculinity has been associated with hegemonic masculinity by elaborating the relation between them.

Hegemony is derived from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relationships referring to the cultural dynamic through which a group demands and maintains a position of leadership in social life (12). Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (77).

The author associates the configuration of gender practice to actions man should do in specific ways, not only to mere expectations or anticipations that have been presupposed by

society through which he can continue his dominance over women. However, whenever men are incapable to do these actions; it implies that they have been considered masculine.

Hegemonic masculinity is a form that dominates other masculinities and takes a position of authority and power which depict men as being superior and women as inferior. It is seen especially when men dominate over not only women, but also fellow men of a different class or race or sexual orientation. This form of masculinity does not mean violence, instead it is the successful claim of authority. It is seen in top levels of business, governments and military (Connell 77).

Connell then categorizes three non-hegemonic categories of masculinity; subordinate, complicit and marginalized which are developed outside the spheres of power and they are usually associated with hegemonic masculinity. Firstly, hegemony connects to cultural dominance in the society as a whole within the overall framework. There are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men, hence Connell defines subordinate masculinity as the dominance and the subordination of homosexuals and gay since they are much more than cultural stigmatization. Likewise, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity; gayness is assimilated to femininity. It is acting typically as a woman which is in turn considered inappropriate and effeminate by most men. They are subordinated and expelled from the circle of legitimacy as well as named by rich vocabulary of abuse; mother's boy, cream puff, wimp geek and sissy (78-79).

Secondly, complicit masculinity is related to men who have no significant access to power. They are treated simply as slacker versions of hegemonic masculinity, since they benefit only from the patriarchal dividend and the overall subordination of women. It can be understood as another relationship among a group of men. As an example, on the difference between complicity and hegemonic masculinities, the difference between men acclaim football on TV who show the complicit masculinity and men play in the stadium who represent the hegemonic masculinity. In marriage, fatherhood and community life men with complicit masculinity often

show respect to their wives and mothers rather than showing any sort of authority, domination, and violence instead they may help in households (Connell 79-80).

Thirdly, marginalized masculinities are recognized at the moment when gender comes into contact with other structures such as class and race (Connell 80). It refers to those men who suffer from social exclusion like the Black minority in the United States or African immigrants in Europe. Connell argues that "marginalization is always relative to the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group" (80-81). Marginalized men like Black workers are oppressed and dominated in societies led by white men who shamelessly practice the unjust and despotic forms of hegemonic masculinity.

1.4.2 Toxic Versus Healthy Masculinity

Previously, traditional masculinity meant a set of norms, attitudes and behaviors associated with the notion of being male or man. Likewise, to be masculine is usually realized by being strong, aggressive, severe, or whatever that is opposite to femininity. Recently, because of the variability of masculinity according to many cultures and people, the world witnessed the emergence of new types of masculinity such as toxic masculinity and healthy masculinity (Waling 3).

The word toxic directly injects a negative effect to people. Something that is toxic is understood as being hazardous to health and should be controlled or healed. Moreover, toxic as a term has been used to describe social interactions and interrelations as toxic relationships or toxic friendships (Brown as cited in Waling 4). Toxic masculinity emerged within the mythopoeic men's movement of the 1980s. It was coined by the American farmer, writer and educator Shepherd Bliss. In 1990, Bliss told Danial Gross in an interview: "I use a medical term because I believe that like every sickness, toxic masculinity has an antidote" (quoted in Harrington 3).

During the 1990s and early 2000s, toxic masculinity spread from men's movements to wider self-help and academic and policy literature. This literature posits that if there are

emotionally distant relationships among fathers and their sons, this may lead to producing toxically masculine men since the mothers only cannot give them the right kind of masculinity. For example, the founder of the U.S. National Fatherhood Initiative, Don Eberly cited Pittman on fathering as an antidote to toxic masculinity in both his 1999 testimony to the US house judiciary committee on youth culture and violence. According to Eberly, boys who practice violence, they have possibly lived with their mothers or had the experience of emotionally absent fathers (Harrington 4-5).

Toxic masculinity as term can be used to deal with marginalized men. Terry Kupers's research on men in prison claims that toxic masculinity encompasses men's tendency of being aggressive and dominant toward others and it also includes a remarkable measure of male proclivities that lead to resistance in psychotherapy (713-714). Moreover, Deevia Bhans's study of Black South African schoolboys argues that the violence that she observed by those boys is the result of both the label of toxic masculinity and poverty (Harrington 4).

By the early 21st century, toxic masculinity spread to therapeutic and social policy settings. Since 2013, feminists started to relate misogyny, homophobia, and men's violence to toxic masculinity. In fact, they adopted the label toxic masculinity as a reaction to resurgent masculine Right Wing politics since the anti-feminisms long history has been refreshed within what scholars of media studies label "networked misogyny" which is considered as malicious strain of violence and hostility toward women. Therefore, toxic masculinity, according to feminist scholars, means violence, domination, homophobia, aggression and misogyny (Harrington 5). The proposition of the recent theorizations of inclusive masculinities was to shift away from the homophobia, misogyny especially among white masculine elite in order to stop the ongoing gender inequalities (6).

The word healthy usually gives the impression of positivity and goodness, similarly, healthy masculinity indicates present progressive changes/developments has done as a method to teach and show men or boys the responsibilities they have by being masculine (Douglass and

Boles as cited in Waling 5). "Men must take responsibility for their own masculinity" (26), argues Seidler who views that boys and men are gifted with masculinity for which they are responsible. Moreover, masculinity is usually linked with power, therefore, men or boys should bear in mind the responsibilities of having such power. Healthy masculinity is realized when men engage emotions and feelings and maintain spiritual relationship with women and other men rather than being aggressive, emotionless, and violent all the time (Nagayama Hall as cited in Waling 6)

The engagement in healthy masculinity by men and boys is useful for them and encourages the dissociation of gender inequality on the other. Accordingly, there are several developed programs that encourage men to engage in healthy masculinity as a kind of therapy (Waling 6).

1.4.3 Macho Man Versus Homosexual

One is condemned to be a male or a female since birth. According to one's sex, society imposes distinct characteristics to male and female in order to differentiate between them; for example, strength is always associated with man while sensitiveness is a trait usually connected with girls. Although society gendered males with certain characteristics, there are males who are homosexual, adopt effeminate appearance and actions. On the contrary, others still look like real men who are named macho man. It is worth mentioning that macho is not only oppositional to homosexual but also to whoever men embrace effeminate characteristics.

Theories on homosexuality showed that male homosexuals possess the characteristics of women's personality since they have female soul inside their body as well as they adopt female clothes and acts such as powdered face, dyed hair or plucked eyebrows. Thus, they transmit the overwhelming impact of effeminacy. Until the 1970s, the history of gay men's dress was dominated by two options, whether to adopt the overtly feminine styles or accept the male dress codes (Cole 125).

There were two categories of homosexuals; men adopt the overall effeminate look and others regarded themselves as homosexual but they avoid showing that. The social and legal climates in both Britain and the United States refused the overt visible gay identity, since it could lead to social exclusion (126). Tony Diaman summed up many gay men's disillusionment on how society views them as effeminate: "The straight world has told us that if we are not masculine we are homosexual, that to be homosexual means to be not masculine... one of the things we must do is redefine ourselves as homosexuals (as quoted in Cole 126). Indeed, this type of men were attacked by society. As a reaction or positive move from the effeminate stereotypes, they converted into the macho man's image as a trial of being a real man. However, they were not only clones. Andrew Holleran believes that the men who began clone style were not themselves clones. Instead, they were "people who, ironically, prided themselves consciously or unconsciously on separating themselves from the crowd" (as quoted in Cole).

The term macho is implied to deal with the traditional male gender role rather than the modern one (Cole 128). Macho or machismo masculinity is defined as a strong sense of masculine pride (Klofas 2). It is the presentation of manly characteristics of real men. In Latin American culture, machismo is a social behavior in which the male shows arrogant attitude or reaction to anyone in position as inferior to him, demanding complete subservience.

Moreover, as Sonya Lipsett-Rivera argues, violence is commonly associated with the macho man (179). In this sense, the term macho is used for negative connotations which are commonly known as: aggressiveness, physical strength and insensitivity. While in the traditional Latin culture, the term macho carries positive meaning; for example, the Latin man has to be a varoom i.e., he should be strong, self-reliant, responsible and protector to his family (Wood as cited in Klofas 2).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, this chapter is mainly devoted to discussing the concept of masculinity that has been seen as a clear concept. It attempted to emphasize on the various

meanings of masculinity through history. More specifically, in America where it had emerged as reaction to femininity. Moreover, it focused on the differentiation between sex and gender through which male gender was studied and linked with cultural social associations; therefore, it was difficult to limit masculinity to overarching definition. In this sense, several definitions according to Connell, Michael S. Kimmel, and Michael A. Messner have been discussed in addition to essentialist and semiotic definitions. It exceeded to express the term masculinity from several perspectives; biological, anthropological, psychological and sociological and it sheds light on how the ethos of each approach tried to defend according to their point of view toward the origin of masculinity and critique of others perspectives. At the end, it demonstrated the various sorts of masculinity as well as hegemonic and non-hegemonic, toxic, and healthy, macho and homosexual in way to show how they are contradicted in nature. Afterward, the concept of masculinity does not remain only in America but it spread to all the world due to colonialism and globalization. The next chapter shall review the treatment of masculinity in Nigerian literature.

