Re-Mapping the Iconic Okonkwo of 'Things Fall Apart' through a Fichtean Map of Self-Exploration, Self-Consciousness and Self-Awareness

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at placing the 'Things Fall Apart', a microcosm of African life, onto the Fichtean map of self-exploration, self-consciousness and self-awareness. Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), the leading figure of African anti-colonial literature, constructed his protagonist, Okonkwo, and presented his transformation in the novel from the pre-colonial time to the post-colonial days in Umuofia. Okonkwo's characterisation in terms of his association with his family, relations, religion, and power inclinations, mirrors his identity and tendencies as a self-sufficient independent character. However, as the situation changes, apart from the colonial terrain, his 'I' is challenged and, consequently, his whole world turned upside-down and crumbled. Observing Okonkwo through Fichtean theory of subjectivity provides a philosophical perspective to show his search for 'I' despite all the changes which had been taking place in his surroundings. The experiences that he had been going through brought about a new 'I' which was different from his former sense of individuality and subjectivity. Fichte (1762-1814) brought the 'I' into a new light of having an active positioning, meaning that the 'I' lacks the capability of exploring itself and achieving self-awareness and consciousness in a solitary life. The choice of being independent does not mean subjectivity since, in that condition, the senses of recognition and perception cannot be fulfilled. What is significant is that such senses may not be considered as the metaphysical phenomena; but they are structurally epistemological. Okonkwo's journey of self-exploration leading to his self-consciousness and self-awareness is demonstrated to be related to the outside world.

Keywords: self-exploration; self-consciousness; self-awareness; Fichtean subjectivity; recognition

INTRODUCTION

"Nosce te ipsum", a prominent philosophical dictum, which means 'Know Thyself', said and popularized by Socrates, and translated as "Read Thyself" (Hobbes, 2017, p. 2) in 'Leviathan', was likely influential in terms of persuading the Greeks to think restlessly, making them the epitome of Western Thinkers. Speaking of thinking, one may visualise 'The Thinker', a well-known sculpture created by Rodin in 1880 which represents philosophy and intellect in a heroic form. The thinking form which originally appeared on 'The Gates of Hell' represented Dante in contemplation and generates the concept of a thinking man preparing to act. This, subsequently, reflects the vital connectivity of action and knowledge (Blanchetiere & Thurrowgood, 2014). Self-knowledge became the core of the Greek/Western philosophical disciplines since it always included multilayer attempts at observing, questioning, analysing, perceiving and knowing, acknowledging, and theorising leading to self-consciousness. So they would not be infected by ignorance to themselves. In other words, having the oldest philosophical concern and problem, they claimed to have self-awareness and an inclination to be close to the truth (Schaefer & Northoff, 2017).

Self-knowledge and self-consciousness as parts of the identity exploration and formation are considered to be a continuous act of discovering varieties of dispositions. It also includes being involved within and dealing with the surroundings. It is indeed a journey that has been described

as long, and discomfortable through which one may achieve wisdom and truth. The status of wisdom has been measured as both a prestigious aspect of culture and humanity and an intellectual activity. Being self-aware also means confronting "a multiplicity of views and thinking" which shows that an 'I' experiences confusion until it finds clarity and some wholeness (Carden et al., 2021, p. 140). The ultimate 'I' can be called an independent 'I' which is subjective and self-conscious. This "I-hood" is "intelligence, reason, or whatever one wishes to call it" (Fichte, 2005, p. 7). It is, furthermore, capable of focusing, comparing, specifying and evaluating. What it can be inferred is that the I-think position or status must be accompanied by the individual one's representations (Seidel, 1932).

