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**Suicide as a Form of Resistance in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958):
A Psychoanalytical Study**

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

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Dedication

"When there is a will, there is a way"

We would like to dedicate this humble work to the most precious and beloved people in our lives.

To the soul of my parents may Allah Almighty bless them who used to be the reasons behind my success. May Allah reward them Paradise.

To all the members of my family

To my headmaster Gaid Ismail who helped me a lot to continue my further study.

To my beloved parents Said and Fadhila, what I would say could never be enough.

To my dearest sisters Hiba and Amel and my brothers Ahmed, Mouhamed and Faress.

To all who have even small piece of love to us

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the action of suicide as a form of resistance in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) from a psychoanalytic perspective. This dissertation presents an overview of the concept of resistance and its forms in psychoanalysis. The study also provides a historical and descriptive analytical analysis of the different forms of resistance in the novel. In particular, it explores the psychoanalytical factors behind, the protagonist, Okonkwo's suicide and how his society has resisted colonialism. Accordingly, this research uses a psychoanalytical approach to interpret Okonkwo and his action of suicide. Consequently, the study addresses the following points first, Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel, reflects his scholasticism nature that does not permit him to surrender to the colonial lifestyle. Secondly, Okonkwo's suicidal resistance signifies his frustration of being the version of his father's Unoka. Thirdly, the study proves that suicide is the result of the repressions that leads Okonkwo unconsciously to commit suicide as a defence. This is clearly covered in Achebe's work through depicting a detailed description of Okonkwo's character before and during the colonial domination.

Key Words: Chinua Achebe, psychoanalysis, resistance, suicide, *Things Fall Apart*.

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Africa occupies a prestigious geographic position in the world that has made it a target place for the European ambitions for various purposes, mainly economic ones. For instance, the French colonialism in Algeria in 1830-1962, the Italian colonialism in Libya 1942-1951 and the British colonialism in Nigeria 1861-1960 and so on. Thus, the African continent has experienced the state of colonialism in different domains of life: politically, socially and economically. The domination over the African lands resulted in several negative impacts such as destroying the African stability in various fields of life. Colonialism caused great damage in traditions, values, religions, social systems and economy. This is obvious when the coloniser had control and power on Africa's wealth, dehumanising and converting its people to Christianity. This led to the colonised peoples to resist against colonialism to restore both their dignity as humans and as independent countries. Resistance was the only solution to the colonised people; they resisted the coloniser in different forms violently and non-violently.

One of the non violent forms of resistance against colonialism is resistance literature. The coloniser aimed to destroy and falsify the African identity and values inferior, primitive and uncivilised in order to justify its domination as a civilising mission. Accordingly, the African writers tended to use their literary texts as a form of writing back to defend their identity and revive their traditions. African writers wrote significant literary pieces using the coloniser's language "English" to make their voices heard all over the world. Moreover, they aimed to introduce pre-colonial myths, traditions and beliefs. Through their writings, they reflected on the misery of their people's psychology. There is a significant number of these writings that presented the above literary techniques such as *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) and *The River Between* (1965) by Ngugi Wa Thiongo, *Efuru* (1969) by Flora Nwapa and the prominent one is *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe.

Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) sheds light on the representation of African identity, traditions and models of resistance. Thus, Achebe depicts the conflict between Okonkwo and the white men passively and violently. Besides the social, religious and the economic impact of colonialism, the novel depicts psychological traumas on Africans that led them to resist in different forms.

2. Statement of the Problem

Chinua Achebe is a Nigerian writer, poet, novelist and critic. He is regarded as a prominent figure of African literature, which gained him the name of the father of African literature. Because of his successful works, he has been awarded significant number of honorable degrees and awards such as a Commonwealth poetry prize in 1972.

Things Fall Apart (1958) is considered as an ideal example of an anti-colonial novel. By which Achebe was able to deliver the pre-colonial culture of African societies. In addition, he was able to correct the false claims that Africans are primitive, inferior and uncivilised. The novel carries between its pages a wide range of African models of resistance either violent or passive.

One of the passive models of resistance is suicide. In order to understand the factors that led to suicide, it is necessary to interpret the action from psychoanalytical perspective. Achebe depicts the protagonist Okonkwo who at the end of the novel commits suicide as a form of resistance. Therefore, this dissertation investigates the factors that led Okonkwo to do so from psychoanalytic point of view.

3. Aims of the Study

Achebe shows the different stands of Africans against colonialism in terms of resistance through the actions and the events of the novel. This work explores the conscious and unconscious forms of resistance and the factors that led to the suicide from psychoanalysis approach and the application of these forms on the protagonist of the novel Okonkwo.

4. Significance of the Study

This study makes the readers aware about the factors that led to suicidal resistance from psychoanalytic approach. Also, It shows the importance and the contributions of psychoanalysis in interpreting African literary texts. Finally, this study facilitates understanding psychoanalysis theories through literature.

4. Research Questions

- What is meant by resistance in psychoanalysis, and what are its different forms?
- What are the impacts of colonialism on African peoples, and how did the Africans resist colonialism in *Things Fall Apart*?
- How did Okonkwo resist colonialism, and what are the main psychoanalytical factors of Okonkwo's suicidal resistance?

6. Research Methodology

The study under investigation is qualitative in nature. To answer the stated questions and attain the objectives of this study, it adopts the descriptive analytical method. The analysis focuses on the protagonist Okonkwo in Achebe's *Thing Fall Apart* (1958) from a psychoanalytical perspective.

7. Literature Review

Thing Fall Apart (1958) is considered the most known novel of Chinua Achebe during the twentieth century. It portrays the pre-colonial life of Nigeria and the European colonialism in the nineteenth century. The novel discusses significant themes such as resistance. *Thing Fall Apart* (1958) is viewed as a successful novel that presents modern African literature in English. That is why; significant studies and researches are conducted in different approaches to analyse its events.

The concept of resistance is tackled by some psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and Carl Gustav Jung. In *Repression* (1915), Freud asserts that resistance is one of

the defense mechanisms that keeps non-desired things and thoughts at a distance from the consciousness through escaping from the sense of belonging to it, and refusing reality as it is. This article is beneficial in the case of explaining how resistance can lead to committing suicide by determining its main psychological factors.

In this context, suicide appears in different African writings as a form of resistance. For instance, in *Foe* (1986) by Coetzee, Friday throws himself in the sea and is found dead by Susan when she was swimming. His suicide comes as a reaction to the neglect he received from Susan due to his black skin colour and his cut-tongue, just like how the European society neglected people who look like him. Thus, Susan steadily neglects him. These two novels are important in defining the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, and how Africans resist colonialism in different forms including suicide. These two works are helpful to show the negative psychological impacts of colonialism on the colonised and the legacy of hatred of the Africans to the colonialism. However, they do not focus on the internal and the real factors that lead to commit suicide as a form of resistance. Okonkwo's suicide is a significant issue. It becomes a centre of discussions and analyses from different perspectives. Several articles and studies are written on this issue such as: A Cultural note on Okonkwo's Suicide (1981), The Symbolism of Okonkwo's Suicide in *Things Fall Apart*- the Death of the Igbo Society and so on.

8. The Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Resistance in Psychoanalysis” which introduces different psychoanalysts' perspectives; Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Carl Gustav Jung, towards the definition of resistance and its psychological factors. To do so, this chapter tries to investigate the psyche from the earliest stages of childhood into adolescence and how the environment and human experiences affect their future thoughts and decisions. Simultaneously, this chapter gives special focus on how the psychological factors of resistance once they reach the climax they commit suicide as one of the defense mechanisms.

The second chapter is entitled “Resistance in African context” which tackles the impacts of colonialism on Africa in different domains; economically, politically, socially, culturally and even psychologically. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on how the Africans resist in the previous mentioned fields violently and passively. With giving more emphasis on the passive forms of resistance, this chapter introduces the application of the psychological forms of resistance on the African people.

The third chapter, the practical one, is entitled suicidal resistance in *Things Fall Apart* (1958). It analyses Chinua Achebe's novel basing on what has been mentioned before to portray the different forms of resistance, violent and non-violent, particularly in the Igbo society from psychoanalytical perspectives. It discusses the images of these forms of resistance through the main character Okonkwo psychoanalytically.

CHAPTER ONE

Resistance in Psychoanalysis

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Chapter One: Resistance in Psychoanalysis

Introduction

The nature of human being is characterised by significant emotions, behaviours and actions that make him distinguished from other creatures especially animals. Those actions are supposed to be achieved either consciously or unconsciously. Psychoanalytical studies try to discover the nature of human actions and the factors behind them such as resistance and suicide. This chapter gives an overview on the psychoanalysis approach according to its pioneers; Sigmund Freud, Jacque Lacan and Carl Gustav Jung. The focus of this chapter is on analysing resistance and suicide from psychoanalysis perspective.