CHAPTER TWO

Masculinity in Nigeria: Postcolonial Context

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Introduction

Colonialism affected societies and heavily changed ideologies and perceptions of identities (Ayobami 94). Africa witnessed, accordingly, a set of changes of the concept of masculinity and how men are perceived, portrayed and developed. The present chapter aims to shed light on the pre- and post-colonial effects on African society and culture. In addition, it elaborates the concept of masculinity according to Nigerian society before and during the colonial oppression through focusing on different studies that have been done to understand how this concept is constructed. As a reaction to colonialism, Nigerian intellectuals mostly aim to devote Nigerian literature, which in turn is divided into three generations, to tackle the issue of masculinity (Arayela 29). Each writer has a different vision towards masculinity; therefore, there are different images of masculinity.

2.1 African Society and Culture

African societies are characterized by different behaviors, beliefs and special ways of interaction in which mannerism of life is founded. These distinctive collections of differences formulate what is called culture. Each African society is distinguished by salient ideological and intellectual heritage that differentiate it from another as in Ania Loomba's words "it is difficult to generalize about nationalism because none of the factors we might think of as responsible for forging national consciousness – language, territory, a shared past, religion, race, customs – are applicable in every instance" (156).

However, the invasion of European powers imposed new definitions and created new concepts subordinated to the West as to reinforce their views. Colonialism enforced the patriarchal and matriarchal systems which were targeted to create hierarchies (Joseph 113). These colonial strategies such as the stratification of society into discriminative castes did not exist in pre-colonial Africa. This in turn leads the writers of African literature to situate its concern on the constructions of masculinity and the relationships among African masculinities.

Indeed, most of common binaries such as colonial/traditional, feminine/masculine, or powerful/powerless urged the critics to identify male characters as oppressors, agents of patriarchy, or subordination of colonialism.

Therefore, African writers focused their attention on gendered relations of colonialism, anti-colonialism, and the construction of new independent nation. For example, the father of Nigerian literature Chinua Achebe, in his novel *Things Fall Apart*, insisted on mentioning different forms of masculinity in Nigeria to capture and reveal the changeable elements that lead to restructuring African masculinities and gender relations. Moreover, he strongly narrowed the views only for his society since he is sure that there is no generalization and there is no common narrative embraced all the nation or nationalism can be generalized, in which each independent entity in society can be a model member for similar and contradictory historical spheres (Parker et al 3).

2.1.1 Pre-colonial context

Throughout the last twenty years, several African scholars like Paul Hoch in *White Hero and Black Beast* among others shed light on neglecting the mentioning of men and masculinity through highlighting its significance like what Todd Reeser says: "the fact that masculinity has tended not to be thought of as gendered is a hole that should draw attention to its very absence... by marking masculinity and by taking it as an explicit object of analysis, we can begin the process of better understanding what masculinity is and how it functions" (9). The variable nature of gender and ethnic relations in the pre-colonial period illustrated that these elements were intersectional and shared deep impact over each other. Therefore, it is insurmountable to comprehend one without the other.

Indeed, many African historical studies such as *Gendering African Philosophy* (2017) argue that the existence of the integral and overlapped nature between both men and women was already there before the coming of colonialism. In this context, Nancy Ellen Dowd,

a professor of law and a writer, viewed that focusing on men and masculinity traits automatically leads to the emphasize on understanding women (5). In addition, in pre-colonial era, there is nothing called ethnic men and non-ethnic women. In contrast, both genders have their ethnic identity and social recognition

Furthermore, it is impossible to talk about men or women as separate entities because they should be always as equal binaries as they are formulated by gender and ethnicity (Greene 15-6). Other factors such as age and personality played an important role in the construction and the development of several African families. For instance, older men or women always have the priority and the authority over the young. Also, personality displays in form of an appropriate and suitable reactions and responds in different social, cultural or even economic context. Ultimately, all the aforementioned factors explain how they operate together in order to define Nigerian lands (Greene 15-6).

2.1.2 The Impact of Colonialism

In African societies, masculinity is viewed as barbaric and exotic. Arlie Hoschild portrayed masculinities as "black men" who "have a higher sexual drive than white men and could pose a danger to white women" (as cited in Joseph 112-113). In other words, the western concept of the Black man is displayed in the belief that each Black man is a sexual deranged due to the common claim and misconception that black male is a threat and harmful to the life of white women.

This misunderstanding broke the trust between these opposing groups. On the other hand, the result of western misconception created hierarchic a representation of genders. Hierarchy system placed African masculinities in the following common binary oppositions: civilized/non-civilized and human/non-human (Joseph 113). It is also evaluated how African men are placed in terms of nationalism and colonialism who are "between the hinges of the

various hierarchical rankings" (Manus 27) which means that each African man is associated according to a certain division of castes in his society.

The major hallmark to the deep negative influence of colonialism on African men is embodied clearly in the form of hegemonic masculinity, particularly in terms of gender roles within private and public areas. In fact, Hegemonic masculinity is a socio-cultural construct which dominates the whole society. It is the presentations or performances of one type of masculinity that is determined, influenced and impacted by specific social contexts and promoted by external forces, such as colonialism (Weinrich 11). In addition to other types of virility such as subordinated, complicit, and marginalized masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt argued that;

"we suggest, therefore, that our understanding of hegemonic masculinity needs to incorporate a more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy, recognizing the agency of subordinated groups as much as the power of dominant groups and the mutual conditioning of gender dynamics and other social dynamics" (847-848).

Accordingly, the dominant, hegemonic masculinity is always the obvious indication of straight men which every male should be like in which colonialism relied on enforcing the hegemony over African men who are considered as inferior in comparison with the superiority of white colonizers, that is considered by Connell as hegemonic type of masculinity. Ultimately, Colonial paternalism is the fundamental factor to this subordinate position (Morrell 616).

Another affection of colonial power is considering African men as females. The colonizer treated African men as if they were children through reordering the ways of working which traditionally were adapted in serving only the benefits of the colonizing class (90). Most pre-colonial African societies were farming communities, largely dependent on their lands and cattle. The colonizer imposed on African men to work away from their homes in which all the works are under the colonizer's control. In this context, Egodi Uchendu, who is a professor of

history and an author, has contended that when African men searched for work, they "lacked autonomy over the type of work they did" and often were forced to fill roles that were traditionally thought of as feminine (90).

2.2 Nigerian society

Like any other community, Nigerian society has its own ideas, perspectives and thoughts toward different issues. In the study that is conducted in (2007), African man is viewed via the glasses of masculinity and virility especially in Nigerian society (Olawoye 1). To understand the concept of masculinity and how it is considered, many studies have been done by different scholars such as Babatunde Osoimehin and Yinka Aderinto and among others. Olawoye et al conducted an important investigation about the social construction of masculinity, manhood and gender socialization among the three fundamental ethnic groups in Nigeria (1). The major purpose of the study is to identify the main dates and levels of male determinants of obligations and responsibilities that is closely controlled by Nigerian society.

For doing so, they examined different ways through which man will be able to get acceptance and recognition within his society. The study revealed that the traditional nature of gender roles is usually imposed on males and females via society's beliefs and the community nurture where the dynamism of gender and social guiding norms of man and woman are variable not static (1-2). Also, this study aimed to cover a large scope of expected masculine's behaviors without ignoring the distinction among the socio-cultural groups, ages, and locations. Ultimately, the research is constantly sought to explore all the dimensions of the stereotypical gender relations that depict men as manipulative and authoritarian (2).

The study showed that masculinity can be measured through the capacity and achievements of men whereas the community usually saw female inferior and limited her roles in the households only because, according to them, her nature as female is incapable to do hard works (Ahmed as cited in Olawoye 2). However, man is viewed as the leader of his family;

based on his position in home or outside which qualifies him to order or impose things. Thus, the social determinants of gender roles have strong effect upon decision-making, especially over women such as the issue the number of children that mothers will have or any other obligations or duties are going to be accounted in a way or another (Olawoye 2).

Constraints of society to fit the elements that determine gender relationships are firm and deviance which in turn sometimes causes problems specially for females. To resist one's socially prescribed position means to challenge all surrounding people and take risk which may not only affected one's position in the family, but also the whole community (2).