With regard to this dynamic 'I', the current research strives to move beyond a conventional colonial/postcolonial study. The proposed Fichtean framework tends to re-map Chinua Achebe's protagonist of 'Things Fall Apart' as an iconic character in terms of a searcher or a seeker. He is Okonkwo whose character transformation constitutes his torturous journey of self-exploration towards his self-consciousness and self-awareness. In this way, Okonkwo undertook an extrapolative manner of self-observation in different situations which he was positioned objectively or he encountered subjectively. The influences and changes in the outside world are emphasised as the determining components of acquiring self-consciousness and self-awareness. This re-visiting demonstrates that Okonkwo expanded his self-knowledge despite his life certainties, and the socio-political existential crisis brought him into a new path without removing his active agency. Achebe's Okonkwo, moreover, is an anti-colonial creation not in the sense that he and his people are the victims of forced subjugation, but because he is a thinker. This attribution withstands the notion of stereotyping and highlights Okonkwo as a 21st century character. Okonkwo's former Kantian pure perception lacks self-consciousness and self-awareness and his self-exploration in positing himself would generate an I-hood.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Widely appreciated by a variety of readers, Achebe's masterpiece which is regarded as a part of the African Trilogy, has been the focus of critics. The scholarship on Achebe's novel and his protagonists includes a number of topics and subjects. These topics are mainly related to the colonial and anti-colonial literature, illuminating and condemning the power of the European colonisers. The novel itself, fortifying the African Literature, has also received an outstanding number of praises from distinctive authors (Okolie & Uzoma, 2019). Maya Angelou, for instance, has assimilated the novel to a road along which one can meet his relatives, family members, and neighbors, etc. (Aggarwal, 2013). The novel's "hypercannonisation" attribution is epitomised in "its capacity to stand in as a collective African response to the massive decolonisation of British Africa" (Hassan, 2001, p. 298). The idea suggests that Achebe's work reinforced the sense of determination in the postcolonial aspects of the novel. "An epic narrative", the novel holds "the indigenous African story" related to the African politics and power, society, people, culture (Bayeza, 2013, p. 224). One might be hugely surprised by the organised social system of the African life introduced and described by the author. The social aspects of the society of Igbo could be regarded as a valid suggestion for making a new Nigeria after decolonisation (Rhoads, 1993). It is like "a statement" of the country's probable future whose roots were "in Igbo culture" (Rhoads, 1993, p. 62). Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart' is scenographically depicted since its "visual

storytelling shapes our understanding and engagement", making it a convincing utopia (Umezinwa, 2023, p. 25).

The linguistic aspects of the novel in terms of places' names and people's titles are parts of the socio-cultural resources involved in the "construction of identities" in the novel (Aboh & Igwanyi, 2021, p. 123). This predominant effect of the language used in the novel is also emphasised for its delivery of various social and cultural components (Poonkodi, 2023). The personification of the natural places can be taken as examples. "The nature and organisation of the tribal society", although, could be called exotic, possessed some "cosmic order" and "harmony" which was "disrupted" and "threatened" by other forces (Ramsaran, 1980, p. 391). This sense of disruption or lack of continuity is magnified by the apocalyptic title of the novel as a direct reference to William Butler Yeats's poem, 'The Second Coming'. This poem indicates that an old order was falling apart and nothing could have been done to reverse it. Using Yeats's lines can also hypothetically imply bringing European modernism in a hegemonic way (Hassan, 2001). This poem could refer to both Achebe's African community and his protagonist in the aftermath of colonisation. Leach (1971), furthermore, mentioned the protagonist's grieving over "breaking up and falling apart" and his mourning for the people of Umuofia (p. 1052). It indicates that the title, itself, could be a major theme of shattering social values and standards.

In addition, it is the narrative technique of foreshadowing utilised by Achebe which is about inducing some feelings regarding the events that might happen despite all the presuppositions. "A sense of anticipation is created" which links the poem and the novel inter-textually (Wafula & Wanjala, 2017, p. 66). Another stylistic technique in the novel which is significant in African cultures and societies is using proverbs. Windu et al. (2019) studied that proverbs play an important role in the communication of the people of Umuofia. The proverbs, which commonly "convey something logically" are categorised according to personal, formal, and religious ideas, giving a sense of literature, culture, and cognitive significance (p. 168). Such proverbs, as identity markers, are an indication and manifestation of the connection of the human being and nature. They are also the symbolic way of the traditional African life which contributes to the preservation of the oral literature and culture (Simona, 2021).

