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Hegemony and Resistance in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*: A Post-Colonial Study

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Abstract

The present study analyses, from a post-colonial perspective, the decolonising power of culture in Chinua Achebe's most prominent novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) (abbreviated as *TFA*). The study examines the colonised Igbo community as one of the main ethnic groups of Nigeria that possess their own identity, indigenous religion, distinct traditions, etc. and how that community comes under threat due to the strenuous efforts of the British colonialists as soon as they arrive in Nigeria. Moreover, it portrays the clash between the two cultures resulted from the arrival of colonialism. It focuses on the different attempts of the native people of Nigeria to decolonise their culture. However, their struggles are met in most cases with failure and in few cases with success. The research also presents the self-consciousness and the resistance of the colonised people against the drastic changes that colonialism has made to their culture and identity and it portrays their readiness to resist the oppressive hegemonic power. The study ends with a conclusion that sums up the main findings of the study, and it is followed by a list of references and bibliography.

Keywords: Colonialism, Decolonization, Igbo Culture, Hegemony, Resistance.

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Introduction

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) is the most prominent twentieth-century Nigerian novelist. He is known as the father of the modern African literature especially with the publication of his masterpiece *Things Fall Apart*. The novel is a portrayal of pre and post-colonial culture of Igbo, and it depicts the power of Igbo culture in two different periods. The first one depicts the cultural values of the Igbo community before the coming of European colonialism and how the writer realistically represented the Igbo culture with its merits and demerits. The second period is related to the effects of colonialism and the people's ongoing struggle to react against the colonial power.

Since culture is a combination of various perceptions, intellectuals and critics like Raymond Williams, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and many others gave particular importance to the term. According to Kirch (2008, p. 747), modern anthropologists define culture "as a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts" (*ibid.*). Therefore, the culture of Nigeria manifests itself in its beliefs, customs, food, music, religions, and so on. For Said (1994, p. xiii), culture "is a source of identity" because both are inextricably related to one another to the degree that the former determines the latter (*ibid.*).

Nigeria is the most multi-ethnic and multi-lingual African country. It comprises almost more than two hundred and fifty ethnic groups, each having distinct characteristics, customs, traditions, and languages. Among these various groups, the most prominent ones are the Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, and Igbo. (Mayowa, 2014). Before the arrival of colonialism, the dominant ethnic

groups were independent and ruled themselves. The Igbo had a decentralised system of authority; “its government is referred to as republican” (Deji, 2013, p. 87). On a general level, the Igbo had no kings; their social system was egalitarian. Such a system was based on the family groups. Usually, every village consisted of several connected families. Each of the family heads had the *Ofo* title. Thus, the family leaders formed the council of elders called *Okpara* to govern the village properly (Adeyemi, 2018). In pre-colonial Nigeria, people were capable of shaping their own identity, and in the creation of cultural identity, religion played a central role. Eliot (1976, p.100) argues that “no culture can appear or develop except in relation to a religion”. In the society culture and religion are inseparable unless there is an external force. Therefore, the heritage of Nigerian culture comes under threat as soon as colonialism arrives which regularly brings the justification that the real source of its existence is merely spreading civilisation among the uncivilised people.

According to Adeyemi (2018), during the nineteenth century, Britain established its colonies through a system so often called indirect rule which implied to rule the people indirectly because it aimed at controlling the natives by making use of their traditional political system, customs, and rulers. As Fanon (2004, p. 86) says: “there are the usual suspects: chiefs, kaid, and witch doctors” (*ibid.*). The chiefs and leaders like Okonkwo were influential and highly esteemed among the natives. However, such a system did not succeed in the Igboland because the people lacked a centralised system of government. And through the process of decolonisation, Nigerians attempt to dismantle the colonising power by deconstructing those hidden “institutional and cultural forces” that once had achieved the colonial power and try to remain influential even after independence (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2007, p. 56). More so, post-colonialism marks the process of decolonisation

that concentrates on “cultural reclaim and renewal” (Mullaney, 2010, p. 16). Post-colonial writers like Achebe are longing to reclaim an identity that had been taken from them because as Gikandi (1991, p. 5) believes, the desire for cultural revival reinstates dignity to them.

Statement of the Problem

The present research intends to identify the external and internal factors that influence the characters’ attempts of decolonisation. It examines the cultural conflict between two different cultures: the coloniser’s culture and that of the colonised. While the main characters struggle to resist the colonial hegemony through the power of culture, others work on the side of the colonisers, and this implies that there is a kind of clash among the colonised themselves. Therefore, the importance of the research lies in examining the Igbo people’s collective and individual strife for decolonisation which is aimed to answer the research questions.

Research Questions

- ▶ How do the Igbo struggle to decolonise their culture?
- ▶ What are the methods through which they resist the oppressive hegemonic power?

The Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is manifested in its contribution to the enhancement of a communal struggle of cultural preservation in the presence of alien forces to avoid the formation of hybrid cultural identity and the distortion of the cultural aspects like customs, rituals, indigenous religion, traditional beliefs, etc. that determine the richness and success of an independent society. More

than this, it raises awareness about the cruel impacts of the oppressive colonial power.

