

**THE CONCEPT OF "EXILE" WITHIN AND BEYOND  
THE POST-COLONIAL THEORY**

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**Yüksek Lisans Tezi  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı  
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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the present thesis is to discuss the concept of 'exile' within and beyond the postcolonial theory, based on Edward Said, and in two postcolonial novels written in English language, the language of the colonisers, in 1960's, "*The Mimic Men*" by Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul and "*Things Fall Apart*" by Chinua Achebe. This study not only covers definitions and appropriations of exile but also deals with theoreticians and practitioners at exile. Naipaul's and Achebe's protagonists' different yet similar experiences inspired this study and some critical questions such as 'How many forms of exile are there?', 'Can exile be mental as well as physical?', 'What kind of cultural, psychological and intellectual transformations occur during exile?', 'Is it possible to go into exile willingly?', 'Is exile a temporary or a permanent condition?' and 'Can someone really return from exile?' are scrutinized in order to provide a thorough understanding of the term. This thesis holds the purpose of finding some meaningful answers to these questions and explaining the concept and condition of exile within the framework of these two novels.

**Key words:** Banishment, Chinua Achebe, Edward Said, Exile, The Mimic Men, Things Fall Apart, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul



## INTRODUCTION

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in Chaguanas on the island of Trinidad on August 17, 1932. He is a Nobel Prize winning, British novelist, travel writer and essayist.

He was the second child and first son born to mother Droapatie and father Seepersad Naipaul. In the 1880s, his grandparents emigrated from India to work as indentured servants in Trinidad's sugar plantations. As a result of the Great Famine of 1876–78 and similar calamities in India, the Naipauls were part of a larger Indian emigration to Trinidad, Fiji, Guyana, Suriname, and other outposts of the British Empire.

In 1939, when he was seven years old, Naipaul's family moved to Trinidad's capital, Port of Spain, where Naipaul enrolled in the government-run Queen's Royal College, a well-regarded school that was modelled after a British public school. Upon graduation, Naipaul won a Trinidad Government scholarship that allowed him to study at any institution of higher learning in the British Commonwealth; he chose Oxford where he intended to study English.

In Kilburn, one afternoon in the summer of 1955, Naipaul typed out a 3,000-word story. It was based on the memory of a neighbour he had known as a child in a Port of Spain street, but it also drew on the mood and ambience of the freelancers' room. Three fellow writers, John Stockbridge, Andrew Salkey, and Gordon Woolford, who read the story later, were affected and encouraged him to go on. Over the next five weeks, Naipaul would write his first publishable book, *Miguel Street*, a collection of linked stories of that Port of Spain. Although the book was not published right away, Naipaul's talent caught the attention of publishers and his spirits began to lift. So his literary adventure started and climbed the stairs of success

gradually until he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001. He is the writer of 14 novels and 18 non-fiction books.

Albert Chinualumogu Achebe was born in the Igbo village of Ogidi on November 16, 1930 and died in Boston, United States on March 21, 2013. He was a Nigerian poet, novelist, critic and professor, who is considered to be the father of Modern African Literature.

Raised by his parents in the Igbo town of Ogidi in south-eastern Nigeria, Achebe excelled at school and won a scholarship for undergraduate studies. He became fascinated with world religions and traditional African cultures, and began writing stories as a university student.

After graduation, he worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) and soon moved to the metropolis of Lagos. He gained worldwide attention for *Things Fall Apart* in the late 1950s; his later novels include *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Achebe wrote his novels in English and defended the use of English, a "language of colonisers", in African literature. Yet in his 1975 essay, *The African Writer and The English Language* he explains that "*the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African Experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.*" Again in 1975, his lecture *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"* featured a famous criticism of Joseph Conrad as "a thoroughgoing racist"; it was later published in *The Massachusetts Review* amid some controversy.

An Igbo chieftain himself, Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influence, and the clash of Western and traditional African values during and after the colonial era. His style relies heavily on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk

stories, proverbs, and oratory. He also published a number of short stories, children's books, and essay collections. From 2009 until his death, he served as a professor at Brown University in the United States.

There are significant similarities between these two postcolonial writers. Firstly, they both were born in 1930's and were brilliant students who studied abroad in former colonial empires. Secondly, they worked in international broadcasting services and BBC, and these work experiences influenced their world views and writing adventures. Thirdly, both wrote in English which is neither their own language nor their mother tongue; they preferred the language of the coloniser to represent the suppression of the colonized and exiled characters. Finally, both created unique styles of their own which are blended in between the two worlds.

On the other hand, there are also major differences between their views regarding ethnicity, slavery and racism. Although there is no evidence whether both writers had ever physically met or not, Achebe declares his ideas about Naipaul in "*Home and Exile*". He expresses their differences frankly. For instance, Naipaul writes in his novel "*A Bend in the River*" as:

I asked for a cup of coffee... It was a tiny old man who served me. And I thought, not for the first time, that in colonial days the hotel boys had been chosen for their small size, and the ease with which they could be manhandled. That was no doubt why the region had provided so many slaves in the old days: slave peoples are physically wretched, half-men in everything except in their capacity to breed the next generation. (Naipaul, 1979, 112)

Achebe reacts these sentences by writing, "*That is no longer merely troubling. I think it is downright outrageous. And it is also pompous rubbish.*" (Achebe, 2000, 87) Although "*A Bend in the River*" is just a fictional book, it is inevitable not to have any correlation between what is written and its writer.



Therefore, Achebe criticizes Naipaul's personal conceptions about slavery and racial differences but does not comment on his literary skills and vision.

Nevertheless both Naipaul and Achebe left great legacies for their followers. They became the voices of colonized cultures and managed to become great writers without being overtly political.

# PART 1

## THE CONCEPT OF "EXILE" WITHIN AND BEYOND THE POST-COLONIAL THEORY

### 1.1 Definition and appropriations of the term

The term 'exile' comes from the word 'exilium' in Latin meaning 'banishment' from 'exul' meaning 'banished person'. It is a frequently used term in literature and humanities and therefore a proper and detailed definition may be useful.

According to Oxford English Dictionary, exile is

The state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons; A person who lives away from their native country, either from choice or compulsion; Expel and bar (someone) from their native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.

The term 'exile' is also related with the term 'refugee' and they are defined by 'European Council on Refugees and Exiles' as:

The term refugee is familiar to most people. Common notions of refugees include people fleeing for their lives to escape a natural disaster or war zone. Past examples of mass refugee flows include the Balkans war, the Rwandan genocide and World War II. The concept of seeking refuge has been present in our cultures and societies for a long time... What all these treaties describe is the basic notion of a person forced to leave their country of origin and seek refuge in a foreign land. (<http://www.ecre.org/refugees/refugees/who-are-refugees.html>)

Finally, Encyclopedia Britannica defines the term as:

Exile and banishment, prolonged absence from one's country imposed by vested authority as a punitive measure. It most likely originated among early civilizations from the practice of designating an offender an outcast and depriving him of the comfort and protection of his group... In the 20th century, exile was frequently imposed for political offenses, a notorious destination being the Russian region of Siberia.  
(<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/198072/exile-and-banishment>)

These definitions, descriptions, classifications and appropriations of the term and concept of 'Exile', clearly show that it is one of the important and alluring themes used by different writers in different times and in different geographies of the world but especially in postcolonial literature and postcolonial criticism.