Within the patriarchal society depicted by Achebe in which the sense of masculinity is prominent, there are traces of women and the manner by which they are treated (Umezurike, 2021). Referring to the notion of double colonisation, Rahayu (2010) elaborated on studies concerned with postcolonialism and the fact of women as being doubly colonised. According to the researcher, they are regarded as the other or the inferior gender in both the original society and the colonised society. The writer further said that women had been called the men's belongings and they were expected to deal with issues of children and nurturing their family. A man in power and prosperity could have several wives and the wives would have lived in each other's vicinity peacefully respecting their own hierarchy. Women's domesticity could imply women's "limited access to education, land, leadership, employment, and justice" which are the factors of empowering the women (Kimario, 2021, p. 6). Within this discourse, women as mothers and wives are real women whose marriage and childbearing capabilities mark their identity. Nasser (1980), in the same manner, analysed the presentation of African women in the novel criticising the fact that their presentation has been different from their real role in their community. "The exploitation and marginalisation of women" is not illogical considering their role as some subjugated creatures (Nwagbara, 2009, p. 175). Being "the bulk of the subaltern", women have shown excluded from the political sphere making them always the stereotypes of "misrepresentation", wrong knowledge, and strange decision makings (Nwagbara, 2009, p. 176). That is why, according to the writer,

making a women participate in political activities meant bestowing her the authority and the result of that implied subverting the whole social system and values. Not only had the original tribal community restricted women within their patriarchal definitions, but the White missionaries passed some legislation "against women preventing them from both participating in policy-making" and implementing any rules (Egbuta & Onyerionwu, 2020, p. 2). 'Things Fall Apart' communicates the message of supremacy of male figures, as explained by Jeyifo (1993), because the female figures are only mentioned in association with the male figures. And these male figures determined the "discourse for the subjugation of the women" and it was the patriarchy of the traditional Igbo which was creating "modes of speaking and thinking" by means of which the individuals received power "on the basis of gender" (Wosu & Nnamdi, 2019, pp. 139-140).

The main male figure of Achebe's novel, the protagonist and the focus of this research, is 'Okonkwo'. Being "obsessed with the idea of masculinity" and refusing to "compromise", Okonkwo presented "the strong sense of male dominance" (Gayathri et al., 2020, p. 488). He is the Achebean Hamlet who had to choose between "what is good or great, what is natural or just" in a leading way (Gosling, 2016, p. 35). This implicitly gives him the quality of an individual. Okonkwo's leadership was based on the traditional form of living and the new form, colonisation, questioned this leadership and moved him toward the margin. Okonkwo's end marked his life's tragic flaw and Igbo's tragedy. The flaw was biblically associated with the indigenous religious practice and belief (Ottuh, 2018). Begam (1997) exonerated religious traditions and inculpated globalisation for the tragic ending of Igbo and other African communities. According to the writer cultural globalisation may be called the common enthusiasm and taste for all so that different historical periods may disappear. Iyasere (2009) observed Okonkwo's tragic falling triggered by the dreadful execution of 'Ikemefuna' and all other catastrophes were the consequences which were lined up toward his death. Okonkwo's death is a practical ingredient for which his self-exploration is mapped.

Apart from the political and social research, some religious or metaphysical concepts have been observed, as well. Mentioning the term's implication, Okpala (2002) stated that according to Aristotle's definitions of metaphysics, it meant "first philosophy" or "wisdom" due to the fact that something's appearance or existence "requires justification" (p. 560). The writer, also, explained that the principle of dualism in 'Things Fall Apart' highlighted "the interaction of the physical and non-physical beings in human personality" and this concept was pervasive in 'Things Fall Apart' (Okpala, 2002, p. 560). Religious matters are considered the essential part of tribal lives, and such beliefs could be called the reasons for making a community. Being spiritual or religious are profoundly interchangeable and it was what connected everyone to the whole tribe and gave them a sense of purpose and unity (Moseley, 2017). These purposes included not only praying and worshiping some Forces, but also matters of farming, harvesting, fertility, wars, revenge, diseases and decision makings and agency. The people's acceptance underscored "a profound sense of individual and collective religious belief" which was necessary for "the maintenance of the universal well-being" (MacKenzie, 1996, p. 129). Later on, the arrival of Christianity suggested that the clan had been pursuing the wrong type of faith. Their religion had to change since it was a major step in being civilised, emphasising the contrast between tradition and modernity. The progress of the missionaries and Christianity, primarily, was depicted as violent, threatening, and belittling; however, it tried a sense of brotherhood among the clan members (Galvan & Galvan, 2008). The act of building a Church in the 'Evil Forest', based on the researchers, was strangely left unpunished which, itself, confused the people of Umuofia. This new religion's aim was to challenge the clan's system of belief and faith as their "pillar of society" so that its adherent could