Method and Theory

The study of hegemony and resistance will be conducted through an analytical method; examining the severe impacts of colonialism and the Igbo people's individual and collective power of resistance and analysing the different attempts of the native people that prove the research questions. A detailed cultural examination of the Igbo community has been done with the help of those books and researches written about Igbo culture. Furthermore, there are some essential books written on colonialism and post-colonialism like Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (2015) which can definitely provide insight into the method of this research work.

Generally, post-colonialism deals with cultural, psychological, and economic impacts of colonialism. It embraces several purposes: most importantly, reconsidering the historical moments of colonial power from the viewpoint of the colonised, ascertaining the political and cultural effects of colonialism mainly on the colonised, and practising the method of decolonisation. More than anything else, it contributes to the attainment of political independence through the construction of "cultural identities" (Habib, 2011, p. 272).

According to Dobie (2015, p. 208), the field of post-colonialism has significantly attracted the attention of many literary theorists and intellectuals since the 1960s because post-colonialism mainly emphasises "what happens to a culture from the beginning of colonisation to the present" (*ibid.*). Currently, post-colonialism incorporates a variety of approaches and theories to literary analysis like Marxism, psychoanalytic criticism, feminism, post-

modernism, etc. It is an interdisciplinary approach to textual analysis. Post-colonial writers like Said, Bhabha, and Fanon to name a few, seek to view their past as crucial as their present. However, they try to interpret their concerns in a context that no longer label them as marginal or inferior beings. According to Bressler (2011, p. 199), Gramsci name these individuals “subaltern writers”, a term that refers to those who are no longer under the shadow of colonial power.

Since this research emphasises merely the hegemony of the coloniser and the resistance of the colonised in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, it is crucial to search for several types of research being conducted on this novel, which use postcolonial literary theories. Mahbubul Alam’s “Reading Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* from the Postcolonial Perspective” (2014) and Anuradha Basu’s “Postcolonial Adaptation and Appropriation in Chinua Achebe” (2014) are instances that benefit from postcolonial theory and criticism.

The study attempts to analyse the psychological effects of colonialism by getting much benefit particularly from Frantz Fanon’s books such as *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Fanon’s books are of high importance because they have been the study’s source of inspiration. They deal with similar impacts of colonialism on which the study intends to shed light on while analysing the resisting struggles of the Igbo against the hegemonic power of the British colonialists.

Literature Review

The study’s literature review on hegemony and resistance includes those works which have focused on the clash between two different cultures in Achebe’s *TFA*. As mentioned previously, since

the present study is the first of its kind which has been solely carried out on the hegemony of the coloniser and the resistance of the colonised in *TFA*, the study has benefited from the works which have been written on Igbo culture. These works depict the richness of pre-colonial Igbo culture and the drastic changes colonialism has brought to that culture. Qurrota A'yunin's MA thesis (2008) titled "The Effects of Cultural Colonialism on the Igbo Society in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" is an example that explicitly discusses the cultural impacts of colonialism depicted in the novel.

Another significant example is Michelle James's MA thesis (2010) titled "A Postmodern and Postcolonial Analysis of Nigerian Literature" which portrays the self-consciousness of the colonised people about cultural changes and examines their struggle to reclaim their identity. Samantha Mallory Kies's MA thesis (2013) titled "Matriarchy, the Colonial Situation, and the Women's War of 1929 in Southeastern Nigeria" can also be a good model for this study as it analyses the way the British colonialists imposed their ideology over the native people. However, this work's primary focus is on the struggle of Igbo women against the colonial patriarchy, but, in a general sense, it has been a good model for the study's literature review. Additionally, other works have been the study's significant source of inspiration concerning the heritage of the colonised culture and the effects of colonial power. Such works are Uyilawa Usuanlele's PhD thesis (2010) titled "Poverty and Welfare in Colonial Nigeria, 1900-1954" and Iwuagwu Obichere Chilaka's PhD thesis (1998) titled "A Socio-Economic History of Food Crop Production in Igboland, 1900-1980: A Study of Yam, Cocoyam and Cassava".

The study's literature review benefited from the works that have explicitly defined some key terms like hegemony. It is evident that ,in most societies ,dominant groups are quite capable of forcing

their ideology over the less powerful ones. This expression can be more intelligible by emphasising Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony by which he describes the socio-political relations of people. Thus, hegemony defines the capacity of a dominant culture to examine its socio-political power over the other, and validate such power through inspiring the consciousness of the latter to accept the former's viewpoint (Clare and Hamilton, 2004). According to Gramsci, hegemony is practised by the domineering culture through "consensus" in spite of "coercion" (Ramirez, 2015, p. 117). Clare and Hamilton (2004, p. 134), clarify the concept in the following lines:

"Hegemony is...a form of social control where an ideology of consent secures the participation of people in their subjection to the existing power relations. Thus, there is no need for coercion or overt mechanisms of control because individuals eventually do not question the legitimation of that control as it has become part of their common sense view of their social world-it is simply the system".

Accordingly, hegemony is undoubtedly linked to the concept of power, culture, and ideology. While ideology as a system of beliefs and ideas attempts to legitimate social action, hegemony as a system of values, perceptions, and meanings seeks to interpret the reality of life in every culture (*ibid.*). Such a system will seriously create a profound impact on the psychological perspective of the colonised and force them to experience contradictory feelings resulted in the mixture of two cultures (Guerin *et al.*, 2011, p. 364; Bressler, 2011, p. 205).