1.1 An Overview of Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis refers to a set of theories and techniques of treatment and therapy. Sigmund Freud is the father and the founder of this science in the early of 1890's. He took the responsibility of developing and refining its theories until his death in 1939. According to Oxford Languages, psychoanalysis is also defined as a system of psychological theory and therapy that aims to treat mental conditions by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind by techniques such as dream interpretation and free association. It aims to minimise difficulties and to give the patient assurance about the results of the treatment especially with neurotic patients. Its main target also is to deal with the unconscious mind. Therefore, it is a way of treatment for mental disorders and tries to improve mental health by making unconscious material into conscious.

Early childhood is the target period in individual's development that psychoanalysts concentrate on (Overstreet et al, 2022). During therapy sessions, psychoanalyst aims to induce the transference which is the repetition of old feelings, attitudes, desires, and fantasies. The patients express their thoughts which include fantasies, free associations and dreams that the

analyst used to infer unconscious conflicts. The analyst analyses these conflicts by interpreting the transference and counter transference, the analyst's feeling for the patient, they confront the patients to understand themselves better.

Psychoanalysis discipline becomes a useful one not only in therapeutic area, but it also extends to reach other areas as in humanities (Paris, 2017) such as psychoanalytic literary criticism, film criticism, analysis of folktales, philosophical perspectives and so on.

1.1.1 Freudian Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is the father and the creator of psychoanalysis discipline. He sets its main bases that are stated in an encyclopedia article *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* arguing that there are unconscious mental processes, the recognition of the theory of repression and resistance, the appreciation of the importance of sexuality and of the Oedipus complex (Juliet, 1975). He also believes that the mind is responsible for both conscious and unconscious decisions and a person's personality is comprised of three main aspects of the mind which are: the Id, ego and super-ego (Strachey, 1999). The Id is the impulsive, unconscious part that holds pleasure principles. The ego is the part that is based on reality, creates a balance between pleasure and pain and controls the instinctual demands from the Id. The super-ego can override the drives from the Id (Freud, 2019). It is considered the consciousness of the person's personality when social moral principles are formed. Thus, according to Parrington (June, 2021), Freud distinguishes between a conscious and unconscious mind. The former represents the things that are inside of people's awareness and they are aware of doing them or they can easily bring into awareness. The latter refers to things that are outside of people's conscious or awareness such as early childhood memories, secret desires, hidden drives, and thoughts that we might consider to be unpleasant or socially unacceptable. As a result, people bury them in their unconscious because they think that they might bring them pain or conflict (Chessick, 2007).

Freud believes that behaviour and cognition are under the responsibility of the unconscious mind because of unconscious drives. He notices that attempts to bring them into awareness stimulates resistance in the form of defense mechanism especially repression that ensures that what is unacceptable to the conscious mind is prevented from entering it (From, 1992; Chessick, 2007).

Therefore, Freud believes that people could be cured or treated by making them conscious of their unconscious thoughts and motivations. This happens when the patient releases the repressed conflicts to consciousness. However, the position of the conflict between the conscious and unconscious aspects can lead to mental disturbance. He also notices that unconscious aspects can be found in dreams and unintentional acts including mannerism and Freudian slips which also called parapraxis. It includes an error in speech, memory or physical action that are resulted from the interference of an unconscious wish or internal train of thought (Cherry, 2023).

1.1.2 Lacanian Psychoanalysis

Jacques Lacan is a Parisian psychiatrist (1901-1981) also called “the French Freud” (The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2022, Jacques Lacan). He is one of the pioneers who established psychoanalysis. His work is a continuation of Freud's work and British and American psychoanalysis (Roudinesco et al., 1990). Lacan's works are based on Freud as he claimed “retourner a Freud” that enabled him to realise that the unconscious is to be understood to the functions and dynamics of language. Thus, he formulated his psychoanalytic theory which states that “the unconscious is structured like a language” (Lacan & Miller, 1992) and he sets his main concepts which include the "mirror stage ", the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. His ideas are used to analyse literary texts in the United States and the United Kingdom. The Imaginary stage refers to the phase of "unity" with the image or the object. The Symbolic is defined as the Other or the world of social rules. These parts of the outside world with which the subject cannot identify which is the place where signifiers are giving meaning. Thus, language is a discourse of

the Other outside conscious control. The Real stage is the stage of demand or recognition and design. According to Cherry (2023), dreams and Freud slips are related to the unconscious mind that is composed of empty signifiers that appear in language and Lacanian clinical practice depends on the exact words uttered or used by the analysand or the patient. Analysis concentrates on the desire which is a result from unsolvable lack at the heart of the subject.

Through therapy sessions or patients cases, Lacan deduces that all people belong to three main clinical structures: psychotic, perverse, or most commonly neurotic (Fink, 1999). The latter refers to the state of people who are either hysterical or obsessional. These three clinical structures determine the relationship of the subject and the Other. Each of these structures has its own defense mechanism. For people who are psychotic, they use foreclosure, a rejection of father's authority that results in the failure of the Symbolic unconscious because of the refusal of the father's authority in the Oedipus complex. Perverts use disavowal, a refusal that lack causes desire and nominating a specific object as its cause. Finally, neurotics use repression.

To conclude, in *La Lettre volee* or, *The Purloined Letter* (1977), Lacan states that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other and that human's deep feelings and passion are expressed in relation to the other's desire. He considers desire as a social phenomenon, since through social interaction, the human subject is created. Therefore, language, culture, and the spaces between people create factors that constitute human desire.

1.1.3 Jungian Psychoanalysis

When his friendship with Freud ended in 1913, Carl Gustav Jung left the psychoanalytic community for the purpose of establishing new psychological science that bases on investigating the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious (Doran, 2017). This new psychological science is called Analytical Psychology which is used interchangeably with Jungian Psychoanalysis. According to Jung, the personality is called the psyche which contains both conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Jung & Pauli, 1952). Like Freud, Jung's theory is based on the assumption that the mind has conscious and unconscious

realms. He claims that the psyche should be interpreted in terms of its unconscious nature, because he thinks that the unconscious aspect of an individual is the source of wisdom, knowledge, and expert (Jung, 1916). Jung focuses more on the role of symbolic and spiritual experiences in human life that contribute unintentionally in forming the individuals' personality-include feelings, behaviours, and thoughts. Jung's psychology of the unconscious adopted several theories (Doran, 2017). Firstly, Jung adopted William James Pragmatism; it was Jung's preferable route to base his psychology on a sound of scientific basis (Jung, 1961). It consists of observation of the phenomena; he investigated into cultures, ancient treaties, religion, and philosophies to discover their direct impacts on the human's unconsciousness. Secondly, in his *Dream Analysis* (1984), Jung contrasts Freud who agreed that dreams are a highway into the unconscious. The most significant distinction is the compensatory function of dreams, by which they perform by reinstating psychic equilibrium in respect of judgments made during waking life. Thus, a man consumed by ambition and arrogance, for example dream about himself as small and vulnerable person. Thirdly, Jung divides the unconscious into two levels: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. The personal unconscious is that aspect of unconscious which develops due to individual experience. It is named personal because it pertains exclusively to the individual; its contents can be restated easily, some with difficulty and some beyond the reach of consciousness (Jung, 1912). The collective unconscious on the other hand, contains archetypes which are the fundamental images of people (Jung, 1916). An archetype is a representation in the unconscious of an experience of the human race, they are universal patterns or predisposition that influence how all humans consciously and unconsciously adapt to their world and result from the deposits of the often repeated experiences of humanity (Jung, 1961). Therefore, the majority of human doings -from the earliest stage of childhood into adulthood- are a result of unconscious desires, ambitions, and even dreams.

From the previous psychoanalytic perspectives, it can be deduced that when the subjects stand in front of a conflict between their undesirable situations and the desirable ones. This may result in what is called resistance.

1.2. Resistance in Psychoanalysis

1.2.1 Definition of Resistance

Originally, the word resistance is derived from the Latin word *resisteritia*, it means the action done from the body when another body opposes its action.

1.2.2 Types of Resistance

In psychoanalysis, there are two types of resistance: Conscious resistance and unconscious one.

1.2.2.1 Conscious Resistance

It is also known as “everyday resistance” (Scott, 1989, p.54). It refers to those situations where an individual tends to take the required and the measurable plans and rules in facing the ordinary obstacles (Lilja, 2022, p.209). By so doing, people are intentionally resisting the predicted positions by avoiding the direct opposition with it. For instance, wearing the appropriate clothes in every season, knocking on the door before entering, refraining from crossing the road at the red light. In other words, avoiding the familiar mistakes to ensure public and personal safety.

