A Rise out of Suppression in the Works of J. M. Coetzee and Chinua Achebe: A Literary Analysis.

*Dr. Narasimha Raju Prathikantam¹

*Associate Professor of English, King Khalid University, KSA¹
*E mail- rajprat@gmail.com, nathikantam@kku.edu.sa

*https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0785-00891

Dr. Appala Raju Korada²

Assistant Professor of English, Jazan University, KSA²
E mail- <u>rajukorada12@gmail.com</u>
ORCID ID: <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1701-927X</u>

ABSTRACT

Colonialism is "the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically". Africa in its phase of colonization saw major changes in culture, polity and people. The roots that held Africa together became shackles. The ramifications were severe: unity dissolved, selfishness poured in, cowardice ruled, and things fell apart. After the European encroachment, Africa became what it was not once as discussed in Chinua Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart' comparative analysis to the variant form of suppression as portrayed in Coetzee's literary masterpieces distinctively, with the touchstone method, contributions of two authors were analysed and expressed with novelty in the findings of the present study. The findings are while Achebe dealt in the suppression of valour in his characters, Coetzee classified types of suppression in his various writings in the direction with impact of power. It is also identified that where there was suppression of freedom, the chances of revolution against the suppressing agent or system would be inevitable and evident. Many revolutions were caused by suppression of rights as discussed in the context of leadership conclave in 1965-68 held by Martin Luther King Jr. in America also. Thus, the paper also specifies that blacks turned stronger after a continuous struggle and revolt against the suppressing agencies across the world during colonialist and imperialist governments.

OBJECTIVE

The present paper delves meticulously into the comparison of themes, culture, and motives of characters in their conflicts in both J. M. Coetzee's works with Chinua Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart'. The paper throws light upon the colonial suppression of hope, thrust, challenges to the change in lives of people through literary analysis of the textual characters and it also finds how suppression leads to revolution in culture against the suppressing agent

in contributions of authors depicting dilemma in lives of people in a geographically demarcated area in the world of literature.

KEY WORDS: Okonkwo and J. M. Coetzee's protagonists, colonialism, suppression, conflict, culture, motives, change in life, literary analysis, etc.

INTRODUCTION

'Things Fall Apart' (1958) is the first book of Chinua Achebe's African trilogy, No Longer at Ease (1960), Arrow of God (1964) being the other two. Achebe portrays the rich culture of Igbo tribe, the imposition of European culture and its aftermath on Okonkwo, the protagonist of 'Things Fall Apart'. Okonkwo's inflexible will towards change is the reason for his tragic downfall and death. In Coetzee's novels, (Attwell, 1990, 1993b, 2011a; Head, 1997b; Roberts, 1991; Spencer, 2008a; Strode, 2013; Watson, 1996b, 1996c) 'Dusklands', In The Heart of Country, The 'Foe', "Waiting for Barbarians", Disgrace, Life And Times of Michael K, Age of Iron, themes were relevant to background of Colonial impact in setting, story, rise and fall of actions with similarities in works of Conrad(Conrad & Beirne, 1925a), Chinua Achibe and other authors of colonial literature. Subjugation was the main theme of Coetzee's and Achibe's novels. The subjugation under colonialism has its impact in many ways as in impact on lifestyle of human beings, culture, characters, currency, religion, conditions, and utilization and exploitation of resources during colonial times under imperialistic dominance.

COMPARING SETTINGS

The setting for the novel 'Things Fall Apart' plots in Umuofia, Okonkwo's fatherland in the lower Nigeria in addition to the other place as Mbanta, a fictional village in Nigeria(Pala Mull, 2017) whereas for 'Waiting for Barbarians', is a vague colonialist regime, for 'The Empire', sets itself in opposition to the "barbarians," mysterious nomadic peoples who live in the wild lands bordering the Empire (Coetzee, 1980) & (Al-Saidi, 2014), 'Dusklands' was set in vietnam project and tribal village in South Africa in the late 20th century and, the 'Foe' was set in a ship to Lisbon, 'Age of Iron' took place in emergency throughout republic of South Africa, and the 'Disgrace' was set in Cape Town, located in post-apartheid South Africa in late 1990s. As compared to Umofia as a village, in 'Waiting for Barbarians', the space represented is vast in its geographically demarcated area.