In several communities, males are considered as most important integral part of females who depend on men in managing the inside or outside family affairs (Olawoye 2). Males assume that women are impairment in front of them and this is strongly emphasized by the fact that males are more practically competent and capable to make decisions in the private and public spheres (ibid.). Accordingly, it is the essential belief that leads to the existence of male dominance. For instance, if a boy is naturally shy and calm, he may be considered as feminine (Olawoye et al 2).

Additionally, males are usually granted great authority and power to make most of the decisions in the family. In many situations, sons are the ones who decided instead of their mothers (Olawoye 2). Karanga study (1983) was founded on form of survey to investigate the nurture of households in Lagos, Nigeria. The research revealed that only the male partner, husband, has the full right to take decisions of issues related to his household (Olawoye et al 2). This means that the hallmark of socialization, both formal and informal, is expressed on the home front then mirrored outside. Therefore, man's capacity and endurance to dominate in his home, pose orders and provide leadership is an approval of the social standards of masculinity and true manhood (Olawoye 2).

In fact, this deep investigation revealed different traditional points of view and concepts of masculinity and virility as well as the contributions of the various challenges faced to examine the roles of masculinity. Moreover, it highlighted the role of the family which reflects, through the opposition, the concept of masculinity (4). Another study named masculinity and Nigerian Youths is conducted by Egodu Uchendu. It is also a survey which targets to identify the variability of social views on the construction of contemporary masculinity. In particular, it was conducted on undergraduate students to explore the influence of education on the meaning of masculinity. The sample includes thirty-seven male and thirty-three female students from different ethnic groups in Nigeria (Uchendu 1).

In Uchendu's investigation, the respondents distinguish between maleness and man as two distinct words with different meaning and interpretations. They related masculinity which is part of male gender classification to men as significant trait need to exist in every man. On the other hand, maleness refers to the qualities and attributes of being a male who is socially accepted, admitted and recognized (280). For instance, one female participant's response was: "When we talk about masculinity, we are referring to the male Man" (280). However, man refers to the genetic term of the human gender category. The majority of respondents agreed that being anatomically male does not mean being masculine. The concept of masculinity in men's minds gives them a sense and feeling of superiority over women by controlling them and being dominative. Moreover, the majority of the views indicated that masculine traits and attributes can be constructed through the process of socialization (282).

Traditionally, masculinity is associated with physical strength, taking risks, enduring pain, and being leader, which had been the essence of building masculinity (282). Uchendu explored that the traditional standards of masculinity are evaluated through getting married, taking care of the family and compliance for all household requirements. However, the undergraduate participants assumed that education, employment, financial independence or

income ensure the acquisition of indigenous masculinity. In addition, they refuse the toxic masculinity that leads to violence and dominance (283).

2.3 Nigerian Masculinity

The history of Africa went through different periods from ancient Africa to the colonial domination, from 15th till 19th centuries, and from the postcolonial period, by the mid of twentieth century to contemporary present period. During the colonial period, there were many changes that have been imposed on the African's life involving culture, education, language, religion and lifestyle (Ayobami 94).

2.3.1 The Pre-colonial Era

In the pre-colonial Nigeria, Nigerians lived like any other citizens in African country who grew in using their traditional settings and gender roles. In these societies, the socio-economic and the political development were the responsibility of both male and female. They divided tasks according to what is associated to each in the community (Jaiyeola and Isaac 8). There are some services in societies and family roles which are conducted and performed based on the division which is imposed by hierarchy of age and not by biological sex because the responsibilities and obligations are not viewed as gender issues (Udodinma as cited in Jaiyeola and Isaac 9). During this period, there was no such conception of housewife as nowadays but there were essential roles or tasks for both man and woman. Hence, they had to collaborate together to do those tasks professionally as the work is needed (Ako-Nai as cited in Jaiyeola and Isaac 8).

The concept of gender roles is expressed in this famous Yoruba statement: "If a man saw a poisonous snake and a woman killed it, the important thing is that the snake was killed." This expression implies that all the duties and obligations in the household or the services of society were not gendered, instead, what is necessary was that the task was accomplished (Jaiyeola and Isaac 8).

In the pre-colonial era, the Nigerian society had a salient number of women who were leaders ruling over empires and kingdoms. Furthermore, beside men's positions within community, women also were warlords and had significant military heroism like Bakwa Turunku and her daughter Queen Amina (Jaiyeola and Isaac 8). Nevertheless, men had full control and dominance while females were marginalized and oppressed but not like in the post-colonial era. These barriers became the practice that has defined gender relations in Nigerian society in the pre-colonial period (Harris as cited in Jaiyeola and Isaac 8).

2.3.2 The Colonial Era

In 1884, the British conquest arrived to the African lands causing a radical change in the Nigerian society in several domains such as arrangement, religion, politics and gender relations (Udodinma as cited in Jaiyeola and Isaac 9).

Colonialism manifested and presented itself through the deep changes on gender roles in the Nigerian community. It based on giving men the priority in every aspect of life particular to the socio-economic and political tasks and issues (Jaiyeola and Isaac 9). However, woman is prohibited from doing such tasks. In addition, their roles became so limited since they stripped the powers that they had before the colonizer (Jaiyeola and Isaac 9). On the other side, the colonial system reinforced the patriarchal system in Nigeria in which men officially conquered the public and political domain to spread their domination in the ground. This further established class structures as men became the new working, lower middle class (Adu Udodinma as quoted in Jaiyeola and Isaac 8).

The financial position gives man more chances and priorities to practice his domination over women. During the precolonial period, men and women were equal to do farming tasks without any discrimination between them. They almost gained the same income which did not exist across the colonial era. Afterward, men's incomes were increased while

women's were reduced until they did not get anything because all farming tasks were done by male farmers (Jaiyeola and Isaac 9).

Men placed as major significant figure in all the domains due to colonialism and its efforts to impose patriarchy. For instance, the valuable position of a leader in politics and in the economic issues that had been granted to the Nigerian man through this system reinforced his masculinity. Hence, he became more dominant in every institution, including the home (9).

2.4 Nigerian Literature

Nigerian society has witnessed different historical periods pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial. Concerning the pre-colonial period, literature was oral such as songs, proverbs and myths. Afterward, with the arrival of colonialism, it has gradually developed into modern written literature. Throughout the whole history, the division of writers like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotim and Eemi Osofisan is a synchronically process depending on historical events as they happen in particular time and space. Thus, their literary works are characterized by different literary generations each of them has its own features.

Those generations have been arisen based on certain collection of writers in a particular era and setting in Nigeria. Robert Wohl supported this hierarchy through his declaration: "historical generations are not born; they are made" (25). The reason behind the existence of these generations stemmed from the national imagination and the question to link the literary pursuit of Nigerians to the nationalistic aspirations. These generational models are used in the Nigerian literary 's history to grab the attention to the dynamic development which help to re-shape new concepts within the context of Nigerian literature.

2.4.1 First Generation of African Writers

In 1948, the university of Ibadan (UCI) was established in Nigerian ground after several conflicts and recommendations for its construction in the African land. It was built in benefit of western world, in particular, it was associated in implicit way to London university

(Arayela 31). Therefore, it was structured as one of western college models. The UCI birthed out many significant Nigerian pioneers, or the so-called the first generations of writers in English language. They are Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Bekederemo-Clark, Christopher Okigbo, T.M. Aluko and among of others. These authors accomplished the skill of new language they acquired through their courses of studying in UCI to achieve their enlightening aims.

Although these pioneers received a western cultural education, they tended to devote all their writings to their indigenous homeland to exhibit their core cultural identity (Arayela 31). Moreover, they insisted on proving through their literary works that the Nigerian society has its own pure tradition, customs and culture before the colonial masters come to totally erase them. As an example, to affirm these situations, Chinua Achebe in his *Things Fall Apart* (1958) produced an anti-colonial discourse to resist the colonial stereotyped images that they tried to deliver to the world. Also, the work showed that Nigeria is equal to other nations and has a rich culture and heritage. Indeed, his novel was as strong reaction to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in which he intentionally microprint African's culture and people as savage and barbaric.

The father of Nigerian literature, Achebe, asserts the pre-existence of beliefs and tenets that are rooted in Nigerian culture as well as the Nigerian identity. Therefore, all his pursuits were to reveal and resist the colonial misconceptions and claims. Indeed, British colonizers aimed to inject those misconceptions in the brains of Nigerian individuals. Also, they mapped to burn all the heritage roots that attached to the African homeland. Not only Achebe but others also have tried to defend their pre-existing culture. Briefly, the first generation, the independence generation, enabled Nigerian literature to be written for the first time in English language which was considered as paradigm shift in all the genres of literary works (Arayela 32).