1.2.2.2 Unconscious Resistance

Sigmund Freud, the founding father of psychoanalysis approach, developed his concept of unconscious resistance when he worked with patients who tend to show uncooperative actions and behaviors during the treatment sessions (Canavêz et al, 2011). He referred to an individual's opposition which may unintentionally impede any attempt to confront unconscious perceived threats. The term resistance in psychoanalysis refers to the process of opposing the normal treatment in which the client refuses pieces of advice and solutions given by psychoanalysts. In his book of *Freud's Foes* (2009), Kurt Jacobsen states three significant definitions of resistance. Resistance is the client's defense mechanisms that emerge from unconscious content coming

from fruition through process. Also, resistance is defined as the repression of unconscious drives from the integration into conscious awareness. Resistance in therapy is a choice which can be either conscious or unconscious. In both situations, it is referred to a variety of reasons. (Jacobsen, 2009, pp. 17-178). In the 1915 essay *Repression*, Freud asserts that unconscious repression is “nothing else than the avoidance of displeasure” (p. 2983). He argues that one of the defense mechanisms is keeping non-desired things and thoughts at a distance from the consciousness through escaping from the sense of belonging to it, and refusing reality as it is. Also, Freud writes in the 1925 *Negation*, negative judgment is the intellectual substitute for repression; it is 'No' the hallmark of repression (p. 10). Thus, unconscious resistance defends against unconscious desire. For example, unconscious resistance may include perfectionism, criticizing the others, disrespectful attitude, being self-critical, pre-occupation with appearance, social withdrawal, need to be seen as independent and invulnerable, and inability to accept constructive criticism (Akhtar, 2018). There are four main forms of resistance which are superego resistance, the gain of illness resistance, repetition resistance, and repression resistance (Freud, 2014).

1.2.3 Forms of Resistance

In psychoanalysis, Freud classifies resistance into four forms:

1.2.3.1 Superego Resistance

The activation of punitive forces of the superego acts as a cognition resistance during the analytic process, and against its deepening, Freud (2014) considered the superego resistance to be the darkest form of resistance although always not the weakest. Resistance to improvement can arise from feeling of guilt and the associated need for punishment at the dictates of the superego.

1.2.3.2 The Gain of Illness Resistance

It refers to the patients who get satisfaction from symptoms from the people or situation around them. Some individuals develop neurotic symptoms after experiencing an event that makes them

feel hurt physically or emotionally. Sometimes after receiving compensation for their injury, the guilty surrender and their symptoms worsen (Freud, 2014). A closer look at this phenomenon in the clinical setting shows that the compensation reveals their unconscious desires- for example, oral dependency and longing-, and that once they receive it, they no longer need their symptoms to achieve gratification.

1.2.3.3 Repetition Resistance

Clinical work shows that patients often tend to repeat experiences, even painful ones. Not to repeat any of this compulsion, Freud speculates about it in his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). When all psychic life governed by the pleasure principle, how the compulsion can be explained to repeat several experiences. Freud (1920) theorises about the demotic force against the pleasure principle and attributes the repetition compulsion to mental operations that are more biologically primitive-evolutionary sense than those normally directed by pleasure or displeasure.

1.2.3.4 Repression Resistance

It is the most commonly used defense mechanism in people with neurotic personality construction. (Freud, 2014). Simply put, it involves the ego pushing and withholding unacceptable ideas and feelings from conscious awareness. Accordingly, the ego works against the goal of interpretation, which is to uncover and bring such material to awareness. Even when a patient makes conscious effort to get well, the repressive habit of the ego interferes, ideally the analyst helps the patient to become aware of this.

Since resistance is one of the defense mechanisms against undesirable circumstances, subjects start reacting in different ways and methods. When people reach the climax of the resisting process, they can commit suicide.

1.4 Suicide

1.4.1 An Overview on Suicide

Suicide is not a modern act, it is rooted back to ancient Athens (Szasz, 1999). A suicidal person without the approval of the state was treated in a different way from a normal dead person. The former was deprived from the honors of normal burial and even from a head stone or a marker to his tomb or grave.

Originally, suicide is a Latin word *suicidium* which mean “The act of taking one's own life” (Willans & Wilkins, 2006). It is also defined as the decision of someone to put an end to his life. Suicide is a death which is intended voluntary and consciously for several reasons. Several factors can lead the person to commit suicide including mental disorder, drug misuse, psychological states, cultural family and social situations, experiences of trauma or loss and nihilism (Hawton et al., 2012). Also, the previous attempts of suicide and the availability of the means to take one's life, and family history of suicide are reasons to push someone to commit suicide (Chang et al., 2011).

1.4.2 Suicide from Different Psychoanalytic Perspectives

From the previous factors, it is deduced that the reasons behind suicidal behaviour are not definite and complex to decide why people try to put an end to their lives. However, most scientists and psychologists agree that there are significant psychological theories of suicidal thoughts and acts (O'Connor & Nock, 2014). These theories can be traced back to the psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. The latter distinguishes between “behaviour” which includes or relates to all animals and “acts” that are related to human subjects. The actor can be bared the whole responsibility for them. Thus, the term act is an ethical one (Evans, 1996). Psychoanalysis takes the greatest part of the responsibility to analyse the main perspectives that lead to understand why some people commit suicide and why this act is related to human beings.

Passage to the act is a phrase that is used by the French clinical psychiatry to describe impulsive acts of a violent or criminal nature (Evans.). Passage to act, as its name implies, indicates these acts are supposed to reach a certain point when the person proceeds from a violent idea or intention to the corresponding act.

In psychoanalysis, the concept of act or responsibility differs from the legal one. This is because it is done intentionally and the person is reasonable for his activities in spite the fact that the subject has unconscious intentions. This results in the subject is being able to perform an action and claiming that it was unintentional, but the investigation reveals that it was an expression of an unconscious desire. These types of acts are called by Freud 'parapraxes', or 'bungled actions', failed actions or symptom, however, only from the point of view of the conscious intention, since they are successful in expressing an unconscious desire. Suicide is the only completely successful act (Lacan, 1973) because it is the only action that expresses both the conscious and the unconscious intention, the conscious assumption of the unconscious death drive which is related to the ethical domain according to Lacan and Miller's (2013) argument. On the other hand, a sudden impulsive suicide attempt is not considered a true act, but it is probably a passage to the act (Evans, 1996).

Thus, one can deduce that one of the main contributions of psychoanalysis to understand the act of suicide or death of a person is not a constructed or consciously performed, but it is the product of unconscious formation as a result of symptom or failed action that does not correspond with the desire (Carmona & Villada, 2022). Also, suicide is considered as an alternative for psychosis as a result of inability to sustain fact and to autoerotic regression. Warren (1976) states that according to Haim, suicide is a defensive act of the normal ego against psychosis. In other words, it is the failure of ego to make a balance between what is real, which should be accepted, and what is pleasurable or desirable. As a result, an individual becomes depressed psychologically and self-destructive, that is to say that suicide is the climax of negative autoeroticism.

Lacan states that suicide and self-destructive can be caused by the dynamics characteristic of his three registries: imaginary, symbolic and real. In the imaginary, one commits suicide because of the collapse of his usual image in the eyes of others. Symbolic registry stands for the value which exists in everyone such as: a mother in family, a leader in artificial group and so on (Carmona & Villada, 2022). When each of which loses his/her value, one may think about suicide. Researches in psychoanalysis proved that self-destructive actions and suicide are relevant within the framework of the real registry because of these situations in which the repertoire of responses the imaginary and symbolic offer to a subject, to resolve an extreme situation and the passage to action appears strictest sense, as the expression of the death drive that may derive in a radical self-destructive action or suicide. In short, Lacan and Miller view suicide as an act of the subjects when they experience themselves as worthless (1992).

Conclusion

To conclude, psychoanalysis is a way of treating mental disorders and tries to cure them through talking with patients in which they express repressed thoughts and feelings that the psychoanalysts interpret them to help the patients understand themselves and their actions better. In this chapter, two actions are investigated in psychoanalysis which are resistance and suicide.

Since resistance is a defensive mechanism by which the subjects resist against any opposed action, they resist as much as they can, and may put an end to their lonely combat by a conscious action which is suicide when they reach the climax of fighting against the dissolved situations.

CHAPTER TWO

Resistance in African Context

Chapter Two: Resistance in African Context

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Chapter Two: Resistance in African Context

Introduction

Resistance is considered as a natural reaction against colonialism over the dominated lands. It is widely agreed that Africa is the most known region that experienced the harassments of the coloniser that have affected all aspects of life: political, economic, social and cultural domains. Accordingly, several severe impacts occurred that led the colonised people to resist against the coloniser in different forms. This chapter discusses the significant impacts of colonialism and how Africans resisted and reacted against colonial abuses from a psychoanalytic point of view.

2.1 The impacts of colonialism on Africa

Africa is situated in a prestigious geographical position in the world that makes it under the target of European colonial countries for several purposes mainly for economical purposes (Austin, 2010).

Colonialism is a direct and extensive domination of one country by another on the basis that state power is in the hands of a foreign power, for example, Britain's extensive domination of Nigeria between 1900 and 1960 (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). The first goal of colonialism was political domination. European colonial countries second goal was to allow the exploitation of the wealth of the colonised land. The colonisation of Africa by European powers was led by several factors: the need for raw materials and the search for new markets for metropolitan industries where their surplus finished products could be sold as a result of the industrial revolution. Other reasons led colonialism to invade Africa were the need to make more food available to the growing urban industrial population and the need to find a place where the excess accumulated profit from the industrial revolution could be invested to generate more profit (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). The first method or strategy employed by the colonialists to colonise and effectively occupy and administer African territories was conquest; they entered the African lands as conquerors, civilisers, educators and so on to have authority on them. The

various African states or territories were conquered and enslaved politically, economically, culturally and socially.