COMPARING THEMES- SUBJUGATION IN COLONIALISM

Through this novel 'Things Fall Apart' (Chinua, 2021), Achebe introduces the Igbo society's cultural and political structures, traditions, law, role of men and women in the family and society(Casimir, 2020). Achebe has an objective in showcasing the fallacies of certain Igbo traditions (Piola & Usman, 2019); at the same time, he is very downright in expressing how colonization psychologically haunts the Africans and how it breaks them as brothers who fail to resist the oppression of the imperialists. In 'Waiting for Barbarians'', third literary artistic work of the author(Coetzee, 2017), presented victims of colonization and sketching barbarians so demonized to deserve torture and death (Spencer, 2008), also exploring the human being's conscience and difference between justice and law. The main theme is set with independence, duty and betrayal that has been suppressed in the tribes of barbarians like igboos suppressed in

Achebe's literary works. Soldiers hate barbarians and treat inhabitants occupy the subhuman status in survival (Salván, 2008). Trading with nomads is portrayed in theme to represent lowest stature considered for barbarians (Spencer, 2008a). In 'Age of Iron' (Coetzee, 1990), theme is life being affected of the protagonist in apartheid era in Cape town through violence between whites and blacks, town fire and apartheid leading to the death of her servant to affect life of Mc. Curren (Coetzee, Age of Iron, 1990). In his 'Boyhood: A Provincial Life', he portrays all his own experiences while spending his childhood and life in South Africa(Attwell, 1993a) which has influenced him much to write about the impact colonialism (Watson, 1996a). In his 'Disgrace' (Coetzee 1940-, 2000), the novel details about the age, gender, power dynamics and sex in post-apartheid era (Boehmer et al., 2009b) in which subjugation of women for David's ecstatic desires that he perversely wished to fulfil (Head, 1997a) with Melanie have been highlighted. Its other theme is simmering racial tensions when a violent attack changes their lives- Change as an agent (Attwell, 1990). Concurrent to all the masterpieces of Coetzee's novels, 'Foe' has different themes such as 'truth and desire', 'motherhood and identity', 'colonialism and slavery', and 'the power of stories' to a minute level and (Coetzee, 1986a; Roberts, 1991), 'Dusklands' (Coetzee, 1974a), a Nobel prize winning novel in 2003 has two stories viz., "The Vietnam Project" setting in U S government agency and Vietnam, whereas the second story "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee" is set in South Africa. The novel claims beauty of introducing postmodernism as a strain in the writings on Africa. Even though all the contributions of Ahibe and Coetzee are masterpieces, they are all set in backward and remote areas of undeveloped countries where colonialism and imperialism have occupied immense part in suppression of people in their respective vicinities.

Coetzee's another masterpiece *Age of iron* has various themes such as aging, confessor as a hero, death, representing narrations, man and unity, and meaning of freedom in addition to the position of white liberal in apartheid South Africa. And views of colonizers were different in all the works of Coetzee and Achebe, but were almost the same in the context of conflicts in both ACHEBE'S and Coetzean portrayal of events with breath-taking contextual changes in themes. The contributions represent other concepts as the colonisation and decolonisation helped to the development of civilizations to more permanent settlements as compared to the nomadic culture of people in tribes of both South Africa and Congo in Nizeria.

COMPARING PROTAGONISTS AND PERSONALITIES IN COLONIAL TEXTS

In Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart' (Chinua, 2021), Okonkwo, the protagonist, is one of the respectable warriors of the Umuofia clan, who always carries a haggard look on his face and has no patience with unsuccessful men, especially his father Unoka. He never wants to be like his father as the Igbo society reveres only hard-working men and calls the lazy men agbala, meaning woman (Casimir, 2020). In Coetzee's literary works (Attwell, 2011a), the protagonist in 'Waiting for Barbarians', is a Magistrate in a nameless empire .(Coetzee, 2017), and Colonel Joll, an antagonist in the novel who arrives at his fort in beginning of the novel. The protagonist in 'Disgrace' (Coetzee 1940-, 2000) is David Lurie who lives in Cape Town while working as an Adjunct Professor of Communications at Cape Technical University (Coetzee 1940-2000), whereas in 'Dusklands', Eugene, in "Vietnam Project" and 'Jacobus' in "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee" (Coetzee, 1974b, 1974a), and in 'Age of Iron' (Coetzee, 1990), and in 'Foe' (Coetzee, 1986a), Susan Barton is a determined Englishwoman on voyage who has explained