develop other social, political, and economic purposes (Galvan & Galvan, 2008, p. 111). What is noteworthy is Achebe's demonstration of the conscious complexities and depth of the traditional culture. Considering the overwhelming transformations in the Nigerian's life can justify the proportion of pessimism, in terms of "the heroic past and a debilitated present", that Achebe has shown in his works (Ponnuthurai, 1974, p. 95). Deterioration, destruction, corruption and debilitation and "the cessation of a society's centripetal force, and the consequent confusion that befalls the people" are thematically perceived in Achebe's works especially in 'Things Fall Apart' (Ponnuthurai, 1974, p. 105).

The studies summarised, reviewed Achebe's social, political, cultural, and religious intentions. They, furthermore, created a kind of consciousness into the African societies whose very existence and roles have been disregarded due to discrimination and prejudices. Yet, a philosophical perspective can shed light on the novel's hidden side. Although, Okonkwo has been the subject of some works according to the aforementioned fields, his journey of self-exploration toward acquiring self-consciousness and self-awareness has not been analysed. These terms in Fichte's philosophy, denote subjectivity in self-positing. Okonkwo is presented as a thinker and a dynamic character beyond what has been carried out on the concepts of color, gender and class.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), the German philosopher, who was primarily inspired by Kant as his student, developed a rigorous system of transcendental idealism in which the concept of subjectivity or the pure 'I' was elaborated. The Fichtean 'I' is the self-conscious and self-aware 'I' that has been through self-exploration. It is a status generated from action and intellectualism. As "an epistemological idealist" and "a moral idealist", Fichte "is not the first, or the last, philosopher in Western thought" who in the process of establishing an idea, "produced a view of the human person" (Seidel, 1932, p. 4). He drew "a portrait of a thinker" while he is interacting intellectually, and not randomly, "with his surroundings" (Bykova, 2014, p. 267). This gives the 'I' a dynamic quality in which self-exploration does not take place in an absolute independent situation. Fichte's advocating attitude toward this "timeless philosophy" encourages the philosophy enthusiasts to pursue exploring "the infinite spirit of transcendental idealism which revealed over time" (Bykova, 2014, p. 267).

What he theorised became the post-Kantian philosophy and the reconstruction of the theory of subjectivity. Self-positioning is a key term through which one's place and identity are defined based on the surrounding others. In other words, one acquires self-consciousness and self-awareness by positioning his/her self within different environments and exploring his/her subjective 'I'. The inter-relation of "something objective "and "something subjective" and their transformation in the 'I', according to Fichte, is not "immediately absolute" and "a factual consciousness" (Fichte, 2005, p. 7). What Fichte means is the journey of the objective 'I', and becoming of the subjective 'I'. He demonstrated that the ego as the ultimate reality posits itself and seeks its pure self. It is considered "a spontaneous activity" through which "the activity of intellectual self-contemplation" takes place in communal relationships and interactions (Bykova, 2009, p. 130). Based on Fichte, our experiences and encounters continuously shift and transform our perspectives toward self and the environment; so considering the self as an object would not guarantee acquiring self-awareness because the self, ego, possesses the attribution of dynamism. It is subjective, and reflects the functional connection of pure and practical reasoning. In other

words, the Cartesian I-Think-Therefore-I-am would not be sufficient for being self-conscious and having self-awareness due to the fact that it appeared to be too theoretical. Since a subject is given the quality of rational agency, a subject can act and make decisions on the necessary course of action. Being a rational agent and a subjective entity allow an individual to be practically self-exploring. Hence the 'I' becomes an active process instead of merely being the first person pronoun or the mere state of thinking. The 'I' as an individual's identity "lies behind all my changing experience" (Bykova, 2019, p. 147). Fichte called it a "mechanism of consciousness" or of self-exploration in which what is subjective and what is objective are separated and unified (Fichte, 2005, p. 7).