2.1.1 Political and Economic Impacts

It is doubtless that colonialism had negative changes in Africa. Colonialism has been responsible for the current situation that Walter Rodney explains in his book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (2018). This fact, too, was vividly articulated in Chinweizu's, *The West and the Rest of Us* (1987). Colonialism introduced a dichotomy between the nations of the center and the nations of the periphery. The latter are being exploited by the former during and after colonialism. The peripheral nations produce raw materials that are expropriated by the center nations. Thus, during colonialism, the economic structure of African society was controlled by the Europeans. Cash crops were introduced to meet the industrial needs of European countries; Cocoa, coffee, tea and cotton were the main cash crops produced on a large scale; and several minerals have been mined extensively. The problem with this was that it focused on cash crops rather than basic necessities, leading to famine among many Africans (Canale, nd). Europeans have shifted the economy from an on-demand food production model to cash crop production. All crops produced by Africans were exported and prices were set by the colonies. Africans were not allowed to grow these cash crops for their own benefit. Trade between the Africans was forbidden, forcing them by that to export all cash crops produced and minerals mined. Hence, colonialism shaped both the economic and political structure of the African colonies to meet the needs of the metropolis. Colonialism ensured that African economic and political structures served the interests of their home governments. Colonialism was therefore a disservice to Africa in every sense (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

2.1.2 Social and Cultural Impacts

Besides the economic exploitation, colonialism had negative social and cultural impacts on the Africans. Africa's traditional lifestyles and culture have been destroyed since the colonisers were

not interested in traditional African culture and neglected Africans (Parker & Rathbone, 2007). They described them as inferior and uncivilised society; they started to destroy African traditions and habits which hold African communities together. Community values represent the identity of the communities. Interpersonal bonds go beyond biological affinity by expressing the community values that Africans share in common; they take care of each other, they are dependent on each other and they show solidarity (Igboin, 2011). ‘What happens to you, it happens to the community as a whole (Igboin, 2011, p. 99).

Colonialism expressed ‘the ethnocentric belief that the morals and values of the colonizer were superior to those of the colonised’ (Okoduwa, 2008, p. 18). As a consequence, they programmed building schools which curricula were designed to achieve the goals of the colonizers, rather than educating the colonised. They also launched missionary ventures, which did much to enliven Christian religious concepts and inclination of the colonised. This scenario naturally created two classes, one the dominator and the other the subordinator, with a deliberate administrative structure that favored the former (Igboin, 2011). This led to the erosion of the native values, culture and religion of submission. The African cosmos fell victim to an alien ideology, which it has continued to grapple with little or no success. For example, with the erosion of Africa's cultural values, Africans now bear at least one European or Christian name. This means that African names, arts, music, religion, and so on are inferior in orientation to paganism and values. This African's acceptance of these values has serious negative impacts on the post-colonial African society and its values.

2.1.3 The Psychological Impacts

The above mentioned impacts of colonialism led African communities to suffer from psychological traumas and pains (George et al., 2006). People feel that they are oppressed and dehumanised by generating a self-understanding among the oppressed that they are outside the scope of human.

An important instrument of colonialism's influence on the psyche of Africans was the educational system (Utsey et al., 2014). Rodney (2018) notes that colonial educational systems, relics of which still exist in most parts of colonised Africa, aimed to transform the mentality of the educated African through mis-education. People were taught to deny their culture and think like Europeans. The result of such mis-education was that “those who had the most education were to be found the most alienated Africans on the continent” (Rodney, 2018, p. 248). This situation makes Africans suffer from many psychological traumas. Franz Fanon is one of the first writers to address the social basis of mental evaluation in relation to colonialism (Dei & Kempf, 2006). He argues that racial and colonial forms of oppression dehumanise people by creating in the oppressed a self-understanding that they are beyond the reach of humanity. According to Fanon (1966), this process leads to the renunciation of personal autonomy, accompanied by the acceptance of the self-image that the oppressor has imposed on the oppressed, or provokes violence in response to fear of losing the sense of connectedness with others. Thus, these internal conflicts inside people make them depressed and have mental illness. In his writings, Fanon frequently portrays colonialism as a neurosis that spreads through society in the form of internalized guilt and fear (Dei & Kempf, 2006). Therefore, in both professional and colonial lay literature on African psychology, Africans were generally considered to be a cheerful and lucky “race” of people with few worries in the world, and what worries they had they probably traced back to the actions of others, either the medium of witchcraft or the intervention of spirits instead of their own actions (Vaughan, 2010). Their fears and anxieties were expressed, their own misdeeds and harmful thoughts projected onto others. Unfamiliar with the experience of guilt, without the inner world of introspection, they seldom lapsed into anything like suicidal despair.

Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) reflects both the sociological and the psychiatric effects of colonisation upon the colonised people (Sheyamala et al., 2019). At the end of the book, in chapter of Colonial War and Mental Disorders, Fanon states some cases and situations that caused psychological problems, disorders and mental illness (Fanon, 1961). This

is because of the bloody, pitiless atmosphere, the generalisation of inhuman practices, of people's lasting impression that they are witnessing a veritable apocalypse. The colonised people were severely tortured by the coloniser, some women were raped, collective killing and so on. All these colonial inhuman actions traumatised both the colonised people and some European colonisers.

The coloniser not only dominated land but also minds. If the impact of colonialism had only been control of land, only one form of resistance (violent) would have been required. But when traditions, values and thoughts are also being colonised, it is essential that the resistance question issues related to traditions, values and thoughts.

This situation was not accepted by some Africans. According to Awolowo and Makinde (2002), they claim:

It is surprising that our European guardians and tutors have not found it worthwhile to turn their attention to the wealth of knowledge which our country has in store for the world. It is more surprising still that the educated Africans have never stopped to think whether it is not possible to make some good out of what we generally term "devilish." This default on our side, of course, is partly due to the fact that the voices from the pulpits have always admonished us to close our eyes to the practices of our forefathers, and partly to the fact that we seem to prefer, in any case, Europeanism to Africanism, and thus every mistake in Britain is a style in Nigeria. (p. 333)

Thus, the European colonial powers did not plan to industrialise or modernise Africa. Its aims were to dominate the lands politically, take their raw materials and dehumanise their people. Africans realised the purposes of colonialism that pushed them to resist and fight against it to restore their beloved lands and their values through different forms of resistance.

2.2. Forms of Resistance

Resistance was the only solution for the colonised societies. African communities resisted the coloniser in two ways or forms: violent or armed and passive or non-violent.

2.2.1 Violent /Armed Resistance

The word resistance in history is used interchangeably with the word revolution which is associated with a reaction against colonialism violently (Houngnikpo, 2010). By which, a set of measures and strategies are taken by the colonised countries to defend themselves against the colonised one. People used several ways, the most common one is to resist with force –face to face-through the use of weapons, beating, and war arms to break the cornerstone of the British colonialism. Resistance of colonialism by Africans was met with brute land and marine military force that allowed coloniser to establish and maintain domination (ibid). Some of the historical resistant revolutions- are: the resistance of the Algerian fighter AL-Amir Abdul Qadir in the west of Algeria in 1832-1847 against the French colonialism, the Egyptian Revolution in 1919, the Mau Mau rebellion of the mid-1950. In his book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (2005), Boehmen (1990) states that according to Fanon the entire structure of colonial society must be changed and resisted radically and violently. Each time the rebellion utilises a specific issue to raise the public's consciousness; it demonstrates the logic of its cause and its maturity (Fanon, 1961). The movement's leaders remain steadfast on the concepts that have altered, defying those who tend to believe that nuances in meaning pose risks and erode the sturdy foundation of popular opinion.

2.2.2 Passive / Non violent Resistance

Non-violent, passive resistance or sometimes called civil resistance. It is the practice of achieving goals such as: social change through symbolic protests, civil disobedience, economic and political noncooperation, or other methods while refraining from violence and its threat (Nicolasen, 2019).

Originally, the word non-violent resistance was introduced by the Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi on March, 1930 to resist the British Empire in India (Nicolasen, 2019). Gandhi stressed the importance of peaceful resistance in the Middle-Eastern colonised countries as long as they are not well-qualified militarily, economically, socially, and politically to resist the colonial domination violently and directly. Therefore, he resisted the British Empire through a non-cooperation with illegal rules and criminal organisations. Gandhi depended on understanding the good desires of people and writings about the history and values of the colonised populations. Finally, in 1944, he was able to break the cornerstone of the British colonialism.