The Hegemony of the Coloniser and the Resistance of the Colonised

The flexible nature of the Igbo community manifests itself in several ways in the novel. It is reflected in Uchendu's assertion that the old and new generation do not have much in common concerning the willingness to keep relationships secure. Uchendu represents the past generation who understands the meaning of social integrity. The unity that Achebe portrays among the younger seems to be less strong than the one Uchendu had once experienced in his life. Though, it is quite obvious that in every community no two generations are the same. The writer intensely shows that the Igbo community gradually faces an ill-fated change with the arrival of colonialism. However, for Thiong'o (1993, p. 16), "Cultures that change to reflect the ever-changing dynamics of internal relations and which maintain a balanced give and take with external relations are the ones that are healthy" (*ibid.*).

Through reading *TFA*, one might undoubtedly witness that as soon as the colonisers enter Nigeria, the whole population partake in an over perplexed web of change. Even though there is a distinct contrast in the people's will against colonial rule, Achebe creates characters like Okonkwo, Uchendu, Obierika, and others that emblemize the true nature of his society. These characters are true representatives of their culture regarding preserving traditional values. They are entirely opposed to any hegemonic power that aims at the distortion of their culture, whereas, others easily give in to the influence of an alien society. Therefore, through the coming of white people, *TFA* presents the conscious and unconscious types of characters. The former are those who enthusiastically struggle to protect their country from any outsider, and they label the latter as worthless beings. Central to this view is the instance when Obierika visits Okonkwo in Mbaino; he informs him that Abame is no

longer the same because the white people have destroyed the majority of the clan.

What distresses Uchendu and Okonkwo is the fact that Abame villagers were not able to defend themselves. It is fascinating to elaborate Uchendu's perspective on such people by clarifying the story he tells to Obierika to emphasise the real reason behind their destruction by the British colonisers. As a knowledgeable elder, his purpose of bringing the story of Mother and Daughter Kite is to relate Abame's downfall to the failure of its people to equip themselves with their weapon against enemy despite the warning they received from the Oracle. Since they were not able to defend themselves, they deserved to face such a fate. Obierika states that the Abame clan "have paid for their foolishness" (*TFA*, p. 140).

Deep down in their hearts, these characters are so sad for Abame, and what distresses them more is the inability of the people to react to the coloniser's attack. However, nearly two years after such an incident, the colonisers widely penetrate the Igbo community and introduce their religion, education, and system of administration. Umuofia, once feared by all the neighbours, now faces a situation that tremendously disappoints all the leaders or title holders. As soon as the colonisers arrive, they begin to have converts among the men who are usually called *efulefu* which means insignificant or worthless beings. For the narrator, Chielo calls them "the excrements of the clan" (*ibid.*, p. 143). Even if the converts are not of prestigious types, their conversion into the coloniser's culture would definitely disturb the collective power that a successful culture might have as a means of opposition.

As Retd and Maut (2014, p. 8) notice, colonialism profoundly alters the unity of pre-colonial Igbo. While Okonkwo is the emblem of cultural conservation, Nwoye is one of the converts who

wholeheartedly accepts the culture of the colonisers. However, his excuse is justifiable because he continually thinks about the absurdity of some cultural customs and rules like killing Ikemefuna and twins. Nwoye is the only character who is profoundly influenced by the demerits of his culture. Additionally, the missionaries through religious songs attracted the interest of the young, especially, Nwoye about the excellence of their religion. The narrator states: "It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow" (*TFA*, p. 147). Each time, the question of killing such innocent beings comes into his mind; Nwoye finds relief by listening to the white men's hymn, because as Olsson (2010, p. 14), remarks, for Nwoye, Christianity seemed to be more sympathetic towards twins.

In addition to their poetry, the missionaries, through Igbo interpreters, persistently endeavour to spread Christianity among the people. They begin to undermine their traditional religion and label their gods as worthless objects. Under such a condition, the reader will perceive a competitive struggle in which both the coloniser and the colonised disrespect each other's beliefs. When the white man's interpreter attempts to convince the people that there is one God who is the only benevolent creator of the world and the father of a son "whose name was Jesu Kristi" (*TFA*, p. 146), Okonkwo interprets the white man's thoughts as the raving of a mad man's mind that needs a reasonable solution.

The attempts of the missionaries result in success in most cases. Since the Igbo have no kings, the missionaries aim at gathering the Umuofia titleholders together. However, they fail to realise that these men cannot be assembled easily. Unlike Umuofia, Mbanta elders accept their offer to have some land so that they can build their churches. They decide to "give them a portion of the Evil Forest" (*ibid.*, p. 149) because this forest is thought to be an

ominous place due to the great number of unwanted corpses or evil spirits. The Mbanta people believe that by providing them with some land of Evil Forest, they would disable their power over their cultural tradition. But, such attempts of decolonising their culture will turn out to be against the wishes of Mbanta elders, because the missionaries are as safe as living in their houses; whereas Mbanta people “expected them all to be dead within four days. The first day passed and the second and third and fourth, and none of them died” (*ibid.*). Thus, the coloniser’s power and hegemony gradually become much stronger as soon as people witness that the bad results the Igbo conceive of living in the Evil Forest are nothing but superstitious belief. Therefore, they begin to brainwash the young converts to defy all the gods and burn their shrines as well.