her experiences throughout the journey in taking Friday, a slave, back to Africa after observing the voyage of Crusoe, the protagonist in the fiction being '*Robinson Crusoe*' (Roberts, 1991).

COMPARING CONFLICTS- ROLE OF PROTAGONISTS, WOMEN, AND RELIGION

Magistrate is the gentleman who is possibly in his late sixties trying to make some kind of change for his Empire and for himself, but it seems that the magistrate is going through an internal conflict in his character and his moral where he shows sympathy and compassion. Yet when he meets the barbarian girl, he demonstrates his privilege.

Magistrate- exploitative man of power and wealth as well as someone- an activist of the freedom, equality, and the determination of the torture of the barbarian people grew up in the empire. Personality, emotions, and moral will be brought into question throughout the entire novel and has shown a great deal of change.

I did not mean to get embroiled in this. I am a country magistrate, a responsible official in the service of the empire, serving out my days on this lazy frontier, waiting to retire (Coetzee 8-9)

Main Conflict:

Magistrate's return from the village, and his subsequent imprisonment for his "alleged" conspiracy with the barbarians. As a result, the magistrate becomes a victim of the system he once represented. He is kept in prison without trial, tortured, and eventually released. After a mock-up execution he is set free, but not allowed to work he leads the life of a vagrant and a beggar.

Saving not only the barbarian girl, but also the barbarians is shown as a motto and his discrimination to teaching and environment he Coetzee's idea behind attachment to one's nation is depicted in Achebe's Okonkwon character in his attachment to the Igbo's cultural community in Umuofia village of Congo. Character conflict lies in singular cultural identity and imagined culture of community. In 'Waiting for Barbarians', Joll's character is to get truth from the tribal people, but the protagonist's view is different from Joll in obtaining truth in brutally torturous form which the barbarian community couldn't tolerate. Hence, the torture employed in getting truth from barbarians is a sadistic pleasure of colonizers to show up their strength. Saving culture of Umuofian community as a motif has been the rise in action in which proving oneself the warrior to revolt against the colonizers, an action which is not expected to be possible, for the protagonist, caused for the protagonist's exile in the novel, whereas, in the quandary of protagonist in 'Dusklands', the protagonists views were disrespected by the colonisers and it induced for distress and conflict in 'Vietnam project'. As in Coetzee's 'Foe' the protagonist's search for her kidnapped daughter to rescue her from the enemy with her perpetual will, along with a flat character, Friday, in 'Foe' (Coetzee, 1986b), and the call of barbarian girl to the Magistrate in "Waiting for Barbarians" (Coetzee, 2017) are similar to the quest for identity in Okonkwo when his playmate calls Unoka an 'agbala' (Abu Jweid, 2016; Pala Mull, 2017). Similar to Okonkwon hardened willingness to fight against the colonisers in 'Things Fall Apart', in 'Foe', Susan's consideration to the enemy lies in the words of the flat character as in 'the man of knowledge must be able not only to love his enemies but also to hate his friends' (Coetzee, 1986a). Okonkwo resents everything his father loves and he doesn't inherit either a farm or a barn from his father, he takes the help of Nwakibie and borrows few

yam seeds. Initial two years make it difficult for Okonkwo with no rains at all and then a heavy downpour. But a fierce fighter like Okonkwo faces it with strong will. He says that he shall survive anything after facing such drought and downpour. "'Since I survived that year,' he always said, 'I shall survive anything'". (Chinua, 2021).