One of the most widespread forms of anti-colonial reaction in Africa was passive resistance. It can be via a refusal to obey orders; the renunciation of everything that was considered a sign of civilisation and was closely linked to colonisation and foreign presence. For instance, keeping children out of school which in some circles was viewed as merely a form of colonial forced labor, and abandonment of the villages that sprung up along the southern roads to keep the population together (Boahen, 1990). Africans frequently depended on magic, the assistance of their ancestors, and the involvement of their gods in their fight against colonial oppression. They used their religion as a weapon to resist colonial power and its danger to their ideals. Thus, colonised communities in Africa used passive resistance in different forms.

2.2.2.1 Forms of Passive Resistance

Besides the violent resistance, Africans had to resist the coloniser non-violently or peacefully. They used different mechanisms and strategies in their resistance to gain their independence.

2.2.2.1.1 Literary Resistance

Writers from the former colonies used their literary texts as a form of resistance. Through their literary texts, writers from the colonised countries tended to react against the colonial claims about their societies, cultures, and people of being inferior, primitive, and uncivilised (Waita,

2019). By so doing, they wrote to make their literature anti-colonial because it aims to fight and correct the misconceptions about their societies. Writing back was one of the useful techniques to emphasise their identity. For instance, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is the most famous evidence of anti-colonial African's literary resistance. Achebe places his novel in opposition to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) as it will be explained in the next chapter. Women's literature also has notable contribution in passive resistance. For example, Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* (1966), *Women's are Different* (1986), and Mariama Bâ's *Feminize Your Canon* (1937) are the basics of the African female literary works. These writings are characterised by significant features that aimed to resist the false Western claims about the Africans traditions and values either to the coloniser or to the African people themselves using different techniques such as: writing back, counter narrative and realism.

2.2.2.1.2 Political and Social resistance

African communities resisted the coloniser in different domains such as social, economic and political. Not men only resisted the coloniser, women also took part in resisting colonialism (Korieh, 2010). For example, in parts of eastern Nigeria, women protested against the colonial government's attempts to control the price of gari and the restrictions on its exports. The government's actions were seen by the women as an attempt to take over their cassava farms. Thus, women demonstrations armed with cassava sticks and leaves can be considered as another form of non-violent resistance. Also, petitions illustrate the ways in which people negotiated politically the various strategies and practices of colonialism and offered insights into the impact and outcomes of local people's confrontation with various colonial authorities in their attempt to gain effective control over the colonial societies. These letters can be read as strategies and tactics used to negotiate the power structures aimed at subjugating and controlling people for the good of the Empire (Korieh, 2010).

Besides these African attempts against the coloniser, punishment, prisons and penalties were an important strategy that colonialism worked to the advantage of the colonisers and their agents. Crucially, however, prisons were also places of resistance and challenge (Buntman, 2019). The history and sociology of the role of prisons and prisoners in shaping legal, social, and political outcomes to a lesser or greater extent is a fairly recent field, beyond colonial studies.

2.3 African Resistance and Psychoanalysis

Resistance in psychoanalysis refers to the person's defense that emerges from unconscious content coming to fruition through resistant process. Resistance is the repression of unconscious drives from integration into conscious awareness (Horney, 1939) and the aim of psychoanalysis is to bring the unconscious or preconscious into consciousness through verbalisation. Thereafter, the act of bringing such thoughts to consciousness prevents them from motivating the behaviour and thus allows the individual to exercise more personal control (Bernstein, 2009). In the African context, passive resistance can be presented through the psychological impacts that people suffered from coloniser: repression, silence, anxiety, fear and so on. They were unable to preserve their traditions and culture which were considered as a part of their identity from the changes caused by colonialism.

2.3.1 Repression Resistance

The struggle for the reassertion and preservation of self-identity first as Africans, then as members of specific cultural nations (Boahen, 1990), they resisted the repressions where the ego pushes offensive memories, ideas, and impulses down into the unconscious. Essentially, the person is unconsciously hiding memories from the conscious mind (Benjamin, 1968). As a result, Africans struggled silently from their dissatisfied situation. They were not heard by the outside world. Africans experiences with colonialism were neither admitted nor supported by public opinion. The issue of African struggle was under the control of colonialism since the colonised people had no media to transmit their struggle outside Africa (Karikari, 2010).

2.3.2. Transference Resistance

Another form of resistance is transference resistance which is typically unconscious. Transference is when the subject allows past experiences to affect current relationships. In therapy, this can happen when the therapist consciously or unconsciously reminds the subject of someone in their past who may have had an early impact on their life (Glen et al, 2012). Subsequently, the person may suddenly tend to view the therapist either positively or negatively, depending on the nature of the past influence. In the African context, since Africans are conservatives (Boahen, 1990), they are consciously attached to and influenced by their past culture and traditions which were completely ignored by Europeans.

2.3.3. Id Resistance

Psychoanalytically, Freud (2014) categorised this type of resistance under the term of Id resistance. It is the opposition put up by the unconscious Id against any changes in its accustomed patterns of gratification. Id resistance reflects the unconscious striving for consistency in a way that is based on the pleasure principle. Since the Id is an innate part of the human instinct, conscious interpretation is an inadequate method. Therefore, the psychoanalyst must first be able to overcome resistances by deducing the person's unconscious defenses presented by exploiting the transference mechanism (Benjamin, 1968). For the African communities, it was hard to accept the huge destructions of their traditions and culture under the rule of the British coloniser, some Africans resisted in order to restore or rebuild them (Dei & Kempf, 2006). Yet, the coloniser's domination was powerful that it prevented Africans to do so.

2.3.4 Ego Resistance

This form of resistance is a neurotic regression to a supposed state of childlike security. Typically, the human being attempts to gain attention and empathy by emphasizing minor medical symptoms (e.g., headache, nausea, and depression) (Benjamin, 1968; Freud, 2014). In other word, the person should be conscious, reasonable and being under the state of resilience. In psychology, the concept of resilience, which is imported from metal physics field, is linked to

resistance and flexibility. In psychology, resilience designates the capacity for a person to recover well, without serious after-effects, after experiencing trauma (Dei & Kempf, 2006). In the African context, resilience is related to religious and spiritual sides. The Black Church, which is a hidden community, has had a deep influence on the black community since it was considered as the place where the notions of spirituality, freedom, hope and resilience has become deeply engraved in the consciousness of the colonised people. These values are integral to the formation of Black identity and consciousness, and can also help to stimulate social action, resistance and confrontation to forms of oppression. Therefore, Black Church was a source of optimism and strength to the colonised people to fight the coloniser (Dei & Kempf, 2006).

2.3.5 Super-ego Resistance

Superego resistance is the opposition put up in therapy against recovery by the person's conscience, their sense of underlying guilt (Freud, 1926). It prompts personal punishment by the means of self-sabotage or self-imposed impediment. It has been considered by some, though not by Freud, the weakest form of resistance, reflecting the moralistic sentiments of the superego (Benjamin, 1968). In other words, and to reflect on the African context, some African people used all forms of resistance violent and non-violent against colonialism to preserve their traditions and culture. However, they could not stop the domination of colonialism. They suffered from it and resisted politically, socially, economically and even psychologically. The latter can lead some of them commit suicide.

Suicide might be seen as the ultimate act of will and resistance or as a final act of desperation, as a symbol of one's autonomy or as proof that one is subjected to forces they have no control over (Vaughan, 2010). It has been the focus of sociological investigation in modern times, especially with the release of Emile Durkheim's book *Le Suicide* (1897), which was supported by the gathering of social statistics. In addition, depending on one's theoretical perspective, the growth of contemporary psychiatry has contributed to the "medicalisation" of suicide and descriptions of the suicidal mind as ill, hopeless, or overcome by inverted rage. But

there is a specific trajectory to thinking about suicide in Africa. In many of these recent reports on eastern and southern Africa, just as in early eighteenth-century discussions of the "English malady," suicide is portrayed as a symptom of a larger social and moral crisis, as a challenge to "traditional" values, and as a sign of the "anomie" brought on by modernization. Suicide remains one of the most controversial and culturally complex human acts (Pierce & Rao, 2006). Magesa and John Mary Waliggo wrote about the importance of the values and the cultures to any society. They state that no society can accept foreign values and cultures because they represent its identity. Thus, societies must keep and protect them, otherwise they commit suicide:

No sane society chooses to build its future on foreign cultures, values and systems. Every society is obliged to search deep in its own history, culture, religion and morality in order to discover the values upon which its development and liberation, its civilization and its identity should be based. To do otherwise is nothing less than communal suicide (quoted in Igboin, 2011, p. 102).

Conclusion

During colonial period, African communities suffered from different aspects of life that were destroyed by the coloniser. The latter aimed to control these communities politically, economically and socially or culturally. This situation led them to resist against the coloniser using various sorts of resistance such as: armed and non-armed resistance. People felt that they were oppressed and dehumanised. Yet, their resistance aimed to restore and rebuild the destructions caused by the coloniser. Some of them reacted unconsciously and even committed suicide as a final solution to escape from their repressions and as an effect of symptom or failed action. These situations are widely expressed in significant writings, the known one is *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe.