"Every situation presents us with a manifold of possible actions to choose" (Ware, 2016, p. 6). The choice, in each situation, reflects the exercise of the conscience of a subjective 'I'. As an active 'I', the challenge which is the ability to "make a distinction within myself between a knowing subject and a real force" is vital because the knowledge of such distinction is the necessary condition of acquiring consciousness (Fichte, 2005, p. 10). In other words, the consciousness can be posited. The existence alone is insufficient and being subjective and objective, and knowing it independently, means positing self. Thus positing 'I' and being active are significantly determining in the subjectivity of something. Being active also means "attentive self-observation" to gain the cognition "both of one's overall moral nature and of one's specific duties" (Fichte, 2005, p. 20). However, for Fichte, this is called "the standpoint of ordinary consciousness" which is only "sufficient for engendering both a dutiful disposition and dutiful conduct" (Fichte, 2005, p. 21). Then, for acquiring the "rational nature" of I-hood, an individual must have a specific insight to have a deduction process by means of which some theoretical cognition is primarily obtained (Fichte, 2005, p. 21). For further levels of cognition, one must posit the consciousness into different forms of understandings.

This idea says that thinking and making observations under certain conditions results in some conclusions. It implies that thinking about self depends upon the current condition and other assumptions can be provisionally perceived and justified. The manner and place of thinking brings something which might not have been noticed before and it becomes the creation of one's immediate thinking. Then one can say that "This is how I am thinking in and for myself" (Fichte, 2005, p. 22). The thinker is the subject and the thinking of self becomes an object; so exploring and finding the self means exploring and finding the object of thinking which is unified with the subject. Such an awareness is the willingness of a thinker to think of "something subsisting, something that is present independently of my consciousness of it…" (Fichte, 2005, p. 26). In other words, one, that is the 'I', becomes conscious of such a consciousness signifying exploring and finding oneself willingly and the object. What is objective gets the quality of being real which means that it becomes "something that is supposed to exist for itself and through itself" (Fichte, 2005, p. 27). It is further elaborated that a thought or thinking should be determined by itself and "not from the outside or even by its own nature" emphasising its having "properties" (Fichte, 2005, p. 40). The 'I', in this regard, which has a strong tendency to posit itself as a free determiner is removed from the mere definition of being a concept and it becomes the 'I' "purely and simply in the practical sense" (Fichte, 2005, p. 42). The practical 'I' as an active consciousness, therefore, has a character "for itself" (Fichte, 2005, p. 44). It is capable of pursuing and performing an action upon which it had already been decided, and this decision and the ensuing action would be as a result of a condition's requirement.

To exist is different from to actively exist which says that the I-am status cannot refer to the I-think status while its contrary can be purely right. The comparison of these two status seeks

reflecting the fact that self-exploration contains the attribution of dynamism. This dynamism brings about a variety of perspectives into the objects, including the 'I'. The probabilities of various perspectives create self-awareness and self-consciousness. A conscious 'I' functions as a determinate consciousness with the intellectual intuition that philosophically means experiencing and realizing the own self in its complete form without being controlled and dominated. In addition, the conscious 'I' understands the responsibility of own subjectivity and the freedom of choice.

The concept of 'I' has been the target of exploration in literary works of different nations. Such an attempt highlights the fact that searching for own self, identity, awareness, and place can be the concern of anyone regardless of skin color, nationality, gender, etc. The synonymity of Literature and History has precipitated a narratively interactive discourse which subsequently causes "ongoing conversations with their creators, readers, and cultures" (Bressler, 2003, p. 189). The epitome of African novels, 'Things Fall Apart', can be regarded as one of those literary works in which searching for the 'I', during and after the colonisation of an African tribe called 'Igbo' by the White is focused. Written by the most notable African writer, Chinua Achebe, and published in 1958, this debut novel portrays the Nigerian tribe members' lives before and during colonisation by the white missionaries. It describes how the people lived within their own system of belief, language, culture, and politics and how their social complexities were their distinguished features which, ultimately, were invaded.