While the first generation pioneered the course of African narrative fiction and "brought it to limelight" (Solomon Awuzie as quoted in Arayela 33), the second generation

introduced and promoted sociological and ideological literature in African narrative fiction. They wrote literature "for social equality" (Nnolim 229). These literary men considered "literature as a social force" and as an "ideological weapon" (Obafemi as quoted in Arayela 33).

This generation of writers has a strong belief that authors are important mediums or catalysts of social change through which a paradigm shift can be done. Hence, they seek constantly to reach Nigerians' dreams about independence by destroying all the colonial constraints since they believe that the first writers were incapable to achieve these dreams as well as drive the British conquest out the patriarchal communities. For this reason, they deviated from the course of first generation in both content and form (Arayela 33).

Second generation writers who came after the first one were stemmed from the failure and disappointment of Nigerian independence and colonial remnants. They assumed that the British colonizers did not give up and still impose their control over Africans in indirect way. Furthermore, they are still imposing restrictions on Nigerians through the ideologies of neo-colonialism in order to control them. The most common champions of this collection of writers include: Olu Obafemi, Femi Osofisan, Kole Omotosho Niyi Osundare, Festus Iyayi, Bode Sowande and among others (Arayela 33-34). They are also known by epithet of the "emigrants" (Oni and Ododo 77).

2.5 Images of Masculinity in Nigerian Literature

According to African writers, literature is considered as a piece of art through which they express their perspectives, ideas and thoughts freely. In the case of gender discussions, traditional focus was only in matters that refer almost to the disadvantages that women and girls face in Africa. However, it ignored those which are related to men and boys. Afterward, it had alienated its perspectives to men and boys (Gary and Christine v). A study called *Masculinity Studies in Nigerian literary Gender: Verisimilitude between Texts and Reality* discovers the meaning to be a man according to the point of view of Africans and compare it to what is

depicted in literature. This study shows that, according to African perspectives, to be a man means doing things which a woman is incapable to do. Also, men must be responsible, strong, authoritative, decision makers and problem solvers, who have the ability to control situations around them. Furthermore, he should fulfil the purpose for which God created him. Therefore, masculinity is realized when men embody all those qualities (Tobalase 5).

However, according to Ayodabo and Amaefula, there are systems or organizations in which people or groups are classified one above the other according to their status or authority (2). Thus, there is no one overarching masculinity (Gary and Christine v), instead there are variations of African masculinities which exist in various societies across different historical periods. They are affected by factors such as race, sex, class, and culture. Likewise, in Africa there are several aspects such as culture, colonialism, religion, economic freedom, class structure, and poverty which directly or indirectly contributed in constructing several forms of masculinity. Basically, gender is in all aspects of life, including religion, education, and work (Salamone 202). Thus, many Nigerian writers such as Wole Soyinka and Ayobami Adebayo interestingly contemplated to use their writings to speak about the concept of masculinity in Nigeria. Each one of those writers depicts masculinity differently.

Wole Soyinka uses his autobiographical memoir, *Ake*, to address issues in Nigerian history throughout the period of colonialism, which perpetrate the core of Nigerian values from the perspective of gender relations since masculinity was considered as a way of resistance to imperial assaults at that time. *Ake* aims to shed light on gender confusion resulting from colonialism and all that is encompassed and dependent on it. *Ake* is a Yoruba village that combines traditional and modern values where Soyinka was growing up in the period just before and during World War II the period of the height of British imperialism. His mother was Christian market woman and his father was a headmaster. Consequently, his life was a mixture of two cultures. Soyinka had a different vision toward masculinity, thus he links the

understanding of Yoruba masculinity to the complexities of the Yoruba place within Nigerian colonial reality (Salamone 205). According to Soyinka tolerance, the ethical values and authentic religions that the Africans were able to sustain from the assaults of foreign faiths as well as idolatress reflect his nuanced understanding of masculinity that has practiced during his all life. (Nobel Lecture as cited in Salamone 206)

Another image of masculinity is depicted in Ayobami Adebayo's *Stay With Me* novel which is the issue of obtaining masculinity. The novel shows the effect of Nigerian culture which is influenced by the patriarchy system on men. Also, how this culture could be harmful to the personality of men since it obliged them to be masculine. In this case, men may work hard to achieve what their society expects from them as males but whenever they fail, they may deceive through being selfish, arrogant or oppressive to obtain masculinity (Rahman and Ningsih 14).

The novel is about two brothers Akin and Dotun seeking to obtain masculinity through doing cunning actions. For instance, to get masculinity, Akin exploits his financial advantage and his position to maintain his authority. Therefore, he takes control of his brother's life with his money and gives him a comfortable life because of his brother's bankruptcy (Adebayo 108). Moreover, he dominates his wife as a leader of the family through his arrogant treatment and ignores listening to her whining. Furthermore, Akin does not care about his wife because he knows that he just needs her as an object. In other words, he covers his weakness with his own money. Additionally, to get masculinity, Dotun uses his physical superiority and appearance to get money and maintain his authority.

Furthermore, he feels overpower than his brother since he has a good appearance according to the patriarchal standards of masculinity. Therefore, he exploits the weakness and the inability of his brother to make his wife pregnant to gain money. Moreover, he promises his brother Akin to give him his son as a way to save his marriage whereas his intention is only to manage his brother with his hand (73). Dotun may commit immoral actions toward women, such

as his daughter in-law, since he sees women as an object or weak creature has nothing to do. The reason behind that is showing masculinity and getting money. However, his ambitions are not only money but also satisfying his lust (163). Briefly, the culture that has been influenced by the patriarchal system is the cause that led to the internal conflict within each character. Thus, both of them choose to use cunning ways to obtain masculinity.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of colonialism, Africa has witnessed several changes that have touched all the aspects of life. It can be described as the time of transition and the emergence of new concepts in almost every field. One of the concepts that have been affected by colonialism is masculinity as well as qualities, standards and traits that are typical for men. The primary aim of this chapter was to shed light on African society and culture. More specifically their beliefs, perspectives and ways of interaction that characterized their mannerisms of life before colonialism. Also, it attempted to show the impact of colonialism and the changes that have constantly been made. Additionally, it focused on Nigerian society and discovered the different meanings of masculinity through several conducted studies that have been done by different scholars, such as Olawoye and Uchandu, trying to show that there is no universal, or prior masculinity, rather there are different versions of masculinities. The system of patriarchy was one of the changes that have been imposed on Nigerian society. It had an essential role to change the society views or expectations for men as males. Moreover, it viewed Nigerian literature that has been gradually developed from traditional oral literature to written modern one. Also, it presented the different generations of writers and their views toward the importance of literature to express their perspectives freely. The next chapter will show how Chinua Achebe depicts the different images and representations of masculinities in his novel *Things Fall Apart*.

CHAPTER THREE

Images of Conflicted Masculinities in Chinua Achebe's

***Things Fall Apart* (1958)**

Chapter Three: Images of Conflicted Masculinity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

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Introduction

The current chapter aims to shed light on Chinua Achebe as a Nigerian writer. More specifically, how the Igbo author was raised differently from his peers. Also, how his environmental factors helped him to be a unique writer. In addition, it attempts to focus on his European and traditional studies since they are considered as the main motives that led him to consecrate his most literary works to deal with colonialism and its impact on African society. Also, this chapter is devoted to provide a general review of the novel. It focuses on exhibiting Achebe's depiction of the manly traits of Okonkwo and his son Nwoye. Then, it bases on the textual analysis of the novel to explore the types of masculinities that the aforementioned characters portray and it reveals the conflicts between them as well.

3.1 Chinua Achebe

Albert Chinualumogu Achebe, commonly known as Chinua Achebe, is a Nigerian author who was born in 1930. Achebe's parents abandoned their traditional Ibo religion and converted to Christianity due to the recommendation of the British government which considered Nigeria as a British colony at that time (Pàrs 1). Christianity, in turn, is quite different compared to the traditional Ibo religion, customs and beliefs. Therefore, Achebe had access to multiple religious and cultural perspectives from his childhood resulting from the nurture and nature of his native environment and the new western religion.

Moreover, Achebe's society is endowed with tremendous traditional oral Igbo storytelling where Achebe acquired rich knowledge and learning attached to his traditional community (Pàrs 2). Furthermore, there was also the traditional western education that he later acquired at the University College of Ibadan. Consequently, when Achebe graduated, he started to devote his focus majorly to colonialism and its impact on African societies, but he was more concerned with history as a transforming paradigm process relying on his use of the most commonly known novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) (Pàrs 2). *Things Fall Apart* supplied Nigerian-

African readers with heritage, customs, values and truth they could be proud of, different and universally recognized as independent entities who do not subordinate to anybody. On the other hand, it was also directed to non-African readers as an announced message placed to inform other parts of the world that colonizers did not bring culture or civilization to Africa, particularly, Nigeria.