CHAPTER THREE

Suicidal Resistance in *Things Fall Apart*: A Psychoanalytical Study

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Chapter Three: Suicidal Resistance in *Things Fall Apart*: A Psychoanalytical Study

Introduction

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is one of the main known African literary works. By which, Achebe reacted against Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* about inferiority of the African people and cultures depicted in his novel. Achebe's novel cannot be understood only from literary resistance perspective, but it also reflects how the Africans tended to resist colonialism in different fields. One of which is psychological resistance which is introduced through the main character Okonkwo. Psychological resistance is extremely deep action which can occur only with the activists and scholasticists who would not ever accept being neither under foreign power nor separated from their cultures, traditions and values. This chapter explains the different forms of resistance of the protagonist Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) from psychoanalytic point of view.

3.1 An Overview on Achebe's Works

3.1.1 A short Overview on Achebe's Works

Chinua Achebe is a Nigerian writer, novelist, poet, and critic. He was born on November 1930 in Ogidi-Nigeria. Achebe is regarded as a central figure of modern African literature. His first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) occupies a special place in African literature and remains the most widely studied, translated, and read African novel (Boehmer, 2005). Achebe's notable works also include *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). These writings clearly show the conflict between colonial Nigeria and the old traditions and values, and emphasise on depicting the negative impacts of colonialism on Nigerian people (Boehmer, 2005). Achebe is classified within the first generation of the African writers who are known by belonging to two conflicted contexts or cultures. That is due to their growing up in pre-colonial society; which means the local traditions and beliefs of

the early Nigeria is rooted in their identities. Simultaneously, they experienced the colonial domination on their lands and received their education in the missionary /colonial schools (Dei& Kempf, 2006). Consequently, the first generation literature can be viewed as a kind of a conflict between modernity and traditions. The works of these writers are characterised by one of the main features of anti-colonial literature which is counter narrative. It is also known as anti-colonial narration. The first generation of the African authors tended to use realism in their narrative in order to serve realistic image of their societies. This is by introducing the African myths, rituals, and proverbs from their traditions in their literary texts, to show a realistic image of Africa to the colonisers who used to dehumanise Africans in their discourse. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is the most famous evidence of postcolonial African's literary resistance. Achebe places his novel in opposition to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) towards the African continent; people, environment, and culture. Conrad's novel depends on the western voice Marlow in narrating the events to the reader. In Conrad's discourse, Marlow represents the real image of the western point of view on African subjects and culture. He depicts the European subject Mr Kurtz's suffering with illness caused by the miserable circumstances that he finds in and around the Congo River. As well as from the strange and scary creatures, Africans, by claiming that they are savages and prehistoric (Conrad, 1899). As a result, Achebe replies to this novel through writing *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by setting a detailed description of Africans as valuable, considerable, and structured societies having own cultures. Through depicting the life of the protagonist Okonkwo within his society Umuofia, Achebe restored the image of Africans as humans having life that contains of traditions, customs, and beliefs that shape the colonised identity. Thus, Achebe resisted colonial narratives about the colonised communities by bringing the old traditions, customs and values in his literary texts which the coloniser claimed their absence.

3.1.2 *Things Fall Apart*: A Summary

Okonkwo develops into one of the clan's top wrestlers as a young man. Okonkwo cherishes aggressiveness and power, which he views as masculine qualities. His worst fear is being viewed as weak or feminine, as his father Unoka. Okonkwo becomes one of the greatest men in the land with three wives and a vast store of yams as his riches and position within the tribe increase. He is harsh with his family because he thinks that anger is the only appropriate feature to show. Nwoye, Okonkwo's oldest son, worries him the most because he exhibits traits of laziness similar to Unoka. One day, the clan demands the sacrifice of a virgin and a 15-year-old boy named Ikemefuna in order to resolve a dispute with a nearby community. Ikemefuna then spends the following three years living with Okonkwo's family.

Ikemefuna develops a close bond relationship with Nwoye while residing with Okonkwo's family by telling him folktales and encouraging him to take pleasure in male duties. Okonkwo works hard on Nwoye and develops a fondness for Ikemefuna. Ikemefuna quickly begins to call Okonkwo as "father" (Achebe, 1958, p. 41). After three years, Okonkwo is told that Ikemefuna must be slain by the tribe's God, Ezeudu asked Okonkwo not to take part in the killing because "the boy calls you father" (Achebe, 1958, p. 41). When they take Ikemefuna out to be executed the following day, Okonkwo disregards this advice out of fear that others will perceive him as weak or effeminate. He then goes on to deliver the fatal blow. Ezeudu dies shortly after, and the entire clan attends his burial party. Okonkwo's rifle explodes during the burial, and accidentally killing Ezeudu's 16-year-old son. Okonkwo had no choice but to leave the clan with his family after killing a fellow clansman. They may return in seven years since the crime was "female" or inadvertent. Okonkwo and his family put a lot of effort into starting a new farm in Mbanta. They receive friendly treatment from his mother's relatives, but Okonkwo is deeply demoralised by the situation. He looks forward to the time when he can take his proper position in Umuofia again. While he is at work in Mbanta, the white men start to show up and rumours

about their might and devastation start to circulate among the nearby clans. But when they do reach Mbanta, the tribe is fascinated but thinks their faith is absurd. Nwoye, on the other hand, is enthralled by the hymn he hears on the first day and quickly joins the Christians to escape his angry father. When Okonkwo eventually makes it back to Umuofia, the European colonialism managed to change his clan. Many clan members are enrolling their children in the school so they can one day work as clerks or teachers. Reverend Smith is uncompromising, encouraging the converted clan members to engage in behaviour that inflames the rest of the clan. In retaliation, the clan burns down the church after Enoch, a fanatical convert, tears the mask off one of the clan's masked Egwugwu during a rite. When the District Commissioner learns about this offense from Reverend Smith, he convinces the clan's elders into meeting with him so that he may shackle them. Once the hamlet pays the fine, the clan leaders, including Okonkwo, suffer taunts and beatings before being freed. The clan leaders discuss battle the following morning before being cut off by the entrance of court messengers. Okonkwo challenges the leader, who responds that the white man has ordered the conference to end with hatred. Okonkwo uses his machete to quickly kill the messenger. When Okonkwo realises that none of his clansmen are with him in his terrible crime, he leaves and hangs himself.

3.2. Resistance in *Things Fall Apart*

3.2.1 An Overview on Resistance in *Things Fall Apart*

One form of traditional resistance in *Thing Fall Apart* is the masculine traditions of the clan. In other words, females were dominated by males (Bloom, 2009). For example, Okonkwo is represented in the novel as the strongest man in his clan who has a leadership spirit that enables him to manage well in his society. He has the right to beat his wives in case of disobedience and to kill anyone in the evil forest who may harm his traditions that were part of his society's identity.

In the novel, the Igbo society resisted colonialism in different forms, passively and violently. Okonkwo started gathering people in the public place and tried to raise their awareness

about the dangers of colonialism and the necessity to fight against it. Then the coloniser prevented people from having a sit together and started imprisoning the opponents including Okonkwo. Since then, the Igbo elders paid fines to free the prisoners. Few people in Umuofia realised that there is no solution but to start resisting violently because they are extremely depressed by being under the colonial domination. One of the actions they have assumed is burning the colonial church. The people of Umuofia rushed to destroy the church instead of negotiating the problem with the white Christians. Okonkwo also resisted violently by killing the white missionary which was considered as an immature action because it is not a personal war against the missionaries but he could not resist showing his hatred towards the coloniser. He did this action because the destruction of his identity suppressed his desire and he killed him to prove his faithful and patriotic sentiment to the Igbo society. His sense of self-worth is dependent upon the traditional standard by which society judges him.

3.2.2 Okonkwo: An Overview

Achebe opens his novel with the presentation and the description of the protagonist Okonkwo as “a well-known man throughout the nine villages” (Achebe, 1958, p.10) and he is young, physically strong and confident man. He suppresses his emotions so as to be seen as manly. Okonkwo values masculinity, strength and respect above all else (Achebe, 1958). The individual power play of supremacy through the character of Okonkwo is clearly highlighted in the novel (Rikza, 2016). The fear and the repression of physical weakness and feminine emotion “agbala” that dominate his character are reactions against reflecting his father’s childish behavior. The fear that he could fail in resisting the coloniser leads him to live in depression. This psychological trauma causes his character to develop extreme anger and hatred towards the coloniser. The passive social reaction against the coloniser status builds pressure on Okonkwo, leading him into grieving and mourning status in his internal character for he is unable to take action along with his community. The consequences of this depression is fully expressed in his reactions. The novel's protagonist is concerned with being a man of traditions and representative

of Igbo identity and culture which were inherited from the elders. Thus, destroying them leaves him unbalanced in his thoughts and actions (Rikza, 2016). Manhood is the concept he learns from his own tribal practice, but he associates it not only with masculinity and aggression, but with the resistance against cultural change and the damage caused by colonialism. As a result of the belief in his manhood and his African identity, he fails to survive under the rule of colonialism and he commits suicide.