Despite the coloniser’s reasonable attempts in defending twins and falsifying gods, initially, their work is met with constant reactions by men who truly resist their power, but day by day the decolonising struggle of the Igbo loses its strength. After the white people prove the rationality of their religious methods, they begin to stimulate the villagers to come to their churches and worship God. For instance, Mr. Kiaga, who is the interpreter and the teacher, continuously works on inspiring children, the young, and those women who intensely suffered from severe cultural traditions.

What crucially works to the advantage of the missionaries is the abandonment of cultural values and family relations to the commitment of Christianity. Nneka is one of those women who remarkably reminds the reader of her culture’s unreasonable custom of killing twins. After witnessing the murder of several of her twins, she heartbrokenly gives in to the coloniser’s culture. This female character, like Nwoye, is forced to forsake her family relations. Similar to Nneka, Nwoye denies any attachment to his

father because Okonkwo severely beats him for attending Christian churches. Afterwards, he decides to go to school in Umuofia where the white men have set up their headquarters and schools to teach the people. Mr. Kiaga is overjoyed by seeing Nwoye's complete allegiance to their power because one of the coloniser's aims is to cut off all the intimate relations and family ties that contribute to the homogeneity of Igbo community. "Mr. Kiaga's joy is very great. 'Blessed is he who forsakes his father and his mother for my sake', he intoned" (*ibid.*, p. 152).

What intensely hurts Okonkwo's feelings is the reality of not being able to control his own son against the hegemony of the colonising power in spite of his persistent refusal of Nwoye's personality. The novel explains that initially, Okonkwo decides to take his machete and destroy the whole group of unlawful outsiders, but soon he realises that Nwoye never deserves to fight for. Unfortunately, a man who is the epitome of bravery and cultural heritage is the father of such a child. The narrator states that Okonkwo is deeply injured in his heart and asks himself why "should he...of all people, be cursed with such a son?" (*ibid.*). The colonisers have successfully swayed the converts to commit crimes that were never heard in the lifetime of the community because for Okonkwo, leaving the gods and ancestors with the purpose of adhering to an alien culture is "the depth of abomination" (*ibid.*, p. 153).

In addition to religion, the white people endeavour to introduce their system of administration. They establish "a place of judgement in Umuofia to protect their followers" (*ibid.*, p. 155) and sentence those who disrespect their power. For Basu (2014, p. 51), colonial rule deforms "the psyche of the oppressed". Unlike the Igbo, the Christians could verify their religious practices depending on *The Holy Bible*. Mr. Kiaga persistently works on brainwashing

the converts so that they would never doubt their religious beliefs. He usually tells them that the heathens say: “nothing but falsehood” (TFA, p. 157). As for the Igbo, Christianity is the sort of religion that welcomes abominations like accepting twins and denouncing the idea of killing them. Therefore, Mr. Kiaga reminds the villagers that nothing happened to them by saving twins or building their church in the Evil Forest.

Beside twins, Mr. Kiaga aims at freeing the outcasts or *osu* from the fear of degrading the power of gods or ancestors which is instilled in them by their clans. The outcasts of Mbanta are people who “could neither marry nor” shave their hair (*ibid.*, p. 156). The *osu* live in a part of the village separated from the clan, and they are deprived of all their village assemblies and titles. More than this, they are made to believe that when they die, they will be buried in the Evil Forest. Accordingly, the church seems to signify the only shelter for them especially after witnessing the acceptance of twins by the missionaries. As soon as the church welcomes the *osu*, some of the converts express their disagreement. They explain to Mr. Kiaga the disapproval of associating with such outcasts, but Mr. Kiaga asserts that an *osu* “needs Christ more than you and I” (*ibid.*). Accepting the outcasts is certainly for the benefit of colonisers because the more they receive people, the more they could impose their power and hegemony over the Igbo.

The British hegemony is also apparent in distorting the traditions the Igbo revered like respecting python and conceiving it as a sacred animal. When the outcasts joined their service, they become zealous protectors of the colonising power. Thus, the missionaries instruct them to shave their hair as a means of removing the sign of disgrace. They are encouraged to challenge everything related to the Igbo culture. For instance, Okoli, one of the outcasts, is accused of “killing the sacred python, the emanation

of the god of water” which is the most favourite animal in the whole Mbanta, besides, “It was addressed as Our Father” (*ibid.*, p. 157). Whenever a python is killed unintentionally, there must be sacrifices and the arrangement of an expensive burial by the accidental killer. The python’s burial must be as big as a great man’s burial, but Okoli’s case is different as he is not the accidental killer but one for whom the clan decides to arrange a severe punishment.

While Okonkwo suggests that a violent reaction must be done towards Okoli, the elders of Mbanta choose peace instead. Thus, for Okonkwo, these men are merely performing a practice which is usually done by women. In the presence of personal affairs, none of the Mbanta men would like to intervene. They avoid problems that are related to a man and his personal god. One of the Mbanta men says: “When a man blasphemes.... We put our fingers into our ears to stop us hearing. That is a wise action”. For Okonkwo, such an action signifies a coward’s personality. Therefore, he labels Mbanta as “a womanly clan”, and his mind immediately goes to his fatherland where men are warlike and brave (*ibid.*, pp. 158-159).