DISCUSSION

OKONKWO: THE FITCHEAN CHARACTER

Okonkwo, who "was clearly cut out for great things" is well described as an individual in his clan, 'Ibo' (Achebe, 1959, p. 8). Being "well-known throughout the nine villages and even beyond", Okonkwo was strong enough in beating the 'Amalinze the Cat' which was exemplary and established him as a distinctive man (Achebe, 1959, p. 4). The narrator elaborates the wrestling scene and emphasises that the elders agreed on it being "one of the fiercest" (Achebe, 1959, p. 4). Having two wives and recently being married to the third one, owning a prosperous farm and barns full of yams, also, presented him as a distinguished man in the hierarchal system of their society especially for the fact that he "did not have the start in life which many young men had" and he had achieved all by himself and not by inheritance (Achebe, 1959, p. 18). Having a father like Unoka meant that he had to "lay the foundations of a prosperous future" by himself even though it was "slow and painful" (Achebe, 1959, p. 18). As a matter of fact, Okonkwo was afraid of failure and "of his father's contemptible life and shameful death", so he worked hard and led a systematic disciplined living (Achebe, 1959, p. 18). He, as the I of the story, according to Fichte's terms, was the product of the community and his self-consciousness was, accordingly, made toward the world (Fichte, 2005, p. 70). His excelling fame is described as "a bush-fire in the harmattan" emphasising his growing popularity in qualities that a man could have had (Achebe, 1959, p. 3). Okonkwo's appearance is described as severe and stern and his breathing, during his sleep at night, could be heard by all three wives and children. He did not have any sense of tolerance and patience and he would not use the language as the medium of communication but his fist as the means to show his authority. In various moments within the first part of the novel, Okonkwo was highly regarded as that he, himself, knew the significance of it in the sense that he would get a higher rank among his fellow clan men. Achebe says that "he had taken two titles and

had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars" (Achebe, 1959, p. 8). This getting a higher position had truly been his life purpose since it would have meant his accomplishment despite his father's failure and his debts to the next generation. His father "was very good on his flute" and a man of humour; yet he never succeeded in fame, wealth and title (Achebe, 1959, p. 4). Finally, "a grown-up" failure, "he died of the swelling which was an abomination to the earth goddess…" (Achebe, 1959, p. 18). Okonkwo's choice of what he wanted originated in his understanding and sensibility. The thoughts produced were coming from the senses collected from encountering others. His self-awareness was mingled with the hierarchical tradition which was forcibly prevalent in his community making him a subjective agent of masculinity and traditionalism. His 'I' was conscious of all attributions and his sense of self-awareness was strengthened by his family, neighbors and other members of the clan. What appeared to Okonkwo was the consistent illusion that was caused by his willingness to perceive the concepts in front of him and his rational being was determined by the condition (Fichte, 2005, p. 32).

The second part of the novel deals with his exile in his motherland because of the act of killing committed by him. In the new environment, he, in spite of being "well received by his mother's kinsmen" is seen in despair and agony; for he has lost what he had been working for years (Achebe, 1959, p. 129). Losing what he had endeavoured and achieved implies losing subjectivity and the built I-hood. In addition, feeling similar to others as the mass who had the medium level of identity, has not been what he could have been anticipated even remotely. Within this condition Okonkwo's 'I' saw its existence as a passive entity, and, ironically, his 'I' remembered the previous sense of being which was used to recognised in connection to his father. He "was given a plot of a ground on which to build his compound, and two or three pieces of land on which to farm during the coming planting season" (Achebe, 1959, p. 130). Starting from the beginning, literally and symbolically, sounded like the most painful part of his life and after his grandfather talked to him and encouraged him to stop his negativity towards the new situation, it seemed that he embarked on his new journey to move on and work, although he never stopped thinking and planning about going back and resuming his life. Achebe describes this new beginning "without vigour and enthusiasm of youth, like learning to become left-handed in old age" (Achebe, 1959, p. 131). His success in the motherland and building reputation showed that he was essentially diligent and had his way toward fulfilment of what he could have in his power. That Okonkwo identified his miserable situation and found it impermanent is regarded as the essential characteristics. This, a part of his self-awareness, empowered him to have control over his life. During this exile time, there was news on the topic of white men killing the members of another clan during the market day and that they have been talking in a strange language and introducing some new faith different from what these people believed in. Okonkwo was also informed upon the arrival of missionaries to Umuofia, their building a church and having "a handful of converts" including his own son (Achebe, 1959, p. 143). The missionaries' persistence on people's equality and brotherhood and the gradual penetration of the sense of doubt triggered their reception by the elders. Changing the environment meant a disruption in the continuous sense of 'I' in Okonkwo's known sense of identity. That he knew himself as a self-conscious 'I' would not have the same meaning in the new place because the new surrounding considered him as an exiled man removed from his rank, land and clan. This doubly removed Okonkwo from his self-understanding as he was supposed to define a sense of identity for himself. Thinking about its impossibility, Okonkwo, who knew his old time, initiated his journey of becoming and of recognition. Were he not self-aware of his 'I', he would not be successful in moving on with his life. In other words, his subjectivity dynamically transformed him into perceiving a new reality.