Achibe's portrayal of protagonist character in Okonkwo recalls his popular name, the *roaring flame* as he looks into the log of fire, and then at the smouldering log, and sighs as he understands why he begot a son like Nwoye, because he considers "living fire begets cold, impotent ash" (Chinua, 2021). Sadly, it is the white man from whom Okonkwo couldn't survive as in the case of protagonist in Empire of Coetzee (Coetzee, 2017).

By the time Okonkwo reaches his prime, he becomes a great warrior and a wealthy farmer with three wives and nine children. In the same way, the protagonist in Coetzee's novels also reach their prime and fall in the context of 'Waiting for Barbarians', 'Disgrace', 'Dusklands', 'Foe', and 'Age of Iron'. Polygamy of protagonist Achebe's works yield leaving their three lives abandoned with their children and it's also indicative of suppression of women in their clan so that the similarity of suppressively treating women in Coetzee's novels can be also be found in Disgrace, 'Foe', 'Waiting for Barbarians' and Age of Iron (Head, 1997c). Women in Coetzee's works were depicted and scrutinised with emblematic solution to several issues that he narrated with identity and social status for them in 'Waiting for the Barbarians', 'Foe', Age of Iron', and 'Disgrace' whereas women characters in 'Things Fall Apart' are purely inactive. Thus, it can be deduced that female suppression is fully seen in 'Things Fall Apart' and negligibly seen in Coetzean fictional works in the light of colonialism, post colonialism and imperialism in literature.

Achebe's portrayal of protagonist bringing his fifth human head home from war sketches him to be a warrior with two titles, as an emissary of Umuofia brings a young virgin and a young boy, Ikemefuna from Mbaino as compensation to the murder of an Umuofia woman (Abu Jweid, 2016) which is against the dialogue in 'Foe' as in "Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much." (Coetzee, 1986b; Penner, 1987). The clan entrusts Ikemefuna's responsibility to Okonkwo similar to that of barbarian girl's responsibility held by barbarians to the Empire(Attwell, 2011b; Salván, 2008). According to Lauryn Nosek (2008), Umuofia's customs and traditions outweighed Okonkwo's personal feelings in the situation. Okonkwo was mistaken in what the values were in this situation as they failed to comply with his real desire to partake in killing Ikemefuna, doing what his father would not have done. In 'Dusklands', the author wishes god to let him be alone as Okonwo did in his loneliness. Per Wastberg states in the Nobel prize awarding presentation speech about Coetzee's inclination to the blacks populating a wonderful world as congruous to his calls for killing the inestimable value of culture that experiences the victorious violence. In 'Age of Iron'

COMPARING CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLT AGAINST COLONIALISM

During Okonkwo's exile, the white man establishes his government, law, schools and brings new religion too. The white missionaries arrive in Umuofia, Mbanta and the other neighbouring villages and start spreading the word of God. The converts from the Igbo community are mostly the *efulefu*, i.e. those who have no titles, the worthless people according to the Igbo standards. The white missionaries also come to Mbanta and sermon the people

despite the clansmen making fun of them. Okonkwo gets convinced that the missionary is mad, but it is Nwoye who gets attracted to this new faith. The thoughts in favor of people and result of applied thoughts for his tribe in Umuofia were portrayed in 'Things Fall Apart' as in;

"The missionary ignored him and went on to talk about the Holy Trinity. At the end of it Okonkwo was fully convinced that the man was mad. He shrugged his shoulders and went away to tap his afternoon palm-wine.

But there was a young lad who has been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son". (Chinua, 2021- Pp 104)

Achebe's portrayal of thought in Igboo's community not to support for his protagonist is similar to the view of Coetzee in 'Foe' as in "Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake." (Coetzee, 1986a; Roberts, 1991). The continued desire of Okonkwo to fight against the church and wipe them off Mbanta was put off with fury as he feels that Nwoye is not worth fighting for similar to state of barbarians and Magistrate in 'Waiting for Barbarians', Susan's role in 'Foe', and lady's role in 'Disgrace' (Attwell, 2011a). He fears of his other sons to follow Nwoye and convert into the new faith Okonkwo, it is a terrible prospect of annihilation, and he considers Nwoye's conversion as an abomination after his death. Similar to the nature of characters in 'Things Fall Apart', in Coetzee's 'Age of Iron', the protagonist states "There is no lie that does not have at its core some truth. One must only know how to listen." (Coetzee, 1990).