After careful scrutiny of different texts about and on exile, the writer of this paper considers exile as experiencing the inevitable. It starts when someone arrives to the borders of homelessness. The strength of the conditions accelerates it. It is a search for a safe place after fighting and resisting the oppressive conditions. Falling apart starts just at this crucial moment and there is no return from this dramatic point.

Exile is deeply connected with being on the road, either willingly or reluctantly. So where and how does this journey start, under what physical, psychological or mental conditions? Wherever exile goes, he never truly arrives, to be an exile is to be permanently in between, either between self and other, centre and margin, metropolis and colony, religion or heresy, art or science. Which feelings nourish or annihilate the exile? Indecisiveness, instability, distress, depression, annoyance, yearning, worry, unbelief, solitude, isolation, grief, regret, hopelessness...

Exiled person or artist choses to benefit from these feelings to his advantage or not. How? His greatest weapon is his language. He must speak, write and create

otherwise he may go insane. He must communicate and share his suffer. But if he cannot even use his own language, the language he feels belonging, he feels castrated.

In exile, language becomes writers' homeland. The position of the writer in exile is shaped within the axis of this consciousness. The meaning of his existence lies here. His connection with his past, experiences and country is kept only through language. He strives to create himself from scratch by resisting the conditions, not by submitting to them. Although exile is mostly permanent, the exiled person or writer has a tendency to perceive it temporal. Even if there is a slightest possibility of return to motherland or fatherland in another sense, he hangs to it.

## 1.2 Theoreticians at exile

There are various definitions of exile and Bill Ashcroft chooses to consider the term as “*The condition of exile involves the idea of a separation and distancing from either a literal homeland or from a cultural and ethnic origin.*” (Bill Ashcroft, 1998, 92) But if exile is related to separation, how does this separation occur? Is it willingly or reluctantly? Because if someone chooses to separate from his country voluntarily, he must be called an expatriate instead of an exile. Exile cannot return to the ‘place of origin’, even if he wishes to do so. Therefore defining and explaining the term needs scrutiny and careful attention.

One of the respected theoreticians Edward Said focuses on the concept of Exile in some of his critical texts and defines the concept as one of the saddest fates:

In premodern times, banishment was a particularly dreadful punishment since it not only meant years of aimless wandering away from family and familiar places, but also meant being a sort of permanent outcast, someone who never felt at home, and was always at odds with the environment, inconsolable about the past, bitter about the present and the future. (Said, 1994, 47).

Said uses the term banishment as a synonym of exile and relates it to a crime which needs to be punished. In addition, he clearly shows that exile has physical, psychological, mental and cultural phases.

There has always been an association between the idea of exile and the terrors of being a leper, a social and moral untouchable. During the twentieth century, exile has been transformed from the exquisite, and sometimes exclusive, punishment of special individuals-like the great Latin poet Ovid, who was banished from Rome to a remote town on the Black Sea-into a cruel punishment of whole communities and peoples, often the inadvertent

result of impersonal forces such as war, famine, and disease. (Said, 1994, 47).

Said focuses on the social aspect of the term and unites the individual with his society. They have an inevitable interaction and is almost impossible not to coexist. He also mentions the transformation of an exile from a respected point to an outcast due to laws of nature.

Bill Ashcroft considers exile from another viewpoint in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. He stresses the universality of the term and makes a connection of it with the society. His argument also holds a positive stand of exile because even if a person is exiled, he still has the potential of creation.

The exile is a universal figure.... We are made to feel a sense of exile by our inadequacy and our irrelevance of function in a society whose past we can't alter, and whose future is always beyond us. Idleness can easily guide us into accepting this as a condition. Sooner or later, in silence or with rhetoric, we sign a contract whose epitaph reads: To be an exile is to be alive. (Ashcroft, 1995, 12)

Returning to Said, he not only defines and describes the physical difficulties of being an exile and exile in general but also the psychological frustration, alienation, depression, emotional collapse, eternal solitude, silence and being silenced.

There is a popular but wholly mistaken assumption that being exiled is to be totally cut off, isolated, hopelessly separated from your place of origin. Would that surgically clean separation were true, because then at least you could have the consolation of knowing that what you have left behind is, in a sense, unthinkable and completely irrecoverable. The fact is that for most exiles the difficulty consists not simply in being forced to live away from home, but rather, given today's world, in living with the many reminders that

you are in exile, that your home is not in fact so far away, and that the normal traffic of everyday contemporary life keeps you in constant but tantalizing and unfulfilled touch with the old place. (Said, 1994, 48-49).

Said touches a very fragile point here because he stresses the importance of confrontation. Exile need not be a form of utter solitude and it is easier to be physically away from home compared to be at home but not be seen and contacted. To be forced to live in a place without feeling any psychological bond is regarded another form of exile. *“The exile, therefore exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another.”* He must always be alert and *“skilled at survival becomes the main imperative, with the danger of getting too comfortable and secure constituting a threat that is constantly to be guarded against”* (Said, 1994, 48-49).

By these definitions it can be considered that an exile is trapped and cornered; he neither can adapt to the beauties of heaven nor can he escape the fires of hell. He is caught in between and has an unsolved identity crisis. He never feels at home wherever he goes or feels secure both for his life and soul. He is not only a foreigner but also a stranger.

On the other hand, Said also shows the positive aspect of exile especially within the frame of intellectuality and marginality when he declares:

Exile means that you are always going to be marginal, and that what you do as an intellectual has to be made up because you cannot follow a prescribed path. If you can experience that fate not as a deprivation and as something to be bewailed, but as a sort of freedom, a process of discovery in which you do things according to your own pattern, as various interests seize your attention, and as the particular goal you set yourself dictates: that is a unique pleasure. (Said, 1994, 62).

It may be useful to resort to Homi K. Bhabha at this point because he brings out a supporting argument to the topic. *“In our thinking, ‘exiles’ have usually been those famous American and British artists seeking a change in creative surroundings. They have not referred usually to those displaced by world war and colonization...”* (Bhabha, 1990, 60). Although Joyce, Miller, Conrad, Eliot and many other Western intellectuals and writers chose exile willingly mostly for artistic reasons, they are generally on the winner side thanks to their skin colour or ethnic origins. It is a strange phenomenon to ignore and forget the majority who are the real victims of exile.