In parallel, Africa refused all kinds of colonial claims and misconceptions portrayed that African culture did not exist before colonization (Ogbaa 16-17). Indeed, Achebe presents in *Things Fall Apart* an important issue for readers which is the theme of gender among other dimensions. Chinua Achebe's novel examines one of the significant themes that cannot be disregarded; gender perspectives. He depicted the protagonist Okonkwo as an ideal example of the man who has the total form of masculinity. Okonkwo's strong masculinity was depicted through the achievements and attainment to his title and status within his village, Umuofia, as its traditions state that a man who has no title or status is simply Agbala, i.e., a woman. That is a concept which is highly related to patriarchal, pre-colonial Igbo culture (Ogbaa 165). The tragic hero Okonkwo is considered as the last representation to traditional African male identity (Peterson & Rutherford 78).

3.2 Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*: General Overview

Things Fall Apart is a representation of postcolonial novels that introduce African literature and culture to the world. African writers persist that Africa is a separate entity which has its own customs, traditions, heritage and culture. Moreover, to debunk all the claims and misconceptions that the colonizer sought to trace on the reader's mind towards African communities. Chinua Achebe in his novel, attempts to provide multiple themes inspired from his childhood, environment, education, and his experience with colonialism. One possible theme that cannot be disregarded particularly is the gender perspective.

Things Fall Apart (1958) is centered around the life of the protagonist, Okonkwo, who is a famous man with an eminent position in Umuofia. His fame and status are rested because of his strong personal accomplishments as well as his great wrestling victory with Amalinze the cat-the great undefeated wrestler for seven years (Achebe 3). According to pre-colonial Igbo values and customs, Okonkwo has the traits of masculinity expected from him as a man. Okonkwo is strong and violent. In fact, such traits are related to his fear of being like his father, Unoka, who was gentle, lazy and improvident, and whose time is dedicated only to music instead of working, making wealth and caring for his family. These qualities characterized him as not manly in his village. As a result, Okonkwo wants to build an entirely self-dependent wealth by working hard in farming and producing good yam every year to provide for his wives and children a suitable life.

Indeed, Okonkwo is able to manage his family's households unlike his father who left them with many unpaid debts. As a strong man in Umuofia who refused any sign of femininity, Okonkwo never shows any emotions of love and tenderness. This is revealed clearly in his attachment to Ikemefuna, whom the elders of Umuofia have given the responsibility to Okonkwo to take care of, but he never shows love and compassion openly toward him only the emotion of anger in order not to appear weak. Nwoye, the eldest son of Okonkwo, is unlike his father, a sensitive and soft boy; he is interested in music and enjoys his mother's stories. Okonkwo's fear that his son will be like his grandfather leads him to force Nwoye to be strong and brave. Also, he prevents him from listening to his mother's stories that will turn him into effeminate. Instead, Nwoye is obliged to listen to his father's stories which are mostly about violence and bloodshed. In addition, Okonkwo commands from his son to be a great farmer and great man. For this reason, he encourages him to prepare yams with him, which is considered as an approval of power and masculinity. Whenever Nwoye fails, he punishes him as if he is not masculine.

As the narrative develops, Okonkwo accidentally kills a man; he and his family are exiled from Umuofia. During their exile, white missionaries conquest Umuofia and they make many transformations. When Okonkwo returns to his village, he becomes unsatisfied with the changes that Umuofia has undergone during his exile. One of the changes is the church. Okonkwo thought that it had an essential role in weakening the Igbo's masculinity by imposing Christianity, the white man's religion, on them. Precisely, when Nwoye admires Christianity and converts to it. According to Nwoye, Christianity is more suitable for his personality unlike the traditional religion which is very strict and prevented him to behave naturally and freely. However, Okonkwo refused his son's doings. Also, Okonkwo asks him to get rid from those white's norms which the colonizer introduces them to threat the masculine values of the Igbo. Moreover, he has to uphold his traditional religion. Nwoye neglects what his father asks him to do and decides not to be like his father's aggressive personality as well. From that moment, Okonkwo realizes that traditional masculinity is violated especially when he does not receive any support from the villagers when he kills a white messenger; the action that leads him to suicide.

3.3 Exploring the Conflicted Masculinities in *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

Masculinity tended to have more specific standards as well as power, strength and bravery that are considered typical of and appropriate for men or boys. In fact, those standards are changeable and varied according to different cultures and historical periods (Kimmel and Aronson xxiii). Thus, Raewyn Connell has emphasized the concept of masculinities rather than a single masculinity. Relying on Connell's claim that there is no universal, a prior masculinity rather, multiple and competing versions of masculinities are there. In addition, her classification of the types of masculinity. Remarkably, in *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe presents the traditional Igbo culture that heavily worships the idea of heroism and masculinity (Hasinur 12). Additionally, it highlights how the social construction of masculinity is basically changeable from generation to another and culture to another. In this sense, Okonkwo, the protagonist, in Achebe's novel serves as a fundamental part for identifying pre-colonial African male traits.

3.3.1 Macho versus Effeminate

The great evident challenge to African elders' masculinity, the traditional Igbo manly traits, is the case between Okonkwo and his son Nwoye. Okonkwo is depicted as a severe and fearless man who tries to sustain all stereotypical traits of masculinity with strict application. According to Connell's view of masculinity, Okonkwo possesses a macho personality which is based mainly on physical strength, bravery, violence and insensitivity. In fact, Okonkwo's macho personality appears in multiple situations and events. One of these remarkable situations is the depiction of his physical appearance in the beginning of the novel in his wrestling match (Achebe 3).

Okonkwo "was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very severe look. He breathed heavily, and it was said that, when he slept, his wives and children in their houses could hear him breathe" (Achebe 4). This description of his standout physical traits as a man with huge body and severe look shows the strong and powerful personality that Achebe intends to associate the stereotypical features of masculinity to the protagonist. Achebe's forcefulness to depict Okonkwo with such manner is to show the macho and traditional image of masculinity that he belongs to.

As mentioned above, physical strength is considered one of the main characteristics of macho masculinity. Another image shows the machismo of Okonkwo is that he "worked daily on his farms from cock-crow until the chickens went to roost. He was a very strong man and rarely felt fatigued. But his wives and young children were not as strong and so they suffered. But they dared not complain openly" (13). Achebe reveals the strength of Okonkwo during the season of planting compared to his family members. Moreover, his hostility and severity prevent even his wives and children from complaining or showing their fatigue. Macho personality does not limit only on the power and strength. It is also considered the ability to be self-reliant, responsible, protector and provider to the family which are basically the characteristics of

Okonkwo "who had risen so suddenly from great poverty and misfortune to be one of the lords of the clan" (26).

The above quote unveils an old man's confession and recognition of Okonkwo, who was really successful man because he was able to make wealth in spite of poverty and misfortune to prove his masculinity. According to the Umuofia society, Okonkwo has a macho masculinity because he, unlike many people, did not rely on what his father left for him. He has relied on himself to earn money and be a successful man in farming in order to secure a suitable life for him, his wives and children, which is an action that his father was not able to do. Therefore, he is respected and appreciated. Also, this has given him a chance to own an eminence status among the clan. In his novel, Achebe does not focus only in presenting the machismo of Okonkwo but also insists on showing another image of manhood through Nwoye, the eldest son of Okonkwo, who is completely different from his father.

Indeed, Nwoye is depicted as an emotional, sensitive and soft young boy. He is interested in listening to music and his mother's folktales. His interests resemble more closely those of his grandfather. These personal traits are often in conflict with the pre-colonial Igbo masculine values and norms and Okonkwo's as well. Therefore, Nwoye is seen as effeminate because he does not fulfill the traditional standards of masculinity and manhood.

Effeminacy means the possession of women's traits including sensitivity and kindness. Okonkwo realizes that his son is effeminate through different situations; he already placed him on to test whether he is masculine or effeminate as his grandfather, Unoka. One of these situations is when Okonkwo gives Nwoye a few yams to prepare. However, Okonkwo obsessed with his son's inability to prepare or cut yams the way he should. Okonkwo's anger turns into a threaten: "Nwoye, and Ikemefuna helped him [Okonkwo] by fetching the yams in long baskets from the barn and counting the prepared seeds in groups of four hundred. But he

always found fault with their effort... "If you split another yam of this size, I shall break your jaw. You think you are still a child. I began to own a farm at your age" (Achebe 32).

In this regard, the author sheds light on the preparation of yam which stands as a sign of masculinity (Achebe 33). Anyone, who is capable of feeding his family from the harvest, is ultimately a great man. According to traditional manly traits, Nwoye's failure to prepare the yams in spite of his young age, is a sign of his laziness, sensitivity and softness, the traits that are characterized the women and effeminacy as well. These traits are mostly unacceptable from Okonkwo because he wants Nwoye to be great farmer like him in order to be proud and respected from the clan. "I will not have a son who cannot hold up his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hands" (34).