COMPARING FALL OF ACTION AND CLIMAX

Weakening of natives of Africa and Afro-American regions is seen in view of both authors and like it is the rise of freedom movement and rights for blacks with calls of Martin Luther King. As a result of suppression of rights, suppression of freedom and exploitation of local resources under colonialism and imperialism, contributions of Achebe and Coetzee have reflected and impacted the futuristic thoughts of natives to revolt against the colonisers to regain native Africans stature of previous culture to preserve and sustain it in their tribal and interior localities of congo, south Africa, and southern states of America (Ansbro, 2000; King Jr, 2013; King, 2014). Realisation and supporting for colonised is seen at the climax in 'Waiting for Barbarians', as magistrate shows path to the barbarian girl to her people considering that barbarians should not treated outcasts (Al-Saidi, 2014b; Coetzee, 2017) and the idea behind this is proved to be ending the colonial violence (Spencer, 2008b). In 'Foe', the writer covers all the aspects of his contribution to the novel for a fast-track recap of incidents and events in the flow of novel along with referring to about protagonist plummeting to the bottom of the sea and finds a wrecked ship adjacent to which she finds Friday's body in sands, thus, she returns to her place with lots of memories narrating her quest for her missing daughter and her adventurous affinity with Cruso as a Coetzeean character with absurdity in the novel (Coetzee, 1986a; Penner, 1987). In the same way, in congruence to the south African cultural situation of war, Thomas Hardy, in 'The Man He Killed', argues that war is senseless, tragic, and brutal, and that it ignores the common humanity between people on different sides of a conflict (Hardy & Sweeney, 2004).

CONCLUSION

On account of analysing characters, themes, settings, plot, and rise and fall of actions with relevance to distinctive events observed in the works of Chinua Achebe (Abu Jweid, 2016; Casimir, 2020), Coetzee (Boehmer et al., 2009a; Head, 1997a; Spencer, 2008a; Watson, 1996a), Joseph Conrad (Conrad & Beirne, 1925b; Singh, 1978; Watts, 2008), Daniel Defoe (Mengara, 2019), and views of poets, speakers, and other critics in literary analysis (Snircova, 2021), narrative style (Coetzee, 1974a) of the afore-mentioned authors in different ages of literature depicts suppression in many forms of or for an individual in the context of colonial literature during olden and also the colonial and post-colonial times. Commitment of protagonists and characters in all the literary texts defined the actual flow of any story, novel, fiction, and other literary forms of literary works.

Knowledge relevant to oppression in all forms were endeared by authors in literature to the readers hence, it can be expressed that any outcome of either suppression, oppression, exploitation, and development of cultures in any society across the world would be realistically specified to the reader in order to define that a literary text will discuss life in the world which is the part of nature.

The struggle for exploration, existence, survival of species has been part of nature and they have been exponentially discussed in literary texts of all the writers to the context of colonialism and post colonialism in terms of narrators' artistic presentation of realistic situations prevailing across the geographic regions.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Narasimha Raju Prathikantam is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at King Khalid University. His contribution to the present paper includes design and draft manuscript, analysis of literature review, textual analysis of content and artistic presentation of previous research employing coherence and strength of comments to make the two authors' work analysed in connection with the context of research. He also has approved the final version to be published. His research also examines the use of language and Literary aspects in intersectional interactions of race, ethnicity, culture, and gender in comparative considerations of identity and subjectivity, with a focus on colonialism, post-colonialism, imperialism in Anglo African, American and contemporary diasporic African literature. His research was also spread across ESP and Corpus linguistics in English.

Appala Raju Korada, is an Assistant Professor of English, Jazan University. His contributions to the present research include studying works of various authors and critics in view of finding suppression, heroism, and villainism in Colonial and Post-colonial literature to drafting the manuscript.

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