If the exile is an intellectual, his marginality in his new society or environment may create a fresh source of inspiration and knowledge for him. Instead of conventional, traditional and static forms of thoughts, daring and challenging alternatives may flourish. He may consider subjects as a stranger from the inside and bring out different perspectives.

In order to enlighten the road of verbal definitions and explanations of the term ‘exile’, Homi Bhabha adds *“Many words in the exile family divide themselves between an archaic or literary sense and a modern, political one: for example, banishment vs. deportation; emigre vs. immigrant; wanderer vs. refugee; exodus vs. flight.”* (Bhabha, 1990, 61). But compared to Said, Bhabha’s works on exile are seen as thinking on alternative ways of ‘dwelling’ in migrancy and exile, different senses of belonging, regrouping in diasporic formations and gathering. He is also critiqued for celebration of the ‘pleasures’ of exile like Julia Kristeva who asks *“How can one avoid sinking into the mire of common sense, if not by becoming a stranger to one’s own country, language, sex and identity?”* (Kristeva, 1986, 298)

David Huddart also considers the term and writes *“Exile can be made into a metaphorical ideal, suggesting a positive cosmopolitan identity, but exile is not only a metaphor, and many experience it in more negative ways.”* (Huddart, 2006, 54)



Taking all above mentioned points into consideration, it can be said that the duality of the phenomenon is obvious and exile has both negative and positive aspects, both creative and destructive forces. Therefore Huddart adds “*Accordingly, we have to be careful when we think about the positive qualities of exile.*” (Huddart, 2006, 54) What he means by being careful regarding especially literary criticism is as follows “*Post-colonial criticism may well derive from an experience of exile which allows writers to think through the complexities of belonging and home. However, this kind of exile is something most readily accessible to privileged academics and literary writers.*” (Huddart, 2006, 106)

Italian philosopher Antonio Negri is an unlucky example of an exiled intellectual unlike Said who was exiled from his country for his political and philosophical ideas for fourteen years and lived in France during his exile. He acquired a fresh view point in France and could see and analyse what was happening in Italy with a new perspective as an outsider. He took an active role in intellectual life of Paris and even managed to publish a journal there. But, he chose to return home even if he knew that prison had been waiting for him for a long time. Being a mentally free man in prison meant more to him than being a physically free but mentally prisoned man in a foreign country. He preferred to reunite with his country’s prisoned intellectuals and his comrades in jail, even though they themselves had already become ‘exiles within’ and ‘marginals’, to be alone and adrift outside. Moreover he concentrates on the concept of exile and writes, “*The theme of exile is mixed with migration and hybridity in today’s world...*” (Negri, 1998, 57) So, he not only experienced exile himself but also thought on it.

Therefore, every concept may have different definitions depending on the view point of the related person or institution. One can either choose to complain and lament for exiles or choose to search the options they utilize and develop both physically and mentally. The point to keep in mind is that exile also provides the

ultimate power of freedom and resistance which are almost impossible to acquire otherwise.

### 1.3 Practitioners in exile

Exile has always been an inevitable reality in human life and it has numerous representatives in many different cultures and geographies. Some names to remember are mentioned as follows. The great Latin poet Ovidius was one of the first artists in exile as he himself was exiled from Rome to a remote village on the coast of Black Sea. Jonathan Swift, who was exiled to Ireland after the fall of Tories, was another powerful voice in exile lived and wrote in 18th century.

Edmond Jabes, Giuseppe Ungaretti and Konstantin Kavafis were other writers in exile who were dramatically influenced by the Second World War as they were themselves banished Jews, Italians and Greeks. Thomas Mann, Leo Spitzer and Erich Auerbach who worked on Latin Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature were exiled academicians and writers. Exile not only affected artists but also scientists. Edward Teller and Werner von Braun are exiled scientists who greatly influenced and transformed scientific methods especially in weaponry and space race in the USA against Soviet Russia during the Cold War.

V.S. Naipaul is considered the most famous writer in exile after he won the Nobel Prize in 2001 and almost all his novels represent some kind of his own autobiographical search for identity and citizenship. His characters are embodiments of exiles who live double lives between different civilizations.

Chinua Achebe is another mighty voice of exile from Nigeria, Africa and like Naipaul, his characters scream the pains of banishment, in addition, we hear the cries of Igbo and other African peoples who are exiled in their own land from their tribes and their own gods.

Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno maybe considered the most determined intellectual in exile who fought against fascism, communism and Western consumerism all his life. He used a bitter language in this intellectual war.

Apart from these real people, two important fictional characters and one special book deserves to be mentioned although they present a different form of exile; psychological and intellectual.

The first character is Bazarov from “Fathers and Sons” written by Turgenev. He is the ultimate figure of artistic values and rebellion against traditions in 1860’s Russia. He never feels at ease with customs and is always at exile in his mind.

The second character is Stephen Dedalus from “Ulysses” by James Joyce. Dedalus is a symbol of internal frustration and external alienation in 1920’s Dublin. Although not physically exiled, he is a restless soul and never at home.

Lastly, the book that focuses on a variety of exiles is “Minima Moralia” by Adorno. The book is in the form of fragments that represent the shattered mind of the artist. *“It is one of my joys, not to be a house-owner,” wrote Nietzsche as early as The Gay Science. To this should be added: ethics today means not being at home in one’s house.”* (Adorno, 1944, Fragment 18)

## PART 2

### EXILE IN “THE MIMIC MEN” AND “THINGS FALL APART”

#### 2.1 Exile in *The Mimic Men*

Mimicry is a fundamental term in post-colonial studies and shares common features with exile and deeply related to it. In order to read and analyse *The Mimic Men* correctly and thoroughly, it is necessary to refer firstly *The Line and The Light* by Jacques Lacan and then *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha.

Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage .... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled - exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare. (Lacan, 1977, 99)

Mimicry is one of the attitudes of an inner exile who physically lives among people but always mentally and spiritually alone and isolated. It is almost impossible to differentiate him from his outlook until he starts to speak, write and create art. So a mimic man is also an exile to and from himself and his society.

Homi K. Bhabha approaches mimicry from another angle when he reveals his understanding of the term as;

Mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline which ‘appropriates’ the Other as is visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of inappropriate, however, a

difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers. (Bhabha, 1994, 86)

In the above sentences, Bhabha infers that mimicry is both a resemblance and a menace at once. A mimic man is both in and out, at the centre and margin, in the metropolis and colony. He experiences the opportunities and suffers of being and living in between. He is a hidden and unnoticed threat to the society, a time bomb.