The continuous threat of Okonkwo indicates that he believes that uprising ones with violence and power is the best way to make him masculine. Because Nwoye is considered the traditional heir to the family, Okonkwo wants his son to be a man not as effeminate as his grandfather. In Spite of Okonkwo's forceful trials to make his son a man and Nwoye's deceiving attempts to be powerful and masculine, he fails to achieve the honorable traits of masculinity that the Igbo society believes in.

Therefore, Okonkwo tells his friend Obierika that Nwoye does not resemble him. As Okonkwo complains: "Nwoye is old enough to impregnate a woman. At his age I was already fending for myself no my friend; he is not too young. A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches. I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but there is too much of his mother in him" (60). Achebe wants to mention from this expression that Okonkwo's son does not have the same manly traits of his father. Therefore, he wishes that Ikemefuna was his son because he is stronger than Nwoye or his daughter Ezinma is a boy since there is no hope that Nwoye will be a man one day:

Okonkwo's despair for Nwoye to be a strong man like him is unveiled. In this sense, Achebe deploys that the beliefs of Okonkwo in masculinity is totally different to his son Nwoye. The reason behind that, Okonkwo is from the old generation, who believes that masculinity does not accept any sort of sensitivity, emotion or laziness, on the contrary, it is based on bravery, power and strength. Whereas, Nwoye is considered from the new generation who has a completely different version toward masculinity. Moreover, he refuses to be a man in the traditional sense because he believes that masculinity is not determined by how much physical strength or power a man has. Therefore, he follows his interests and passion. Consequently, it creates clashes and conflicts between the two generations in the whole novel.

3.3.2 Toxic versus Healthy

In the case of gender identity, Achebe brings to focus another type of masculinity that Okonkwo and Nwoye personify in order to show that they are completely different. Hence, they are usually in conflict. In fact, Okonkwo has psychological and emotional instability. This instability is a result of his childhood. more specifically, his unpleasant and complex relationship with his father, who was a lazy, coward and careless man. Unoka was interested in playing the flute and had no responsibility toward his family. He "had died ten years ago. In his day he was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow" (Achebe 4). Okonkwo's shameful past and repression has led him to be an aggressive and violent man who only knows the language of power. According to him, these are the cultural and societal expectations and values that indicate masculinity and manhood. As one of the scholars named Don Eberly said that the boys who practice violence, they had the experience of emotionally absent fathers (Harington 4-5). It is clear that Okonkwo has toxic masculinity since it is related to aggression, violence and power. Okonkwo's aggression and toxic masculinity is clear in his relation with wives and children; "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).

The masculinity of Okonkwo is constructed around the fear of being like his father and the failure to achieve the traditional Igbo masculine norms that are based on violence and power. For this reason, his aggression and lack of empathy lead him to treat his wives and children brutally and with a heavy hand even though he is not cruel inside. According to him, violence is the solution to handle any matter even if this action makes his family live in horror and sadness all the time. In other words, Okonkwo believes that masculinity should be achieved only with violence.

Another situation that reflects the toxicity of Okonkwo's personality and his aggressiveness: "Okonkwo never showed any emotion openly, unless it was the emotion of anger. To show affection was a sign of weakness; the only thing worth demonstrating was strength. He therefore treated Ikemefuna as he treated everybody else-with a heavy hand". (Achebe 28).

The above quote shows the exaggerated pride of masculinity that Okonkwo has. In his relationship with Ikemefuna, he prefers not to show his emotion and feelings although he loves him. This action eventually ensures the toxic and aggressive masculinity of Okonkwo that prevents him even to declare his adoration toward this boy on the pretext of appearing weak and sensitive. Indeed, Achebe does an excellent work to present another version of masculinity through Nwoye, who is completely opposite to Okonkwo's exaggerated view toward masculinity. Indeed, healthy masculinity is the masculinity that Nwoye belongs to. This sort of masculinity is realized when men engage emotions and feelings and maintain spiritual relationships with women and other men rather than being aggressive, emotionless, and violent all the time. It is clear that Nwoye has healthy masculinity because he is simply depicted as a sensitive and emotional man. Nwoye's sensitivity mainly appears in with his relation to Ikemefuna;

"Ikemefuna had an endless stock of folktales. Even those which Nwoye knew already were told with a new freshness and the local flavor of a different clan. Nwoye remembered this period very vividly till the end of his life. He even remembered how he had laughed when Ikemefuna told him that the proper name for a corn cob with only a few scattered grains was eze-agadi-nwayi, or the teeth of an old woman" (34-35).

The quote reveals that Nwoye is not aggressive with his relation with Ikemefuna like his father. In contrast, he has pleasant relationship with him. Also, their relationship is full of love and passion. In fact, it is great evidence of his healthy masculinity which in turn helps him to be emotional and sensitive with others. Moreover, it helps Nwoye to behave naturally without any sophistications as his father does in his relationship with Ikemefuna because of the cage of fear that surrounds his whole life.

The following reflects Okonkwo's toxic or aggressive masculinity and Nwoye's sensitivity and kindness. In order to maintain the principles of masculinity that are expected from Igbo society, Okonkwo forces himself to engage in murdering his surrogate son Ikemefuna although he is warned from Ezeudu, the oldest man in this quarter of Umuofia, to not kill him: "That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death" (57). In fact, he is sad. However, he did not refuse the oracle's decision. The death of Ikemefuna left a huge gap in Okonkwo's life. Indeed, he became very gloomy and stops eating for many days but he never shows any emotions of regret, pain and sadness in order not to appear weak. "Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna. He drank palm wine from morning till night, and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat" (63).

In contrast, when Nwoye hears that Ikemefuna would come back to his village, he was not able to hold back his tears: "Nwoye overheard it and burst into tears, whereupon his father beat him heavily" (57). This action ultimately reflects his sensitive and empathetic

feelings. This attitude that raises his father's anger and leads to beating him with a heavy hand. In fact, the conflict of masculinities between Okonkwo and Nwoye is very obvious in this case since each one of them has his own way to express and show his feelings. In the case of Okonkwo, it is hard and shameful for him to show any emotions because his toxic masculinity does not allow him to do so whereas Nwoye is very natural and spontaneous since his healthy masculinity prevents him to hide his emotions. The image that Achebe portrays through these opposite masculinities is that of the different beliefs and thoughts toward masculinity of two different generations.

3.4 Symbols of Masculinity in Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*

Symbolism is one of the salient features in African literature. Chinua Achebe sheds light on the great significant and efficient role to present ideas and thoughts in indirect ways such as stories, animals, gods, colors and even to the actions and events in his novel *Things Fall Apart*. He attempts to spot all the events that his society has lived during both pre-colonial and postcolonial periods. Chinua Achebe uses symbols to indicate the fall of the Ibo tradition due to the profound impact of colonialism and how the latter have changed the roots of Ibo customs, traditions, culture and religious beliefs (Booth 78). This is, in turn, has led to the birth of the second generation.

In order to embody the transitional gender relations between the first and second generation and the paradigm shift that tackles the process of development of masculinity for identifying the types of masculinity, the Nigerian writer, uses his characters and events in different images as symbols. He depicts the case of conflicted masculinities in Okonkwo and his son, Nwoye who have opposite personalities. Achebe reveals several traditions of the Igbo culture especially of how the same anatomical type of gender owes very prominent contradictions in his culture. Indeed, he tends to mention that before the arrival of missionaries,

the gender stereotypes of the Igbo cultures impact the characters and social status between men themselves (Peterson & Rutherford 78).

In the pre-colonial eras, Each Ibo man had to attain the quality of being strong, violent, warrior, powerful and wealthy to provide for his family exclusively to be considered as masculine (Achebe 126). This is what Achebe has embodied in Okonkwo's character who is an ideal man between the first generation men as Chinua Achebe portrays in his novel "Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages" and also "His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat" (Achebe 3).

In contrast, Achebe insists on pointing that Okonkwo's son Nwoye as the total opposite personality from his childhood to his father and he is considered one of the second generation's victims of the severe influence of colonialism especially on the psychological side, as Achebe stated; "But there was a young lad who had been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son. It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow" (Achebe 147). In fact, the British colonists contributed to making Nwoye strip away from his father and even deny his ancestors who embraced the Igbo traditional culture and religious belief.

3.4.1 Okonkwo Heroism versus Nwoye Weakness

In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe portrays Okonkwo as a strict committed figure towards anything related to the Igbo traditional gender roles in which his motto is doing actions rather than keeping thinking or talking, "Okonkwo was not a man of thought but of action" and Okonkwo's adhering to the norms of being masculine are described in the next quote: "This meeting is for men." The man who had contradicted him had no titles. That was why he had called him a woman. Okonkwo knew how to kill a man's spirit" (Achebe 26). Achebe wants to

shed the light on to what extent it is important to get a title in the Igbo society while any man has no title, he will be simply considered as women.