Umuofia represents manliness and a place where a man could play his real role. The people of Umuofia rarely fear to come across problems; they are zealous protectors of every unwelcome situation. They never show signs of cowardice, “Such a thing could never happen in his fatherland”. Okonkwo regularly encourages Mbanta people to resist the coloniser’s hegemony because they accept every type of abomination. One of the Mbanta men acknowledges that Okonkwo’s view is rational and he suggests that his people should prevent the outsiders from distorting their cultural values. Then, they start to exclude all the practitioners of their religion from the “privileges of the clan” (*ibid.*).

However, the Igbo people's struggle of decolonising their culture is met with constant failures because the Christians have formed a community of converts consisting of men, women, as well as children. "Mr. Brown, the white missionary" states: "it is only eighteen months since the Seed was first sown among you, I marvel at what the Lord hath wrought". The decolonising power of Mbanta people affects those women who begin to make some Easter arrangements. They have been ordered by Mr. Kiaga "to bring red earth and white chalk and water to scrub the church for Easter" (*ibid.*), but they return having being whipped severely by the clan, and they acknowledge that their community has outlawed them. By doing such an action towards women, the Mbanta men think that they are dismantling the coloniser's power, but in reality, they are merely showing signs of their weakness. More than this, whenever they hear news of Okoli's death, they think that their gods are still influential because Okoli has received his punishment straightly from the gods for killing the sacred python. So, the people come to believe that there is no point in fighting back the Christians because their gods will fight on their behalf.

Consequently, due mostly to the irrationality of their view about the world, the collective endeavour of Mbanta people is entirely unable to rule out the coloniser's hegemony. Thus, Okonkwo eagerly waits to see the ending moments of his exile. He believes that the real ambition of dismantling such an unlawful intrusion will find its dead in his fatherland. However, he expresses his extreme gratitude to his mother's kinsmen by preparing a large feast through which a reader can observe the unaffected nature of some certain traditional customs by the colonisers. The gathering of kinsmen, performing sacrifices, and expecting elders like Uchendu to break kola nut and pray to their ancestors to provide them with health and children as the symbol of wealth and power are vivid

examples of the traditional customs that resisted the coloniser's hegemony.

Relatives mean a lot for the Igbo, but unfortunately, the arrival of colonialism aims at cutting off all the intimate relations among the people. The elders presented in this novel, are deeply worried about the drastic changes in their cultural aspects and the negative consequences of colonialism on their culture. Therefore, by expressing his gratitude to Okonkwo, an elder member of the *umunna* expresses his anxiety about the future of the young people. He tells them: "I fear for you; I fear for the clan" (*ibid.*, p. 167) because leaving relatives and family members with the purpose of integrating into the new system of society has found a footstep especially among the young who could be brainwashed more efficiently by the coloniser's system of beliefs and administration.

The old man's speech foreshadows the partition of the Igbo community, loss of identity, and the cultural assimilation Okonkwo witnesses as soon as he returns to his fatherland because he begins to lose the fame and position that he had formed seven years ago. As Loon and Sardar (1999, p. 123) believe, "identity is regarded as the product of an assemblage of customs, practices and meanings, an enduring heritage and a set of shared traits and experiences". In fact, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995, p. 125) go more than this, and they argue that "The post-colonial desire is the desire of decolonised communities". Therefore, Okonkwo does not want an identity "thrown into mimicry and ambivalence" (*ibid.*), but the intrusion of European power has deprived him of the opportunity of attaining the highest title in the clan. Thus, he comes across a situation that weakens his will as the narrator states: he "lost his place among the nine masked spirits who administered justice in the clan" (*TFA*, p. 171). Now he understands that his fatherland also has gone under the shadow of colonial power. Such a reality

shatters most of his future hopes when he has already planned to rebuild two more huts for two new wives and prepare himself to be the lord of the clan. Unfortunately, the colonial hegemony has much more power in destroying his desires and putting obstacles on the way of his lifetime ambitions. The tragedy that most highlights Okonkwo's incapability is when he cannot cease his son from intermingling with the coloniser's culture.

It is worth noting that, in Umuofia ,the Christians are quite able of brainwashing not only the outcasts and lower classes of people but also title holders. The white people established "a court where the District Commissioner judged cases in ignorance", and received men for the trail from court messengers. The court messengers come from Umuru where the majority of colonisers first settled and built their church and government. For this reason, the court messengers, who are called *kotma*, are intensely disliked by the Umuofia people because they are "foreigners and also arrogant and high-handed" (*ibid.*, p. 174). They guard prison which is filled with men who stood against the colonial rule. The prisoners are forced to work every day, and each time they begin to work they sing a song that is worth quoting:

"Kotma of the ash buttocks,

He is fit to be a slave.

The white man has no sense,

He is fit to be a slave" (*ibid.*, p. 175).

The *kotma* are called Ashy-Buttocks "because of their ash-coloured shorts" (*ibid.* p. 174). However, they hate to be called by such a name; therefore, they beat the prisoners so severely.