*The Mimic Men* is "A profound novel of cultural displacement, which masterfully evokes a colonial man's experience in a postcolonial world". The main character Ralph Sing "borns of Indian heritage and raised on a British-dependent Caribbean island who retires to suburban London, writing his memoirs as a means to impose order on a chaotic existence." His memories lead him to recognize the paradox of his childhood during which he secretly fantasizes about a heroic India, yet changes his name from Ranjit Kripalsingh. As he assesses his short-lived marriage to an ostentatious white woman, Singh realizes what has kept him from becoming a proper Englishman. But it is the return home and his subsequent immersion in the roiling political atmosphere of a newly self-governed nation that ultimately provides Singh with the necessary insight to discover the crux of his disillusionment.

The novel is divided into three parts. The first part starts in London and the reader is introduced with protagonist's life as a student and his miseries as an outsider in London. After some temporary love affairs, he meets an ordinary but passionate English girl. They get married and return to Singh's island, Isabella. Later, Singh inherits a small fortune from his family and becomes a successful businessman by the help of unjust conditions on the island. Singh and his wife enter into the cosmopolitan and elite society of the island and they start to live a life based on daily entertainments and pleasure. He also becomes obsessed with building a colonial house with a big swimming pool for himself. They lead a luxurious, fake, artificial

and isolated life unlike the rest of the islanders. Singh's relationship with his wife gets worse day by day and she finally leaves him and the island and the first part of the novel finishes here.

The second part of the novel is a flashback and it is about Singh's childhood on the island. The reader meets his family, friends and school life. He is always unhappy, dissatisfied and negative and all he desires is to escape from the island although he is not sure where to go. That is an identity crisis for him and he cannot comprehend where he really belongs. He feels a sense of non-belonging but he is not at an age to find out the major reasons of his restlessness.

The third part is dedicated to the blistering rise and fall of Singh's political life. He and his friends become the rulers of the island as a socialist movement and this is an unexpected success for them. Everything starts like a game but surprisingly the island becomes independent. On the other hand, things do not go well after this freedom due to lack of experience, preparation and outside help. The political atmosphere changes and Singh's fall starts. He loses his power and he is not considered as an important person in his efforts to find solutions. Lastly, he is exiled to a small hotel room in London and he decides to leave everything behind as much as he can and to continue his life in England as a new-born writer at the age of forty. Yet, whether he will be 'successful and prosperous' in writing his autobiography by recreating his history or not remains as an enigma and Naipaul leaves this question unanswered. Naipaul finishes his novel while the main character Ralph Singh's writing adventure starts.

After this summary, it is noteworthy to represent some aspects of exile in order to comprehend and analyse the underlying theme of the novel and the main character Singh's physical, psychological, political and literary journey.

Exile can be described in different ways and it is not one but many things. In general, *"Exile is a division between self and others; it is the loss, or the*

*renunciation, of close ties with the others, family, community, society among whom one lives or has lived.*" (Weiss, 1993, 5) Exile can fragment the self, reconstruct it by merging, or fragment and reconstruct in cycles. As the exile breaks ties with others, he lives a lonely life and although some intellectuals find a freedom through not-belonging to a community, the experience of exile can produce an intense splitting of self and world. *"Exile can also provoke extreme responses: just as the stranger can fascinate or frighten, so too strangeness can channel the exile's energies creatively or destructively."* (Weiss, 1993, 9)

In addition to fragmentation, the experience of exile holds new possibilities for seeing, understanding, interpreting and creating, but these can also be painful and paradoxical. The exile believes that in order to find the centre, one must look from the outside and margins; and that in order to know one's self and community, one must know all the world, though what one sees and knows is always culturally based and contextual. The "*margins*" can be "*an unprecedented source of creative energy,*" argue Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (2002, 12). They also explain, "*The gap which opens between the experience of place and the language available to describe it forms a classic and all-pervasive feature of [colonial and] post-colonial texts.*" (2002, 20-21) As the outsider or stranger is generally thought to be an Eastern, Caribbean, African, Asian or even Aborigine, shortly any non-Western, their sheer difference is both appealing but also repulsive to a Westerner.

In the Westerner's eyes, an interest in difference can turn into racism or a variation of ethnocentrism in which one's own culture is considered superior to other cultures of the world. These two attitudes together with recognition of difference, yet a sense of egalitarianism and commonality can perhaps make for the perfectly tolerant, observant, inquiring person and for the traveller who applies both an exotopy and an empathy to understand creatively the strangeness of others. (Weiss, 1993, 13)



Exile can also be viewed as a response to the dichotomy of metropolis and colony; in today's world it can be seen as a larger response to a rapidly changing postcolonial world with its collision of cultures and powers and its splintering and remaking of societies. As a result of this, one can be an exile even in his own neighbourhood, village, town, city and country, for it is the same sentiment of exile, though of a lesser intensity, that motivates certain people to move from a town to a big city in order to be anonymous, to be a stranger among others of one's own nation, to be lost in the madding crowd and thus, to resist integration within a community and to have one's private world. The exile desires to be an invisible man within society; he wants to see but not to be seen.

Exile is also a process of becoming, in between origins and destinations, and because exile is in-between, his journey can be a two-directional movement. Furthermore, sometimes journey itself becomes the heart of the matter and going is chosen to arriving. The exile is always on the road. He may wander the world but always end up in the same place, because he carries with him, in his mind, his past and the village, city or country from which he has escaped physically but can never escape psychologically.

Exile can afford an experience of diversity and lead to an awakening to heterogeneity and the basic connection between self and others. Therefore, exile can offer significant creative possibilities. *"He can also live a 'double exteriority' for he or she belongs to two cultures without identifying wholly with either, so the exile does not want one place to be 'like' another."* (Weiss, 1993, 13) Whereas he can engage in a cross-cultural dialogue and through that dialogue he can affirm both his uniqueness and the interrelationship between himself and others. Exile inevitably entails attitudes and modes of cross-cultural perception, encounter, and communication, and as suggested, there are many possibilities for response.

Before moving on to the main character of the novel, a close look at Naipaul himself can also help us find some correlations between him and his character Singh.