3.3 Okonkwo's Resistance: Psychoanalysis

Things Fall Apart (1958) reflects the conflicts between two different cultures: the coloniser's culture and that of the colonised, and how the protagonist Okonkwo resisted psychologically to protect the Igbo culture and traditions till his suicide. The novel describes Okonkwo as a symbol of resistance and an anti-colonial man. He is the main character who resisted the coloniser (Alghamdi, 2020).

During the colonial period, the impact of colonialism on African communities was severe. As a result, a great number of people suffered politically, economically, socially and psychologically. African traditions were destroyed and life styles were completely replaced by the coloniser ones (Rikza, 2016). When Okonkwo returned home from exile, he found that things had changed and the African traditions were damaged (Achebe, 1958). For Okonkwo, it is not possible to bear and endure weakness under the domination of an outsider's culture. Okonkwo's visions of the passive Igbo community and their ancient prestigious traditions were infected by the image of his father, Unoka. The weak communal power stirred his irrational anger and violent actions, leading him to resist non-violently and violently when he killed the white missionary. This achievement or violent action demonstrates his patriotism. His personal victories at wars and wrestling matches earn his clan the epithet (Ogbaa, 1981), 'Umuofia obodo dike', 'Umuofia the land of the brave' (Achebe, 1958, p. 109).

In fact, Okonkwo's extreme anger and violent actions are reflections of the infantile memory of life and repressions resulted from his father's character and how he resisted to shape his personality and gained higher position in his society. He became a man who represents the Igbo culture and identity. In psychoanalysis, this kind of resistance is called the transference resistance. Okonkwo's childhood experience enables him to build a stronger superego. Okonkwo's father Unoka is considered as agbala (p. 13) because he hates doing things that symbolises manhood such as participating in wars, cultivating yams and so on. Okonkwo resented his father's failure and weakness and resisted his father's character; he did not want to be like his father meanwhile he resisted to protect the traditions and the values of his society. This causes Okonkwo to follow the demands of the superego, letting it suppresses the id. He consciously preserves both masculinity and African identity. Thus, he unconsciously fears appearing, like his father, weak and as a failure and losing his position in his society as a brave leader and the one who represents the African identity. This is what Achebe says about Okonkwo:

In his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness... Even as a little boy he had resented his father's failure and weakness, and even now he still remembered how he had suffered when a playmate had told him that his father was agbala (pp. 9 -10).

Thus, the reason behind the protagonist's violent actions in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is his childhood experience, which affects the infantile mindset, as his beliefs and convictions suffered from traumatic experiences and were influenced by psychodynamic perspectives (Rikza, 2016). Moreover, it adds to it the fear of losing his societal status that he spent his whole life to build it because of colonialism.

Rikza (2016) states that according to Freud, the human mind consists of three subdivisions: the id, the ego and the superego that influence a person's behaviour, thoughts and actions. Psychoanalytically, in Okonkwo's unconscious mind, there is an internal conflict between the id and the superego that leads to Okonkwo's destruction. The id is anything that the superego disapproves of. In the case of Okonkwo, before the coming of colonialism, he was dominated by the id. For the id, Okonkwo is an impatient man who fears being seen as an "agbala" (Achebe, 1958, p. 10) or womanly. After the coming of colonialism everything is changed, he was dominated by the superego. He resists violently to repress his emotions in order to be viewed as masculine as he used to be viewed in the pre-colonial period. This is Okonkwo's defensive mechanism that he shows his actions as a man though "he is well-known throughout the nine villages" (Achebe, 1958, p. 04) for his triumph and strength over the unbeatable wrestlers. Okonkwo is not a rational. He is only ruled by one passion to hate everything that his father loved; "Okonkwo was ruled by one passion- to hate everything that his father Unoka loved" (p. 10); the realm of the id (Nweke, 2011). The superego is represented in the novel by the Igbo elders and grandees. Those elders who both set moral values and represent Igbo identity. At the beginning, Okonkwo preserves resisting the coloniser peacefully with some of clansmen and then he resisted violently. Since Okonkwo is an impatient and rigid offender, Freud suggests that violent offenders, like in the case of Okonkwo, are characterised as dominant individuals who are unable to control their impulsive and pleasure-seeking urges (Rikza, 2016) which in turn drives them to commit crimes. Okonkwo is a scholasticist, his id dominates over the superego. Therefore, it becomes exposed and obvious, making his judgment partial and narrow, ultimately powerless to judge the situation of reality. Because of this, without further judgment and immediate decision, Okonkwo becomes violent and shows anti-empathy for the victims because his superego is repressed and isolated, unable to make a logical connection between reality and consequences, which brings the tragic end of the targeted victim. In other words, Okonkwo's resistance is between the id that represents the power and the pleasure of

Okonkwo and the superego that represents the traditions and moral values. These values that most elders know that they are threatened by white man's arrival in Umuofia made “things fall apart” in their community. Thus, the triumph of the id and the destruction of the superego can result in the unconscious decision of hurting or punishing the self such as committing suicide.

In his book, *The Ego and the Id* (1923), Freud states that the human ego grows out of the id, and the impulses of the id are carefully controlled by the ego, so that the superego attains its perfection by controlling people's sense of right, wrong and guilt. The superego forms a contradiction to the id because of its characteristics, which contain all of human's internalised moral standards and ideals that people acquire from both parents and society, their sense of right and wrong, while the id is just instant self-gratification and wants complacency or self-satisfaction. Okonkwo is unable to control fear and nervousness and is unable to regulate the connection between the id and ego. In some situations, Okonkwo surrenders to his id, which responds neither to reality (ego) nor to moral judgment (superego). In the novel, the protagonist subdues his ego and superego in various situations. For instance, he commits crimes by killing Ikemefuna and the white missionary. His reality is shown to be often interrupted by the thought of fear and anxiety and dominated by the natural impulses responsible within him to develop an indomitable superego that indicates no surrendering fear of failure and weakness. Okonkwo's weak ego and superego do not resist his animal desires, which means the id. Because he suffers for a long time in his childhood and his ego is weak and damaged, he is unable to cope with stressful coloniser's circumstances in the deal with the colonised or conventional society. In these special situations, he is consciously not afraid of death, but unconsciously afraid of showing any signs of weakness and failure which motivates him to commit crimes and even put an end to his life when he commits suicide.

3.3.1 Okonkwo's Suicide

According to the Igbo tradition, Okonkwo's suicide is considered an "abomination"; a tragic fall for a man who was once highly respected, because suicide is an "abomination," it is not accepted in the Igbo society (Achebe, 1958). This is clearly obvious when Okonkwo's friend Obierika says "His [Okonkwo] body is evil and only strangers may touch it" (p. 147). He also explains that only strangers may bury Okonkwo's body. On the other hand, according to the critic Alen R Friesen Okonkwo's decision to put an end to his life can be considered as a heroic action (2006). Okonkwo's suicide can be considered as Shakespearian tragedy, Achebe adapts the features of Shakespearian tragedy in his novel by presenting the tragic death of the protagonist (Usongo, 2007). Okonkwo was a conservative and a man of principles who could not live in a society that does not abide by his view of right and wrong.

By the end of the novel, Okonkwo tries to withstand the tide of change, but he seems to be the only one who, through violent action, reminds his villagers of the past glory of Igbo culture. This situation leads Okonkwo to realise that his clansmen have surrendered. He mourns for his village and becomes depressed "Okonkwo was deeply grieved [...]. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart, and he mourned for the no warlike men" (Achebe, 1958, p. 129). He rebels against the elders, disobeying the superego demands when he ends up killing the colonial official and the missionary in an attempt to prove his manliness and as a last effort to save his village from the white man's influence, however he realises that "Umuofia would not go to war" (p. 205). This symbolises that the superego, which is responsible of planting the idea of manhood into him, is turning its back against him. Since the absence of the superego and the ego to balance and repress the id, the id unmask itself causing him to be weak. Eventually he makes up his mind to save his ego and superego by sacrificing his own life. Okonkwo kills himself because he is pressured by his worst fear which is the fear of failure and he sees his people as a failure. In order not to continue with the life of failure and weakness, he hangs himself to preserve his masculine power and avoid the consequences of his actions that make him viewed as a coward or being seen weak;

“...Are you afraid he [Egonwanne] would convince us not to fight?” Obierika says.

“Afraid? I do not care what he does to you. I despise him and those who listen to him. I shall fight alone if I choose.” Okonkwo says. ...

“How do you know he, Egonwanne, will speak against war?” Obierika asked after a while.