Okonkwo's individual power still encourages him to react against cultural hegemony when he hears the reality of the loss of Igbo identity and culture. The only thing that intensely puzzles him is how the Umuofia people, who were the epitome of bravery and cultural preservation, have become powerless. Zizek (2003, p. 313) argues that "if the individuals were uneven in terms of power, order could be guaranteed through sheer domination" (*ibid.*). Okonkwo is the only character who never stops from preserving his culture because the colonial power like a contagious disease has affected the whole Igbo community and Okonkwo tries to become the community's healer from such a disease. He tells Obierika that they should do something to clear their land from the outsiders, but Obierika reminds him that individual efforts could not be as powerful as collective ones. Thus, their attempt will be met with failures, as Obierika says: "Our own men and our sons have joined the ranks of the stranger" (*TFA*, p. 176). Even if they could drive out the colonisers in Umuofia, they could not fight their own people because they are given power. Obierika further states:

"The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (*ibid.*).

No man in Umuofia is as concerned as Okonkwo about the white people's intrusion because they come to be highly respected by the clan. The colonisers employ various methods to accomplish their mission of brainwashing the Igbo about their culture through religion, education, medicine, etc. Mr. Brown persistently tries to relegate their gods as false and merely wooden statues. The narrator explains, on Mr. Brown's visits to other villages of Umuofia, "he had been presented with a carved elephant tusk,

which was a sign of dignity” (ibid., p. 179) and he gains lots of information about the traditional religion of the Igbo specifically from Akunna, one of the great men of the neighbouring village. Mr. Brown attempts to convince him that their gods or religious practices are false and there is only one Supreme God. Akunna enthusiastically explains to him that in spite of the Supreme God or what they call Chukwu, they also believe in other gods and view them as God’s messengers. Akunna’s endeavour to convince the white man of the validity of their religion can be seen as an attempt of decolonisation because religion has recorded essential roles both in the process of colonisation and decolonisation.

Due mostly to the fact that the worthy men in the Igbo community were firm believers in their traditional beliefs or religion, Mr. Brown concluded “that a frontal attack on it would not succeed” (ibid., p. 181). Thus, the white people influence them not only through the church but also school and hospital, and they beg families to send their children to school because religion and education are two essential elements in the coloniser’s strategy. For Khatar and Zarrinjooee (2016, p. 224), Fanon often emphasises that “colonial education” causes “inferiority complex” because it “invites the black man to follow white man’s values and forget his own culture” (ibid.). In addition, Gikandi (2000, p. 65) asserts: “school is a vehicle of colonial rule and conquest” (ibid.). As a means of encouragement, the colonisers provided students of different ages with various presents. In this way, the coloniser’s power begins to have more effect on the Igbo. For this reason, Okonkwo is deeply grieved when he witnesses these drastic changes. He grieves for the entire Umuofia, which he sees “breaking up and falling apart”, and he even grieves more for those brave men who have “unaccountably become soft like women” (TFA, p. 183).

However, there is disunity among the colonisers themselves because when the Reverend James Smith takes the position of Mr. Brown as the head of the church, he detests the way Mr. Brown managed the church. For him, the important thing is not to have numerous inappropriate converts who do not deserve Christian values. For the most part, Mr. Smith intends to attract the attention of great men of the clan to their culture. As soon as he leads the church, he begins to express his intense aversion to several Umuofian customs like mutilating dead ogbanje children. Labelling such a practice as devilish works, Mr. Smith condemns the practitioners as devil worshippers. Thus, the novel portrays Mr. Smith as the most rigid white missionary who “saw things as black and white. And black was evil” (ibid., p.184). As Fanon (2008, p. 139) states: whiteness symbolises “Justice, Truth, Virginity”, whereas, blackness stands for all bad references.

The writer depicts most effectively the coloniser’s aim to break up the Igbo culture into pieces and distort every custom they hold in high esteem. For instance, every year the Igbo form a ceremony to honour the earth goddess with the presence of the ancestors as *egwugwu*. And according to the Igbo tradition, to unmask an *egwugwu* publicly means to kill the ancestral spirit, whereas, Enoch, who is a zealous convert, dares to perform such a practice which is “One of the greatest crimes a man could commit” (TFA, p. 186). For these people, ancestral spirits talk to them through their masks, and during their communication, there is no human being under the mask but a spirit. Consequently, Enoch’s action falsifies such beliefs and this is another vital sign of partition because the clan might doubt the sanctity of their beliefs in the *egwugwu*.

The impact of Enoch’s crime on the clan and the band of *egwugwu* profoundly manifests itself in surrounding Enoch’s compound with “machete and fire” as a means of destruction (ibid.,

p. 188). However, Enoch seeks refuge in the church, but the band heads for the church as well. For them, the church stands for all the distortion that has devastated their community. Without paying attention to Mr. Smith's idea of solving the matter, they begin to destroy the church collectively.