To begin with, “*he is a person ‘on the margins’ by inheritance and choice.*” (Weiss, 1993, 16) V.S. Naipaul, like his native land Trinidad, the former British colony, is both in and out of English world, both included in and excluded from it by a combination of inheritance and history. He is “*in between his colonial identity and his aspirations to become a metropolitan writer.*” (V.S.Naipaul, Jasmine, 29) Like other colonials, Naipaul is marginalized through the ideology and myths of Englishness, and through this and other experiences he learns to see as an exile. The split between exiled self and others is treated in its darkest aspects in the novels of the 1960s, *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion* and *The Mimic Men*, but this split is inherent to the point of view, situations, and sensibility of many of Naipaul's essays and novels. “*The threat of breakdown, a deepening fissure within the self and between self and others, looms as a possibility in An Area of Darkness, The Mimic Men, In a Free State, Guerrillas, A Bend in the River, Finding the Center, and The Enigma of Arrival.*” (Weiss, 1993, 11)

For him, exile is more than an encounter; it is a manner of perception, more basic than these modes, that involves seeing one entity through the lens of another entity, one culture through another culture, the self through others who are strangers. The perception operates in two directions: the exile understands the self through the lens of strangers, and understands strangers through the lens of the exiled self. Naipaul understands colonial Trinidadian society partly through the lens of metropolitan English society, and colonial and postcolonial societies partly through the lens of Trinidadian society. For Naipaul, “*exile turns into a journey and testing of the limits of understanding and creativity. Exile, then, as an experience of not-belonging and as a manner of perception and encounter informs Naipaul's works, variously shaping their characters, themes, narration, and views of the world.*” (Weiss, 1993, 15)

The split identity of the exile and the associating split in colonial and postcolonial societies; the trauma of developing societies and the myths that are

engendered by that trauma; the relationship between observer and writer are foreshadowed in Naipaul's Works.

His sense of 'self-defilement' informs Naipaul's novels of the mid-1960s, *The Mimic Men* and *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion*. These books, which grow out of the creative impulse of exile, express exile as a division and an alienation: fragmentation and isolation, a sense of futility, and the absence of belonging to a meaning-giving community and society." (Weiss, 1993, 88)

Even though exile and home are linked to places, they are more precisely experiences of absence and presence and phenomenological constructs of places. This real world, or imagined home, is not exactly England but a construct of it, a collective, colonial fantasy of the metropolis, the centre to which all things from the colonies gravitate; it is the idealized and modern world. It is a Utopia.

As the title of the novel *The Mimic Men* suggests, Singh, the narrator, "*tells the story of a false relationship between self and others in which the identity of the self is masked or distorted or rendered invisible by imitation.*" (Weiss, 1993, 103) The mimic men of the colony have a divided sensibility and a divided social identity, and Singh, the colonial in exile in metropolis is doubly divided in his relation to other colonials and to the citizens of the metropolis. "*Divided by his attraction to and repulsion from both the colony and the metropolis, and by aestheticism on the one hand and nihilism on the other, Singh is paralyzed. He arrives at a dead end.*" (Weiss, 1993, 103) For him, the only way out can be found through a new way of looking; the possible solution to the problems of decolonization requires, among other things, a change in the mind of former colonial people. "*If in nothing else, by writing his memoirs, Singh begins a long reflection on self and society that is the prerequisite for this.*" (Weiss, 1993, 103) In contrast, Karagoz considers Singh's writing experience from another perspective in his article and writes "*Singh cannot find any resolution and static mood even though he strives to reach relief and permanence through his activity of writing memoirs...*" (Karagoz, 2014, 44)

The novel grows out of and shaped by the author's experience of exile as fragmentation, one of whose symbols is the break-up or wreck of the voyager's ship.

I thought I should preserve the photograph. But I left it where I had found it. I thought: let it not happen to me. Death? But that comes to all. Well, then, let me leave more behind. Let my relics be honoured. Let me not be mocked. But even as I tried to put words to what I felt, I knew that my own journey, scarcely begun, had ended in the shipwreck which all my life I had sought to avoid. (The Mimic Men, 9)

The novel tells a story of exile, is about the absence of belonging to a meaningful community of others. Ralph Singh is a political exile from the Caribbean island Isabella and an intellectual exile from his youthful, colonial vision of the metropolis as centre of the world. *“So this present residence in London, which I suppose can be called exile”* (The Mimic Men, 177) But who or what is the reason of his exile? Why does he see London as an exile and a punishment now although this metropolis has always been the centre of the universe for him in his past? *“The novel conveys aspects of exile as alienation and fragmentation partly through an ironic interplay with literary and mythic discourses such as the story of Robinson Crusoe.”* (Weiss, 1993, 18)

Singh's ambivalence regarding his personality is manifested as follows:

As though the personality, for all its byways and wilful deviations, all its seeming inconsistencies, does not hang together. There are certain states into which, during periods of stress, we imperceptibly sink; it is only during the climb back up that we can see how far, for all the continuing consciousness of wholeness and sanity, we had become distorted. Coming to London ... I had tried to give myself a personality. It was something I had tried more than once before, and waited for the response in the eyes of others. But now I no longer knew what I was; ... I had once dismissed as shipwreck. (The Mimic Men, 22)

He experiences a crisis about finding out who or what he really is and his self-image starts to shatter and sink. Karagoz touches this issue as regards identity problem in the novel and claims “*the image of 'shipwreck' is used several times in the novel so as to stand for Singh's fragmentation and anxiety becoming visible due to the fleeting and ephemeral trait of his identity...*” (2014, 42) In the novel, Singh compares his life on colonial Isabella to a shipwreck, and his life in England to “*the greater shipwreck*”. Karagoz explains Naipaul's usage of the image as “*The writer deliberately turns to the image of “shipwreck” in order to insinuate Singh's sense of displacement and disorder...*” (2014, 43) Singh has serious and dramatic problems of dislocation and homelessness and he identifies himself with the image. What is strange here that both Naipaul himself and his character Singh leave their islands, Trinidad and Isabella for another greater island, Britain.

Shipwreck: I have used this word before. With my island background, it was the word that always came to me. And this was what I felt I had encountered again in the great city: this feeling of being adrift, a cell of perception, little more, that might be altered, if only fleetingly, by any encounter. (The Mimic Men, 22)

His small hotel room in the attic becomes his island and just like an island's loneliness on the ocean, he is totally alone without any connection with the main land. Somehow Singh is destined to be alone, adrift and isolated.

... just four months later, standing in the attic of a boarding-house called a private hotel in the Kensington High Street area, holding a photograph of a girl and praying for a little bit of immortality, a prophylactic against the greater disorder, the greater shipwreck that had come to me already. (The Mimic Men, 129)

In fact, choosing exile and being forcibly exiled are not the same, and later in the novel, this distinction becomes less clear. Singh is exiled from Isabella, his West

Indian island home, because of his political views and his party's failures, but he has an exile's mentality long before he is put on a plane for London. His departure fulfils a wish and continues a flight from the colony motivated by a long history of empire. To what extent and why does any person choose exile? That is a significant question to answer and Singh answers this question as such. *"I could not, like so many of my fellow exiles, live in a suburban semi-detached house; I could not pretend even to myself to be part of a community or to be putting down roots."* (The Mimic Men, 11)

For Singh, exile begins in his colonial inheritance and the many flights of exiles before him from colony to metropolis. He equates exile, being a stranger among others, with personal liberty. *"One foot in one country, the other foot in another"* This experience of liberty and the sense of specialness that it can engender is a prime appeal of exile.