Yet, the change which was taking place because of colonisation influenced his self-definition and as a man with self-awareness, Okonkwo knew that the "living fire begets cold, impotent ash. He sighed again, deeply." (Achebe, 1959, p. 153).

Moving on to the third section of the story, colonisation was seen in progress despite some resistance from the elders and some people. The missionaries called for gatherings so that people would know about Christianity and the promising consequences of accepting Christianity in terms of the developments in the economy, the relations with other regions, educations and other welfare items which were concerned with women and children. Okonkwo returned to his clan after seven years and the narrator commented that his arrival was not cheered as he expected and, furthermore, his clan had been under the colonisers. His son, in spite of his brutal disagreement, changed his faith and Okonkwo banished him from the family as if he had not been his son from the beginning. The narrator ended the story with an overwhelming incident. Following the destruction of the church, the bigger men of the clan, Okonkwo included, were invited by the District Commissioner to explain what exactly happened. The clan men were arrested and their hair, one significant sign of their grandeur, was shaved and they were imprisoned. "The self-contempt" which has been "carefully instilled by missionaries and colonial officials" deeply and "literally blackened" the tribe's traditional dimensions which is significant in perceiving the "abandonment" of the subjectivity of the members (Moore, 2001, p. 29). Later on, the novel ended tragically revealing that Okonkwo, who was once called the Roaring Flames, has hanged himself as an act of "self-immolation" which according to Nkeokelonye et al. (2020), was different from a mere act of suicide because of its "protesting" nature and its "collective identity" (p. 89). Okonkwo's realisation and self-consciousness in taking his own life was in spite of knowing the tradition that "it is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen. He is body is evil…" (Achebe, 1959, p. 207). What made him a Fichtean character in the final section is that he recognised that he was trapped between his 'I' and the 'I' which was forced on him to take by the white people. The imposed 'I' was the 'not-I', according to Fichte, which could not bring him into a unified subject (Neuhouser, 1990). Once he self-consciously refused to accept the imposed identity, or to be colonised, he found that to end his life was a better solution because the new reality was indefinitely different from his 'I'. With his subjectivity or agency removed, he, self-determinant, decided on being the subject of his living or not living.

CONCLUSION

Okonkwo is the Fichtean character in Chinua Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart'. Fichte, the German philosopher, outlined particular key terms to map the way an individual finds the I-hood. This map of self-exploration includes challenges, questions, definitions and re-definitions; because the self/I is a dynamic entity and a seeker. The 'I' embarks on the journey of self-exploration by positing itself which means that it subjectively and actively acquires self-consciousness and self-awareness. Okonkwo's identity which has been socially, culturally, and politically established was questioned in the story. While he was in his own clan, his interactions and experiences were according to what had been already defined. If he thinks highly of himself, it is for the fact that the surrounding reacts to him in the very same manner. His self-understanding could not be different from what he experiences every day. In other words, his primary status does not involve any self-exploration and his consciousness and awareness are built upon the situation. When the environment changes,

his whole experiences change too. His sense of 'I' challenged and his self-picture was shattered; so he fell into despair and disappointment, and he lost the sense of purpose. Once he defined a new 'I' for himself, he resumed other features connected to his sense of identity. Encountering the colonisers, in the story, meant losing one's identity, being imposed by another identity and being forced to get that identity. Committing suicide was mentioned as forbidden according to the clan's faith and the dead body should not touch the earth. Okonkwo's perceiving that sense of loss of identity and subjectivity was darker than any other moment in his life. He was deprived of having his authority, prosperous life, faith, reputation, etc. implying that he had to adopt the 'I' which was defined by the colonizers. Ultimately, he became self-conscious and self-aware. The reality that has been in front of him for some times, sounded clear and he came to the recognition of his inability to cope with the new experiences in the new situation.

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