It is after the destruction of the church that Okonkwo feels happy once for all these years. He encourages the clan to take more violent action by killing the white men and driving them out of their memory. The clansmen respect his decision as they did before his exile, but they do not kill anyone. When the District Commissioner asks the village leaders to meet each other, Okonkwo reminds them to be well armed to avoid any situation similar to what Abame people had faced. However, when they meet the District Commissioner, they put down their machetes and begin to explain the crime Enoch has done towards their entire culture. Unfortunately, the colonisers imprison the leaders and encourage them to mimic their methods regarding religion, education, etc.

Due mostly to the fact that the British people view their culture as superior to all other cultures, they try to prove such an erroneous way of thinking by forcing the Igbo to follow their rules. This is because the colonisers usually impose their power and hegemony over the natives through the use of one of the two contrasting strategies: negotiation and force. Thus, what one might observe in the District Commissioner's attempt can be related to the former as he tells the leaders: "We shall not do you any harm...if only you agree to cooperate with us". To release the imprisoned leaders, the District Commissioner asks for "two hundred bags of cowries" (*ibid.*, p. 194). The guardians mistreat the leaders so severely, and for Okonkwo, this would not have happened if the clan had accepted his advice of killing the white men. However, out of love

and respect for their leaders, the people of Umuofia attempt to collect money to rescue them soon.

Even after their release, the District Commissioner insists on reassuring the superiority of his culture and the power of his queen as “the most powerful ruler in the world” (*ibid.*, p.194). Thus, the colonisers justify their cruel treatment by labelling the Igbo as irrational and uncivilised people who need to be disciplined and educated by the British. Their illegal settlement in his community deeply touches Okonkwo. In no way, his mind stops thinking about the severe treatment he received in prison. Therefore, he hopes that the clansmen reach a final decision and act like real warriors to drive out these illegal occupiers and if they do not cooperate with him, he will resist alone. For him, “worthy men are no more” (*ibid.*, p. 200). At last, the villagers gather and meet in the marketplace. Okika, one of the leaders whom the white man arrested, speaks to the crowd and encourages them to fight and do whatever contributes to the expulsion of the colonisers from their country including the clansmen who have followed them.

Unfortunately, the meeting is interrupted by the arrival of some court messengers, and their head announces that the white people have ordered to put an end to the meeting. Okonkwo, whose anger is indescribable, approaches the man and fearlessly beheads him with his machete. Okonkwo is the only one who practices his power without any hesitation because he knows that Umuofia is no longer the place for warlike men. Such an assumption confirms itself when Okonkwo sees people allowing the other court messengers to escape instead of taking action. He hears people saying: “Why did he do it?” (*ibid.*, p. 205). Okonkwo finally realises that his power cannot preserve his culture no matter how effortlessly he struggles. Thus, he commits suicide rather than surrender to the authority of the white men because his extreme

obsession with masculine strength causes him a sense of estrangement. He realises that no one is as ardent as himself about preserving cultural values and preventing the influence of external forces. Ironically, the District Commissioner plans to write his experiences of civilising the Nigerian and about the story of a “man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself” in his future book “*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*” (*ibid.*, pp. 208-209).

It is reasonable to mention that *TFA* portrays a kind of people who are caught between two conflicting cultures. Achebe’s hero intensely struggles to stimulate the Umuofia people into the preservation of their traditional ways of life and opposition to the colonial power. However, Okonkwo realises that he is all alone in maintaining cultural integrity and his downfall brought about such self-consciousness. He witnesses the tension between his longing to remain inflexible and the society’s desire for assimilation.

Alam (2014, p. 104) argues that “Okonkwo symbolises the essence of Umuofia” and his suicide which is the result of the colonial power “symbolises the suicide of Umuofia’s essence”. However, similar to what Njeng (2008, p. 5) writes, his “suicide is one of the greatest acts of valour” (*ibid.*). Okonkwo’s suicide symbolises the triumph of the coloniser’s hegemony and the collapse of the Igbo people’s resistance during the occupation.

The novel puts forward two different interpretations about Okonkwo’s suicide. On the one hand, one could relate his death to the drastic psychological and social pressure of colonialism on him. On the other hand, his death, which is not anybody’s death but the death of someone who was once the epitome of his culture, symbolises the attempts of the Igbo to decolonise their occupied culture and not to be assimilated by the alien values and the

oppressive hegemonic power. Thus, Okonkwo's suicide implies the community's ongoing struggle of decolonisation as they want to sacrifice themselves for rejecting the colonisers' culture.

Conclusion

The study analysed the decolonising power of Igbo culture in Achebe's masterpiece *Things Fall Apart* that depicted the richness of Igbo community before and after British colonialism. It emphasised the pre-colonial Igbo identity and portrayed Okonkwo as the symbol of cultural preservation whose identity was formed through wealth, status, titles, and strength. In addition, this study examined the impacts of colonialism on the colonised people and how they responded to the occupier's culture by accepting or rejecting it. In other words, it depicted the hegemony of the coloniser and the native people's resistance to decolonise their own culture. Through Okonkwo, who was the epitome of his community, the work showed that the Igbo kept on resisting the hegemonic power because he was ready to sacrifice his life instead of surrendering to colonial rule. Finally, the study pointed out the negative effects of colonialism, and it conveys a message to resist collectively the hegemony of the colonisers that work for the devastation of the native culture and the erasure of national identity.