So this present residence in London, which I suppose can be called exile, has turned out to be the most fruitful. ... I thought I would stay in a hotel in the country. I had never done this before, in England or anywhere else; but after recent events the conviction was strong that I was again in a well-organized country. I made no inquiries. I simply chose a town I had visited as a student in a British Council party. My imagination, feeding on the words 'country' and 'hotel', created pictures of gardens and tranquillity, coolness and solitude, twittering hedgerows and morning walks, spacious rooms and antique reverences. They were what I required. (The Mimic Men, 177)

But does he really find what he requires? Even if he finds this tranquillity and solitude, is he able to utilize these in order to recreate his distracted and fragmented identity? Singh experiences exile or alienation as an internal state, as a division between ideas and experience. *"The novel conveys the destructive aspects of the experience of exile partly through ironic allusions to literary and mythic structures: Robinson Crusoe for The Mimic Men."* (Weiss, 1993, 89) The novel demythologizes the colonial image of the metropolis, yet in its place it constructs other

complementary, dualistic images of exile and home. In the absence of a community of others and of alternatives for action, the protagonist of *The Mimic Men* is all alone.

I could not pretend even to myself to be part of a community or to be putting down roots. I prefer the freedom of my far-out suburban hotel, the absence of responsibility; I like the feeling of impermanence. I am surrounded by houses like those in the photograph I studied in Mr Shylock's attic, and that impulse of sentimentality embarrasses me. I scarcely see those houses now and never think of the people who live in them. I no longer seek to and beauty in the lives of the mean and the oppressed. Hate oppression; fear the oppressed. (The Mimic Men, 11-12)

Naipaul uses a very important phrase in the above quotation, "*the absence responsibility*". Singh leaves his island for his university education and goes to Britain but he cannot be a successful student; he gets married but cannot be a successful husband; he happens to be a politician but again not a successful one. This absence of responsibility may most probably be considered the reason of all his failures in all aspects and phases of his life.

Through his journeys, Singh experiences the process of estrangement and tries to escape his colonial past but whatever he does or wherever he goes, his past follows him. He tries to escape into fantasy and nihilism whereas he acquires a mentality that the colonial exile carries with him to the metropolis and to other parts of the world. As a result of his escape, there occurs a splitting of self and the outer world because exile is a condition of absence that cannot be filled either by returning home or to a former identity, manner of perception, or way of thinking. For him, "*To leave India's sacred soil, to cross the 'black water,' was considered an act of self-defilement.*" (Weiss, 1993, 11) Furthermore, "*To be a colonial is already to be an exile, for by definition a colony is a satellite, something ancillary; the colonial lives his unnecessary life in an unnecessary land.*" (Weiss, 1993, 87) A colonial's experience of exile becomes a kind of ridiculousness in the eyes of natives, yet surprisingly metropolis simultaneously becomes the exile's home; "*it is the*

*omphalos, the sacred navel of the world*” (Weiss, 1993, 88) but due to destructive aspects of life in the metropolis, *“along with disillusionment comes a sense of exile as deracination and fragmentation, and the twentieth-century metropolis, once a magic centre, becomes for the colonial a disenchanting margin, a place of outcasts and automatons”* (Weiss, 1993, 89)

One of the destructive aspects of life in the metropolis for a colonized, whether he is an exile or expatriate, is the language barrier. He can never comprehend, internalise and use the language of the colonizer thoroughly and he is doomed to be silenced. At this point, the exile becomes also a subaltern and Spivak’s question *“Can the subaltern speak?”* becomes even more difficult to answer. He can neither use his own native language nor the language spoken around him. Daily communication can somehow be settled but it is never enough to express unique opinions and emotions. Surprisingly the exile can focus on his own native language and realise the beauty of it when he is away and cannot use it.

In London I had no guide. There was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistencies or inconsistencies. It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship. (The Mimic Men, 18)

The sense of exile does not begin during the colonial's voyage to the big city, it begins *“in language and the history that a language both records and distorts incongruous identity must always be explained to others.”* (Weiss, 1993, 90) And although there is a sense of wasted life, cast out from a community of others, Singh’s situation has some advantages too. For instance, he experiences a sense of difference and harmony; this is perhaps the positive outcome of exile as an intercultural process. By maintaining a hold on both the 'inner' and 'outer' perspectives, he transforms the 'fragmented consciousness' into an artistic advantage, rather than a crippling factor and he manages to transform his experience of isolation,



fragmentation, and withdrawal into aestheticism and fantasy. He dwells in an aesthetic withdrawal and a romance of history. He creates stories of exile, alienation, and an absence of a meaningful community of others and it is necessary to remember that Ralph Singh is both a political exile from a postcolonial island Isabella and an intellectual exile from his youthful, colonial vision of the metropolis which has always been the centre of the world for him.

*"The revolution takes place in the mind"* says Yoshikawa (1987, 320). For the exile, a similar revolution in the mind must take place to unify the self and construct a sense of society and home. This involves seeing in a new way. A new syncretistic identity must evolve, but that identity cannot evolve in isolation, without a new social context. As a result of evolution, Ranjit Kripalsingh becomes Ralph Singh.

I broke Kripalsingh into two, correctly reviving an ancient fracture, as I felt; gave myself the further name of Ralph; and signed myself R. R. K. Singh. At school I was known as Ralph Singh. The name Ralph I chose for the sake of the initial, which was also that of my real name. In this way I felt I mitigated the fantasy or deception; and it helped in school reports, where I was simply *Singh R.* (The Mimic Men, 69)

For Singh, neither his former West Indian colony nor the English metropolis can be a real home but in order to be at home, or at least in a place like home, Singh, the exile, must create a construct of home by seeing in a way that is both familiar and new although he does not share any deep connection with anybody.

A man, I suppose, fights only when he hopes, when he has a vision of order, when he feels strongly there is some connection between the earth on which he walks and himself. But there was my vision of a disorder which it was beyond any one man to put right. There was my sense of wrongness, beginning with the stillness of that morning of return when I looked out on the slave island and tried to pretend it was mine. There was my sense of intrusion which deepened as I felt my power to be more and more a matter of

words. So defiantly, in my mind, I asserted my character as intruder, the picturesque Asiatic born for other landscapes. (The Mimic Men, 149)

Singh, a middle-aged, East Indian-West Indian businessman and politician, disillusioned and restless, torn between past and present and constructs of exile and home, recounts the memoirs of his life on Isabella (once a British colony), his career and exile in England. Throughout his recollections, but especially in the novel's final pages, Singh contemplates his exile from the colony and bitter withdrawal from metropolitan English society, which he once eagerly looked to as the centre of the "real world" beyond the shipwreck of his life on Isabella. Ironically, England becomes for Singh the "*greater shipwreck*". He "*float[s] rather than live[s], suspended in memories, doubts, negations. He is "adrift" and incomplete: He ceases to be a "whole person" "trapped into fixed, flat postures," their personalities "divided bewilderingly into compartments"* (Naipaul, 1984, 16). Through him, *The Mimic Men* portrays the emptiness of the exile's shipwreck, of being without a society because the colony is inherently flawed too. Neither is the metropolis a solution; London and England are the greater disorder, they are the final emptiness in Singh's fragmented life.