The following passage of analysis tackles the extent of imbalance that *Things Fall Apart* depicts in the arising and building to the different gender characters. By all accounts, Okonkwo keeps "male" in all the benchmarks and he is considered the most important character who was able to embody the best in the original culture of manliness and masculinity without any external affections such as colonialism. In the excerpt below, Okonkwo is described as a great wrestler who wins the fights against the great wrestler Amalinze the Cat who for seven years was unbeaten "he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was a great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten" (Achebe 3).

Okonkwo's hegemonic violent and physical power appears early in his youth when he brings honor to his village in form of different solid achievements: Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements" (Achebe 3). The incident of winning on the one hand, demonstrates Okonkwo's capability and strength of his hegemonic violence. On the other hand, the use of the name "Cat" is not arbitrary indeed as the novelist Achebe states "He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth"(Achebe 3). Although, Achebe depicts Okonkwo's wrestler as the strongest man among the all tribes but Achebe also has the intention to use name cat which bears the domestic, kindly and peaceful meaning in this context as symbol of femininity. Therefore, Chinua Achebe used this symbol as an indication to Okonkwo's early and serious attempts to eliminate femininity within men in his world.

Furthermore, when the sound of the drum began to rise, the fire of victory started inside the youth boy of eighteen years, which was the evidence to his hegemonic strength and power: 'Okonkwo cleared his throat and moved his feet to the beat of drums. It filled him with fire as it had always done in his youth. He trembled with the desire to conquer and subdue"

(Achebe 42). On the other side, the physical description which takes a big important in Achebe's novel as "Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. In the end Okonkwo threw the Cat" (Achebe 53). Okonkwo is well known with nicknames like "Roaring Flame ... Flaming Fire ... Living Fire" (Achebe 153). The hero Okonkwo acquires these nicknames because of his strength and courage.

Achebe was interested in prescribing the conflict between the father Okonkwo and his son Nwoye about the determinants of masculinity in society which emphasizes the theory of Connell about the different types of masculinities. Okonkwo clearly differs from his sons: "I am worried about Nwoye ... His two younger brothers are more promising ... my children do not resemble me" (Achebe 66). Nwoye is not vividly described as a man who inherited the traits of his father. In contrast, he is described as "incipient laziness" (Achebe 13) which is an early expectation indicating the possibility of being like the second coming of Unoka, the lazy and weak grandfather. Okonkwo makes efforts to avoid the repetition of his father's personality.

The following quote sums up the situation of Okonkwo "I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but there is too much of his mother in him" (66). However, Nwoye is expected to be masculine, and violent like Okonkwo's personality. This indicates the conflicted nature of masculinity between Nwoye and Okonkwo. The son does not reach what his father expected and recommended being masculine not effeminate. Therefore, Nwoye's personal traits are the main reason behind the disconnection with his father. In addition to that, Nwoye's views to the way of being masculine is quite different from Okonkwo belief.

3.4.2 Bloodshed Stories versus Animal Stories

Okonkwo devotes his time and energy to construct and build the concept of masculinity in his son's mind in one way or another, he focuses on embodying this understanding through narrating different stories of heroism and fighting spirit Achebe depicts the scene as the

following: "Okonkwo encouraged the boys to sit with him in his Obi, and he told them stories of the land masculine stories of violence and bloodshed' (Achebe 53).

In the analysis of the excerpt above, Okonkwo is already telling the boys masculine stories of violence and bloodshed; his pursuit only is to cultivate his youths how to be masculine enough in the beliefs by indoctrinating his sons into a traditional understanding of masculinity. He also teaches them to what extent they can have a tough and hard heart by the type of stories he selects to tell. This kind of learning influences the psychological side in which it leads to reinforce the stemming of how to be masculine. Furthermore, this way of raising awareness helps to understand the functions of male gender in the society. Thus, the actual masculine man will be expected to know what he has done or given to his society.

To prevent Nwoye from taking after Unoka, Okonkwo insists on orienting to the verbal language only in the domain of wars, wrestling, fight and bloodshed. These bloodshed stories symbolize that the concept of masculinity has static and fixed norms that must exist in every Igbo male.

Despite Okonkwo's stories that are target to promote the hegemonic dominant desire in his boys, Nwoye stood opposite to his father's folktales. Although he knows the necessity to get all the masculine traits that are mentioned in the bloodshed stories. Achebe delivers this image in his novel as the following: "Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent" (Achebe 53).

Okonkwo indoctrinates his son into a traditional understanding of masculinity. Even though Nwoye actually prefers the more creative tales of his mother which are told to her children in which the core of it are animals and nature. The below quotes clarify the understanding of Nwoye to the need of hegemonic masculinity but he prefers the other kind "Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell, and which she no doubt still told to her younger children-

stories." (Achebe 53) and the second excerpt is: "That was the kind of story that Nwoye loved" (Achebe 54). The relying on traditional feminine stories is an obvious sign and symbol to the subordinated masculinity. This in turn was the major hallmark trait of Nwoye masculinity and to the conflict of first and second generation particularly in standards and norms that are responsible to define masculinity in beliefs.

3.4.3 Traditional Religion versus Christianity

Traditional Ibo faith is the identity of each man that situates its title and situation in Nigerian society. To maintain the envelope concept of crude masculinity, Okonkwo's treatment of his eldest son Nwoye was merciless: "Where have you been?' '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. "Answer me" he roared again..." (Achebe 152).

The above passage depicts the reaction of Okonkwo when his cousin, Amikwu, told him about the existence of his son Nwoye among the Christians in the church. Nwoye's father enforced and imposed on his son to tell him the truth that he tried to hiding it. To do so, he uses the cruel and torture treatment without sympathy or mercy which is obviously in the aforementioned quote.

Okonkwo's reaction is a clear depiction of the hegemonic, dominant, masculinity that he embodies throughout the novel and to what extent the traditional religion symbolizes the total form of masculinity. In Okonkwo's belief, any other religion is simply considered feminine. Okonkwo does not merely threaten Nwoye, but practically treats him in a manner described as merciless manhandling. Another excerpt explains how Okonkwo is strongly attached to his Igbo traditional religion and to what extent he decided definitely to deny anyone of his boys to decide to convert Christianity: "You have all seen the great abomination of your brother. Now he is no longer my son or your brother. I will only have a son who is a man, who will hold his head up among my people. If any one of you prefers to be a woman, let him follow Nwoye now while I

am alive so that I can curse him: If you turn against me when I am dead I will visit you and break your neck" (Achebe 172).

Embracing the Christian faith is a symbol of femininity and weakness as the motto of Okonkwo says. Thus, men are supposed to have cruel and stout hearts that are prevented them to care about these issues as those that are related to faith, religion and cultural beliefs instead they have only to join with serious dealings. Okonkwo becomes deeply grieved when his son Nwoye abandons the traditional religion to embrace the Christian faith, he is seen as a woman and denied being one of his male children. Furthermore, if each one of his brothers thinks to resemble Nwoye, he will get the same fate. For Okonkwo, every man has to be brave, action-oriented and all the hallmarks of masculinity are existed on him.

In contrast, Nwoye questions the traditional religion of his tribe. He is controlled by two conflicted emotions; he is torn between being a masculine and physically strong to make his father satisfied. On the other side, he thought about the new prominent values of Christian religion that are attracted and deeply affected him. Especially, after the killing of Ikemefuna who considered him as his brother as it mentions in the following quotes: "Ikemefuna had begun to feel like a member of Okonkwo's family," "But he and Nwoye had become so deeply attached to each other that such moments became less frequent and less poignant" (Achebe 34).

This scene is the turning point and the main reason behind the deconstruction of the relationship between Okonkwo and Nwoye and leading him to embrace the new faith. Not only that but also, Nwoye is always controlled by the memories of what is happened to the twins in the forest and associated it with the killing of Ikemefuna as it explains in the next quote:

Nwoye had heard that twins were put in earthenware pots and
thrown away in the forest... A vague chill had descended on him...

Then something had given way inside him. It descended on him

again, this feeling, when his father walked in, that night after killing Ikemefuna (Achebe 62).

These two motives overcome Nwoye's father dream of being strong, powerful, and full masculine. He converts to Christianity. The religious missionaries brought clarifications and new concepts to the wrong orientation of the Igbo traditional religion. Christianity attracted Nwoye strongly even though he does not understand its fundamental principles, tenets and values that form the basis of it but he felt emotionally much more the tales his mother used to tell him and connect the relation between them.

Consequently, this connection enables him to understand the secret of killing Ikemefuna, the twins in the forest in addition to several issues. Achebe uses the below expert to portray this situation: "The hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul-the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed" (Achebe 147).