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ههژمون و بهرەنگارى له پۆمانى

"شتهكان لىك ههڵدەوه‌شینه‌وه"ى چىنوا ئاچىيى

پوخته

ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه له پوانگه‌ى پۆست-كۆلۆنیاڵیه‌وه هیزى كه‌لتورى بۆ نه‌هيشتنى داگیركارى (پۆست كۆلۆنیاڵیزم)، له به‌ ناوبانگترین پۆمانى (چىنوا ئاچىيى) به‌ ناوێشانى "شتهكان لىك هه‌ڵدەوه‌شینه‌وه" (١٩٥٨) شى ده‌كاته‌وه. توێژینه‌وه‌كه وینه‌ى كۆمه‌لگه‌ى (ئىگبۆ) ده‌خاته‌ پوو، يه‌كێك له‌ سه‌ره‌كیترین گروپه‌ نه‌ژاده‌كانى (نايجېريا) يه‌ كه‌ خاوه‌نى ناسنامه‌ى خۆيان و ئايىنى په‌سه‌ن و نه‌ريتى جياوازی خۆيان هتد...، هه‌روه‌ها وینای ئه‌وه‌ش ده‌كات چۆن ئه‌و كۆمه‌لگه‌يه‌ ده‌كه‌وینه به‌ر هه‌ره‌شه‌ى هه‌ول له‌ سه‌رسه‌خته‌كانى ئىمپېریالیزمى به‌ريتانى هه‌ر كه‌ ده‌گه‌نه (نايجېريا). سه‌ربارى ئه‌وه‌ش، ئەم به‌شه‌ وینای پێكدادانى نێوان دوو جوور كه‌لتور ده‌كات كه‌ ده‌رئه‌نجامى هاتنى داگیركارييه‌ و هه‌روه‌ها سه‌رنج ده‌خاته سه‌ر ئه‌و كۆشش و خه‌باته‌ جياوازانەى له‌ لایه‌ن خه‌لكى په‌سه‌نى (نايجېريا) وه‌ دراوه‌ بۆ ئازادکردنى خۆيان له‌ ده‌ست كه‌لتورى داگیركارى. هه‌رچۆنێك بێت، زۆربه‌ى كۆششه‌كانیان پووبه‌پووى شكستبوونه‌وه و كه‌میان سه‌ریانگرت. هه‌روه‌ها توێژینه‌وه‌كه به‌ئاگاهاته‌وه‌ى خود و به‌ره‌نگارى گه‌لى داگیركراو دژ به‌و گۆرانكاريه‌ سه‌ختانه‌ى داگیركارى به‌سه‌ر كه‌لتور و ناسنامه‌ياناندا هیناوه‌ ده‌خاته‌ پوو و ئاماده‌سازيان بۆ پووبه‌پووبوونه‌وه‌ى ده‌سه‌لاتى زالى سته‌مكار وینا ده‌كات. توێژینه‌وه‌كه به‌ ئه‌نجامێك كه‌ هه‌موو دۆزینه‌وه‌ سه‌ره‌كه‌كانى لىكۆلینه‌وه‌كه‌ كۆ ده‌كاته‌وه‌ كۆتايى پێدیت و دواتر لیستی سه‌رچاوه‌كان و ببیلۆگرافى به‌ دوا دا دیت.

وشه كليبيه كان: كولونياليزم، نه هيشتنى داغيركارى، كه لتوورى ئيگبو،
هه ژمون، به رهنكارى.

الهيمنة و المقاومة في رواية (الأشياء تتداعى) للكاتب تشينوا انشيبا

ملخص:

تقوم هذه الدراسة بتحليل القوة النازعة للثقافة في دحض الأستعمارية من وجهة نظر مابعد-الكولونيالية في رواية (الأشياء تتداعى) (١٩٥٨) وهي ابرز رواية للكاتب تشينوا انشيبا. يقوم جزء كبير من الرواية بتصوير مجتمع قوم (ايجبو) الخاضع للاستعمار، بصفته أحد المجاميع الرئيسية في (نايجيريا) والتي تمتلك هويتها الخاصة بها و دينها الأصلي و تقاليدھا المتميزة. ويصور أيضاً كيفية خضوع هذا المجتمع للجهود المضنية من طرف المستعمرين البريطانيين حال وصولهم الى (نايجيريا). فضلاً عن هذا، يتتبع تصوير الصدمات بين الثقافتين اللتين انتجتھما وصول القوى الأستعمارية. ويركز الدراسة على عدة محاولات للسكان الأصليين في (نايجيريا) للتخلص من ثقافتھم الأستعمارية. وعلى الرغم من ذلك، لاقى نضالھم الفشل في كثير من الحالات، وفي الحالات القليلة أصاب نجاحاً. ويعرض البحث الوعي بالذات و المقاومة من طرف الشعوب المستعمرة ضد التغييرات العميقة التي أحدثتها الأستعمار في ثقافتھم و في هويتھم، وبصور استعدادھم لمقاومة القوى المهيمنة الأضطهادية. وتنتهي الدراسة الى الأستنتاج الذي يلخص أهم نتائج الدراسة و تليها قائمة المراجع و المصادر المستخدمة في الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأستعمار، التخلص من الأستعمار، ثقافة قوم (ايجبو)،
الهيمنة، المقاومة.