There is a discrepancy between Singh's vision and actuality and he lives like a man in a cage in London. He is an escape from the perceived vulgarity and rabble of the metropolis. Singh the exile, the alienated man, observes the Londoners and London beyond his hotel room. He is buffeted by a "ceaseless roar of traffic" and assaulted by the "tainted air." Singh's life in London inverts his dream of nurture and security, London, the "two-dimensional" city, is not exactly a place, but a construct that grows out of and symbolizes Singh's exile; therefore, his exile is not just in a physical place; it is a place in his mind as well. He maps this latter, "inner" place of exile onto London, the city of chaos and ruin at which he always arrives. "*For those who lose, and nearly everyone in the end loses, there is only one course: flight. Flight to the greater disorder, the final emptiness: London and the home counties.*" (The Mimic Men, 10)

Therefore, Singh's escape from the colony does not lead to involvement in a new community or society, but rather into the bondage of aloneness and nihilism from which he seeks to extract himself if only through the self-examination of autobiography. He can find no alternative to the fragmentation and disorder of the colony and the fragmentation and orderly emptiness of the metropolis; his mind turns to myths of ordering and building a pastoral withdrawal. His restlessness and malaise are Caribbean or West Indian, not British.

In his attic, after a devastating short life, at his forties, he anchors to literature and starts to write his autobiography. This is a quiet life which provides him reconciliation with himself after his crazy thirties. Although Naipaul does not hint any information about Singh's literary skills, it can be inferred that his writing journey is most probably a failure in the end like his business and political adventures. Why does Singh choose such a silent and isolated life in London? Writing or art may be just another tool for him in his quest for his self. But can his autobiography be accepted as a form of art? Probably not. Which language does he use to write? As he mimics the colonialist throughout his life, he may be using the colonial's language, English, yet the reader cannot know the answer of this question definitely. Considering his affair with Stella and her interest in the book titled *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Singh may not be a total loser but he may also be just worse. In exile, with an identity divided between colony and metropolis, Singh, just as he has idealized the "real world" beyond Isabella, constructs a counterweight romance of the Arcadian island world he has left behind.

Singh's affairs and relationships also illustrate the exile's isolation, his split or fragmented identity. He experiences an exile's disjunction between ideas and actions, constructs and actuality. For example, "*sex and the suit symbolize aspects of his new identity that he has yet to assimilate; for him, breasts signify the centre, home, the time before the shipwreck of his exile's life.*" (Weiss, 1993, 11) By his sexual affairs, he may also feel like taking his ancestor's revenge from the colonizer. His authentic, genuine and indigenous body becomes his weapon for counter-colonization and just like the colonizers' conquests of his 'mother's land, he conquers female bodies in

Britain. Because “*Sexuality, additionally, and eroticism were integral discourses in the colonial dialogue, symbolizing power and control.*” (Salamone, 2010, 142) He physically both exploits and is exploited and it is again a two-directional journey and adventure for him.

I had spent all my life among women; I could not conceive of an existence away from them or their influence. Perhaps the relationship into which I had fallen with Lieni was sufficient; perhaps all else was perversion. Intimacy: the word holds the horror. I could have stayed for ever at a woman’s breasts, if they were full and had a hint of a weight that required support. (The Mimic Men, 21)

Through these symbols, Singh's dream indicates a dependency that is an analogy of the dependency of the colony on the 'mother country.' “*Like his fetish for women's breasts, his reverie of the cocoa estate expresses his need for nurturing and security and creates a construct of home in contrast with his constructs of exile where he describes London as a mechanical and godless city.*” (Weiss, 1993, 98)

Still, he prefers and choses to live in this mechanical and godless city instead of making another move to find a better place for himself. Living in the attic seems more appealing to him than being on the road again. His exhaustion is not an excuse for him; he just does not want to lose his touch with the heart of colonial empire even if he sincerely knows that he will never be able to touch it. He physically exists in the metropolis but is this kind of existence enough for him? What about psychological, mental, intellectual and spiritual contacts with other people? Or is this exile just an intellectual and artistic frenzy for Singh? The novel ends by leaving numerous questions in the readers’ minds and Naipaul looks like enjoying his readers’ questions more than his own or their possible answers.

## 2.2 Exile in “*Things Fall Apart*”

This seemingly short novel is considered Achebe’s most spectacular and ground breaking work which may also be viewed as a masterpiece in African and especially in Nigerian Literature. “‘*Things Fall Apart*’ helped create the Nigerian literary renaissance of the 1960s. Achebe’s most famous novel brilliantly portrays the impact of colonialism on a traditional Nigerian village at the turn of the century.” (Things Fall Apart, Everyman’s Library, Synopsis) This postcolonial novel becomes the foundation stone for African literature and a source to be inspired by young African writers.

The novel is in two parts and twenty-five chapters. The first part is about the rise of its protagonist and the second part is about his fall. “*It establishes a characteristic tonality: simplification through intensity (a Yeatsian formula).*” (Bloom, 2010, 1) The novel mostly takes place in an African clan Umuofia in 1890s during the first physical contact between the black and white worlds. Umuofia is a group of nine villages on the lower Niger and a powerful clan, skilled in war and with a great population, proud traditions and advanced social institutions.

The novel’s hero Obi Okonkwo rises from nothing to a high position and epitomizes both the nobility and the rigidity of the traditional culture. Through hard work, he becomes a great man among his people unlike his loser father. He takes three wives in his father’s land and his barn is full of yams. He rules his family with an iron fist. One day, a neighbouring clan commits an offence against Umuofia. To avoid war, the offending clan gives Umuofia one virgin and one young boy. The girl is to become the offended party's new wife. The boy, whose name is Ikemefuna, is to be sacrificed, but not immediately. He lives in Umuofia for three years, and during that time he lives under Okonkwo's roof. He becomes like a part of Okonkwo's family. In particular, Nwoye, Okonkwo's oldest son, loves Ikemefuna like a brother. But eventually the Oracle calls for the boy's death and a group of men take

Ikemefuna away to kill him in the forest. Okonkwo, fearful of being perceived as soft-hearted and weak, participates in the boy's death. He does so despite the advice of the clan elders. Nwoye is spiritually broken by the event. Okonkwo is shaken as well, but he continues with his drive to become a lord of his clan. He is constantly disappointed by Nwoye, but he has great love for his daughter Ezinma, his child by his second wife Ekwefi. Ekwefi has born ten children, but only Ezinma has survived. She loves the girl fiercely. Ezinma has a bad health and she is sickly, and sometimes Ekwefi fears that Ezinma, too, will die. One night, the powerful Oracle of Umuofia brings Ezinma with her for a spiritual encounter with the earth goddess. Ekwefi follows the Oracle at a distance; fearing harm might come to her child. Okonkwo follows them, too. Later, during a funeral for one of the great men of the clan, Okonkwo's gun explodes and he accidentally kills the dead man's son. In accordance with Umuofia's law, Okonkwo and his family must be exiled for seven years.