“Because I know he is a coward.” Okonkwo says. (p.142)

Okonkwo's death may have marked the beginning of a change in Umuofia, but his suicide is not sacrifice for the sake of his people. That is to say that for neither the gods nor humans would consider suicide as a form of sacrifice for suicide is an abomination in Igbo society (Achebe.). Okonkwo's suicide happens because he realises that he has been failed by his society. Though he has the courage to endure calamities such as losing his yams during the Umuofia drought, the trauma of exile, the conversion of his son Nwoye and the humiliation of imprisonment, he does so with others. That is, in all three cases, the people are behind him. It is not fear of what the white man, whose power is highly known, might do that drives him to commit suicide. Rather, it is an acknowledgment of the truth of the statement: “It is more difficult and bitter when a man fails alone” (p. 23), words of wisdom transferred to him by his father. He is aware of his failure which was unconsciously depressed in his inner life. When the latter appears and becomes apparent, he resists by means of suicide as a defense in order not to be viewed weak, as a woman, like his father.

Besides this, the coloniser also dominated the Africans by destructing their traditions and values using white missionaries that converting most of the Africans into Christianity, and by building churches and schools in which the coloniser's culture is taught and learned. This great destruction and changes were strange in the African communities. The African way of life used to be inherited from one generation to another. The Igbo traditional birth and death identity system is a legacy that goes along generational myth patterns of Igbo ancestry and history

(Kingsley, 2018). The life and thought of the Igbo legacy are manifested in speech patterns, traits, actions, behaviors and evidence. Okonkwo considers himself as the representative of the Igbo society and if he does not resist the coloniser and restore the fallen things, he will not consider himself as a part of his culture and he will not find a place to live in such strange society, therefore, he will not represent his society. According to Okonkwo, the legacy between the ancestors and the new generation should be continued. This continuation myth of grandfather-grandchild imagery and allusion must be alive among African beliefs. When Okonkwo realises his society abandoned its identity, especially his son Nwoye, he feels depressed and resists the coloniser violently. However, his resistance was individual and he finds himself alone. He mourns its passive reaction of the society that easily abandoned its identity.

Psychologically, the protagonist represses his desires and he acts violently as in the killing the messenger. Okonkwo knows that the coloniser would arrest him but he prefers committing suicide and to die rather than to live under the domination of the coloniser. Okonkwo's suicide remains as premonition that Africans lived with and deliberated through generations. This can be seen in Achebe's novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960).

Conclusion

Okonkwo's suicide signifies the depression that he suffers from due to colonialism and the colonial ability to control his own people. Because of the extension of his sincerity, adherence of his Igbo traditions, his courage and spiritual leadership, how he can put an end to his life easily. Okonkwo could not see colonial life threatens his existence or isolates him from his identity which is considered a legacy that should be transmitted through generations. Okonkwo resists the coloniser as much as he could, but he reaches to a stage where he feels that he is alone and all those around him surrender to adapt to the new life even the closest ones including his son and his friend. Psychoanalytically, the suicide of the protagonist is resulted from the fall of the superego and the ego in Okonkwo's mind which repress the id. The id unconsciously inspires him that he no longer has that ideal position. Okonkwo is pressured by his worst fear of failure

and by the fall of his traditions, therefore, the loss of his identity. “That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog” (Achebe, 1958, p. 147).

General Conclusion

Things Fall Apart is considered as one of the valuable literary texts of Chinua Achebe, the father of the African literature. As an anti-colonial novel, it attempts to present African models of resistance through the protagonist Okonkwo before and during the colonial domination over Nigeria. One of the main forms of resistance is suicide. The aim of this dissertation is to study the forms and factors of resistance in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) from a psychoanalytical perspective.

In order to synthesise the relevant studies and researches to the topic, the related literature was reviewed. The present work provides a detailed definition, factors and forms of resistance from different psychoanalysts' viewpoints; Sigmund Freud, Jaque Lacan, and Carl Gustav Jung. Each one of them tries to explain his philosophy and explore the psyche and the term of resistance as well, with special focus on the term of suicide as a form of resistance. In this sense, various definitions and interpretations were provided for the sake of highlighting the theoretical framework of the study which is psychoanalysis. Therefore, the first chapter provides a scientific analysis of the psyche from the earliest stages of childhood into adolescence and how the environment, and human experiences may contribute to the foundation of the human minds and meaning of resistance. Providing these pieces of information contributed in the comprehension of the meaning of resistance and demonstrated the classification of the forms of resistance in relation to the human beliefs, assumptions and stages of growth; which are the id resistance, the ego resistance, the superego resistance, the transference resistance and repression resistance.

Besides this, the work emphasises on the impacts of colonialism on Africa in different fields; political and economic, social and cultural, and then discussing the psychological impacts on Africans. It introduces the main two types of resistance, which are:

violent and non-violent/passive resistance. In each of which Africans' notable models of resistance were presented, however, it focuses on the passive forms of resistance since they are the line that permits to connect the main aim of this research which is suicide as a passive form of resistance. It also analyses the psychological forms of resistance, which are introduced previously, in the African context. These forms of resistance are a result of the failure of some violent forms of resistance.

The analysis of Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) highlighted and emphasised the main events of the novel that helped to serve the psychological resistance of the protagonist Okonkwo, through presenting his life story, his family, his friends, his assumptions and his masculine features. Accordingly, conducting this research required to include several quotations to support and justify the ideas mentioned in the two theoretical parts, and to confirm the research hypotheses. The findings of the research ensured the precision of the previous hypotheses and revealed the following results. Through analysing the novel *Things Fall Apart*, it was deduced that Achebe obviously implied the concept of resistance in different forms. One of these forms of resistance, which is the focus of this study, is suicide of the protagonist Okonkwo. Okonkwo's suicide signifies the depression that he suffers owing to colonialism. Because of his sincerity, adherence of his African traditions, the amount of his courage and spiritual leadership, how he can put an end to his life easily. Okonkwo could not see colonial life threatens his existence or isolates him from his identity which is considered a legacy and it should be transmitted through generations. Okonkwo tried to resist the coloniser as much as he could, but he reached to a stage where he felt that he is alone and all people around him surrendered to adapt to the new life even the closest ones including his son and his friend. Psychoanalytically, the suicide of the protagonist is resulted from the destruction of the superego in Okonkwo's mind which repress the id. The id unconsciously inspires him that he is no longer has that ideal position. Okonkwo was depressed by his worst fear of failure and by the fall of his traditions because of colonialism, therefore, the loss of his identity.

To conclude, psychoanalysis is a recurrent issue in the literary analysis. There are many issues discussed using its theories but this dissertation deals with the main factors that lead to suicide while resisting colonialism in *Things Fall Apart* with the focus on the protagonist, Okonkwo. There is no doubt that the coloniser has negative impacts on the colonised. In return, the latter had to resist to restore its independence and identity either passively or violently. However, the psychological impacts on the dominated people made them feel that they live in a depressed life. The solution of the psychological traumas is that either they adapt to the new situation or resist until death. Okonkwo resisted the coloniser, however, he found himself alone. Thus, he became depressed and decided to suicide although he knows that it is an abomination in his religion and traditions. He resisted by surrendering his life to save his dignity and for not being hanged by white people. The repressions of the id with the absence of the superego makes the person hurts himself and decides unconscious decisions that can put an end to his life.

Although psychoanalysis is applicable to significant literary works, it is still new approach in African literature. Literature has sought to use psychoanalysis for further explanations, and even psychoanalysis itself uses literature as a source or exemplar for psychoanalytic notions. It is a new flourishing field that connects between literature and African studies. In this dissertation, psychoanalysis facilitates understanding the main psychological factors of suicide as a form of resistance.

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ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في فعل الانتحار كشكل من أشكال المقاومة في رواية الكاتب تشينوا أتشيبي " الأشياء تتداعى" (1958) من منظور التحليل النفسي. تقدم هذه الأطروحة لمحة عامة عن مفهوم المقاومة وأشكالها في التحليل النفسي. كما تقدم الدراسة تحليلًا تاريخيًا وصفيًا تحليليًا لمختلف أشكال المقاومة في الرواية. على وجه الخصوص، يستكشف عوامل التحليل النفسي الكامنة وراء انتحار أوكونكو وكيف قاوم مجتمعه الاستعمار. وفقًا لذلك، تستخدم هذه الدراسة نهج التحليل النفسي لتفسير أوكونكو وعمله الانتحاري. وبالتالي، تكشف هذه الدراسة عن الدلائل التالية: أولاً، أوكونكو، بطل الرواية، يعكس طبيعته المتعصبة التي لن تسمح له أبدًا بالاستسلام لأسلوب الحياة الاستعماري. ثانيًا، تدل مقاومة أوكونكو الانتحارية على إحباطه من كونه نسخة من والده أونوكا. ثالثًا، أثبتت الدراسة أن الانتحار هو نتيجة القمع الذي دفع أوكونكو دون وعي إلى الانتحار كوسيلة دفاع. تمت تغطية هذا بوضوح في عمل أتشيبي من خلال تصوير وصف مفصل لشخصية أوكونكو قبل وأثناء الهيمنة الاستعمارية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تشينوا أتشيبي، التحليل النفسي، المقاومة، الانتحار، الأشياء تتداعى.