Chinua Achebe presents Okonkwo as a symbol of the traditional masculine belief which is the origin and the root of Igbo society in different situation such as the fighting with the wrestler Amalinze the cat, heroism stories and describing that the convertor to Christian faith is automatically a woman who cannot be considered a man. From another perspective, Nwoye symbolizes the effeminate masculinity which is easily affected by the surrounding events such as cruel situations, animal and nature stories and abandoning the origin faith. These contradictions assert Connell theory about the different types of masculinities that Achebe tends to show in his novel. These opposite traits appear in several gendered and generational clashes between Okonkwo heroism and Nwoye weakness as mentioned above such as Okonkwo strength versus Nwoye weakness, bloodshed stories versus animal stories and traditional religion versus Christian religion. The conflict really is between male and male, masculinity and manliness.

Okonkwo, a traditional masculine man, is not fitted to the new effeminate way of life which Nwoye chooses to live.

Conclusion

The literary work is considered as an instrument through which the writers can exhibit their cultures. In the case of Africa, many writers intentionally use their writing endowment to speak about the considerable number of changes that most African countries have witnessed due to colonialism. Additionally, to show their pre-existing culture and erase the unpleasant images that the colonizer strived to display to the world. *Things Fall Apart* is one of these literary texts that tackles many issues. Gender perspectives is one of the prominent issues that Chinua Achebe insists on spotting the light on to indicate the Fall of the traditional Igbo manly traits. This chapter provided a brief account about Chinua Achebe, his family, and educational background. Moreover, it supplied a brief summary of *Things Fall Apart*. Putting more emphasis on showing the traditional perspectives of Okonkwo toward masculinity and how this perspective is mainly different to his son, Nwoye. The chapter also analyzed the conflicted masculinities between the aforementioned characters. Then, strived to reveal the forms of masculinity of each character and the role of symbols in the novel. Achebe tends to use symbolism in his narrative like the scene of fighting, stories and religions to sign and symbolize the different types of masculinities. These symbols embodied the confliction between both pre-colonial and postcolonial concepts of masculinity. In brief, *Things Fall Apart* asserts to the world the fact of the existence of African culture, heritage and customs. Simultaneously, it is used as reactions to all what Europeans have claimed or misrepresented about African society particularly Nigerian society.

General Conclusion

Things Fall Apart is considered one of the most important literary masterpieces of Chinua Achebe, the father of African literary cannons. As a postcolonial novel, it had attempted to discuss the main challenges and changes that the African society had experienced during colonialism. One of the main challenges was the change of the concept of masculinity. Correspondingly, the aim of this dissertation was investigating the representation of conflicted masculinities in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

In order to synthesize the major studies related to the topic of the research, the related literature was reviewed. The present work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is entitled: Masculinity Studies: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework. It was devoted to provide a historical overview about the concept of masculinity for the sake of giving a glimpse on the reasons behind the emergence of masculinity in the west. In addition, it drew attention to the changes of the standards and characteristics of the meaning of masculinity through time. More specifically, in the period between the nineteenth century to the present, most researchers and scholars claimed that masculinity is unstable and complex concept. In this regard, various definitions had been provided about Masculinity from different scholars precisely those of R. W. Connell and Michael Kimmel. Moreover, particular emphasis has been put to highlight the different theoretical perspectives about the term namely: biological, anthropological, psychological and sociological. These perspectives contributed to the comprehension of the meaning of masculinity and bounded in demonstrating how gender works in certain cultures. Furthermore, this chapter shed the light on the classification of the types of masculinity according to Connell: hegemonic and non-hegemonic, toxic and healthy, and macho and homosexual as to show their conflicted nature.

The second chapter is entitled: Masculinity in Nigeria: Postcolonial Context. This chapter was fourfold. The first part tackled how each African society characterized by specific ideological and intellectual heritage that formulate its unique culture. Nevertheless, the arrival of colonialism led to impose new culture which serves the benefits of the colonizer such as the patriarchal system. The second part examined two major studies conducted on the Nigerian society to identify the determinants of Nigerian masculinity and to set the difference between male and man and who is deserved and able to be considered as masculine. These studies focused on the constructions of masculinity and on gender relationships in both pre-colonial and post-colonial eras. The third excerpt was about Nigerian literature which characterized by different literary generations. Each had its specific features and goals. Chinua Achebe is one of first generation leaders who was qualified to mix the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial contexts in his first anti-colonial novel *Things Fall Apart*. At the end of this chapter, two different images of masculinity were depicted in different literary works. Each one of these images revealed the different points of view of both Soyinka and Ayobami toward masculinity.

The third chapter, which is the practical part, studied Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. Through this chapter, much emphasis had been put on highlighting the main stages of Chinua Achebe's life, precisely, his family, studies, his interests and tendencies to speak about the impact of colonialism on African society in all the aspects. Moreover, a brief summary was given about the novel. Accordingly, different characterizations of the main male characters, Okonkwo and Nwoye, were highlighted. At the end of this chapter, analytical discussions and interpretations of the chosen narrated events and quotes were conducted in order to answer the research questions and confirm the hypotheses.

The findings of the research ensured the precision of our previous hypothesis and revealed the following results. First of all, through the reading of the masterpiece *Things Fall Apart*, it was deduced that Achebe obviously implied the concept of masculinity in his novel in

different ways and forms. In addition to that, the analysis reflected that Achebe did not depend on one type of masculinity in his narrative, rather he presented several types of masculinities that were embodied through Okonkwo and Nwoye who were from two different generations. Secondly, the Nigerian novelist personified the concept of masculinity through conflicted dichotomies such as Macho versus Homosexual and toxic versus healthy and hegemonic versus non-hegemonic that in turn insured Connell's views toward masculinity. The third result, Achebe's representations of the aforementioned conflicted masculinities embodied and used through his characters; the protagonist Okonkwo who is a strong, aggressive and violent man which according to the traditional Igbo culture these are the honorable manly traits. In contrast to Nwoye, the eldest son of Okonkwo, who has a complete opposite personality to his father: soft, sensitive and gentle and he is considered by Okonkwo and the pre-colonial masculine norms as effeminate and unmasculine. These traits made Nwoye reflect the effeminate, subordinate and healthy type of masculinities. Furthermore, Achebe did not depend only on his characters to show the difference and conflicted nature between the two generations in expressing masculinity. However, he intended to present symbols in contradicted dichotomies such as traditional Igbo religion versus Christianity and animal stories versus bloodshed stories to ensure the opposition and conflict between the father and his son, in one hand, and hinted to the fall of Igbo masculine norms, in another. In a nutshell, we conclude that Chinua Achebe's novel carried in its lines the real representation of the different types of masculinities who, due to the obvious historical effects, deemed to be in conflict.

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ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في صور الذكورية المتضاربة في رواية الكاتب تشينوا أتشيببي " الأشياء تتداعى" (1958). تنقسم الأطروحة إلى ثلاثة فصول ؛ يقدم الفصل الأول لمحة عامة حول مفهوم الذكورة وأنواعها. في حين يكشف الفصل الثاني عن السمات الذكورية التي تميزت بها فترة ما قبل الاستعمار وكيف استطاع الاستعمار التأثير عليها. اما الفصل الثالث والأخير فقد اعتمد على المنهج التاريخي والوصفي لتحليل التمثيلات المختلفة للذكورة في الرواية. على وجه الخصوص، فإنه يدرس البطل اوكونكو، وابنه، نووي، وطبيعة احيالهم المتعارضة عن طريق استكشاف اهم الصفات الذكورية لكل منهما. علاوة على ذلك، تستخدم الأطروحة نظرية كونيل الجنسانية لفحص أنواع الذكورية المتضاربة في سياقات ما قبل الاستعمار وخلال الحقبة الاستعمارية. وهكذا تكشف الدراسة الحالية عن النتائج التالية: أولاً، تثبت أن أوكونكو، الذي يرمز إلى الصورة النمطية للذكورة ما قبل الاستعمار، يعكس نوعاً رجولياً ومهيماً وغير صحي. على النقيض من ذلك، فإن ابنه نووي، الذي يمثل السمات الاستعمارية وما بعد الاستعمارية للذكورة، يمثل صورة ذكورية هادئة وغير مهيمنة وصحية. ثانياً، ينفذ أتشيببي رموزاً تتوافق مع كلا الخصائص المعارضة للذكورة. ثالثاً، تكشف الدراسة أن تراث الاستعمار في المستعمرات -نيجيريا تحديداً- يؤثر على تصور متطلبات الذكورة. تم الكشف عن ذلك من خلال الأجيال المتصارعة والرموز المرتبطة بصفاتهم الذكورية كما تم تصويرها في "أشياء تتداعى" لأشيببي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تشينوا أتشيببي، الأشياء تتداعى، الذكورة، الذكورية المتضاربة، الاستعمار