Okonkwo bears the exile bitterly. Central to his beliefs is faith that a man masters his own destiny. But the accident and exile are proof that at times man cannot control his own fate, and Okonkwo is forced to start over again without the strength and energy of his youth. He flees with his family to Mbanto, his mother's homeland. There they are received by his mother's family, who treat them generously. His mother's family is headed by Uchendu, Okonkwo's uncle, a generous and wise old man. During Okonkwo's exile, the white man comes to both Umuofia and Mbanto. The missionaries arrive first, preaching a religion that seems mad and lunatic to the Igbo people. They win converts, but generally the converts are men of low rank or outcasts. However, with time, the new religion gains momentum and supporters. Nwoye becomes a convert too. When Okonkwo learns of Nwoye's conversion, he beats the boy and Nwoye leaves home.

Okonkwo returns to Umuofia to find the clan sadly changed. The church has won some converts, some of whom are fanatical and disrespectful of clan custom. Worse, the white man's government has come to Umuofia. The clan is no longer free to judge its own matters; a District Commissioner judges cases in ignorance. He is

backed by armed power. During a religious gathering, a convert unmasks one of the clan spirits. The offence is grave, and in response the clan decides that the church must no longer be allowed in Umuofia. They tear the building down. Soon afterward, the District Commissioner asks the leaders of the clan, Okonkwo among them, to come see him for a peaceful meeting. The leaders arrive, and are quickly seized. In prison, they are humiliated and beaten, and they are held until the clan pays a heavy fine. After releasing of the men, the clan calls a meeting to decide whether they will fight or try to live peacefully with the whites. Okonkwo wants war. During the meeting, court messengers come to order the men to break up their gathering. The clan meetings are the heart of Umuofia's government; all decisions are reached democratically, and an interference with this institution means the end of the last vestiges of Umuofia's independence. Okonkwo gets angry and kills the court messenger with one blow. The other court messengers escape, and because the other people of his clan did not seize them, Okonkwo understands that his people will not choose war. His act of resistance will not be followed by others. Embittered and grieving for the destruction of his people's independence, and fearing the humiliation of dying under white law, Okonkwo returns home and commits suicide by hanging himself.

The novel is described as follows by the publisher at the back cover of the book:

*Things Fall Apart* tells two intertwining stories, both centering on Okonkwo, a "strong man" of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first, a powerful fable of the immemorial conflict between the individual and society, traces Okonkwo's fall from grace with the tribal world. The second, as modern as the first is ancient, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world with the arrival of aggressive European missionaries. These perfectly harmonized twin dramas are informed by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul. (*Things Fall Apart*, 1971)

So the novel chronicles both the life of Okonkwo and the introduction of colonialism in Nigeria in the forms of religion, education and government. There is also a global feeling of fin de siècle which can be understood from the title of the novel inspired by W.B. Yeats' poem *The Second Coming*.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things Fall Apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

There are many aspects of the novel which can be discussed in detail as it conveys a multi-layered reading and analysis opportunities, yet the tracks of exile will be followed in order to present a unified and focused work.

Okonkwo's character and behaviours can be thoroughly understood only if his relation with and his opinions of his father Unoka are surveyed. His father was a loser in Okonkwo's eyes because he was always in debt and he preferred music to war. "*He was in fact a coward and could not bear the sight of blood.*" (Things Fall Apart, 2) Therefore, "*Okonkwo was ashamed of him*" (Things Fall Apart, 2) and he tried to be a man just the opposite of his father. As he never really liked, loved and admired his father, he was set apart from his father and this may be the first sign of his psychological exile. "*It would not be excessive to regard Okonkwo as a brutal person, judged pragmatically, but that would be misleading: he is not brutal by nature, but only by his compulsion not to repeat his father's life.*" (Bloom, 2010, 2) He wanted to live away from his father and to be himself which can be achieved only by being independent. Although children belong to father in Umuofia, Okonkwo never felt like himself belonging to his father neither during his childhood nor in his adolescence. In addition, "*his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and weakness.*" (Things Fall Apart, 4)



It can be inferred from the problematic relation between Okonkwo and his father that Okonkwo is not only psychologically but also mentally exiled from his father because his father's world view is based on spiritual and artistic tenets. On the other hand, Okonkwo needs a strong and ruling father figure in a tribal society where highly respected titles are achieved only through material success in life. "*In Okonkwo's world, the ignominious predicament of his father, Unoka, simultaneously torments and propels him towards achieving his highest ambitions in life.*" (Nyame, 2010, 9) As Okonkwo does not feel any sense of belonging to his father's family, he fights to create his own destiny and be a prosperous self-made man as a result of his first psychological and mental exile.

Although Okonkwo's father is depicted by Achebe as a marginal figure in a tribal society; looking at the tribal world from Unoko's perspective maybe insightful. Why is he different and marginal? Why is he fond of music and why does hedonism play an important role in his life? As he is not an intellectual, he is not exposed to Said's understanding of an exiled mind. Still he is an inner exile because there are invisible walls between him and his clan. Despite his being scorned and pitied by his clan, he finds peace and tranquillity in music and idleness, not in hardworking, wrestling or wars. He plays his instrument for joy instead of waving his machete for war. He lives his life day by day without any domestic and tribal responsibilities as if there is no tomorrow at all. He is a carefree man and a representative of Carpe Diem. He has a family and children, yet he acts like a single soul. He exiles himself from his own society within his tribe's territory by being and living different. He is the marginal and stranger within.

Before moving on, it would be wise to have a quick look at the Igbo people by quoting the writer of the book. "*The Igbo have always lived in a world of continual struggle, motion and change – a feature conspicuous in the tautness, overreach and torsion of their art; it is like a tightrope walk, a hairbreadth brush with the boundaries of anarchy.*" (Achebe, 2000, 18) Ibo society is full of contradictions and Okonkwo's genuine position in relation to his society is significant and he "... is the personification of the cultural ambiguity of the Igbo

*people.*” (Nnoromele, 2010, 41) Igbo’s understanding of the world cannot be explained conveniently by using Western terminology and “... *for the Igbos, a hero must lead a life of self-contradiction; and Okonkwo was one primary example.*” (Nnoromele, 2010, 45) As a result of this ambiguity and contradiction, the use of language and the art of communication are highly respected in Igbo society and mostly proverbs constitute the heart of their conversations. For these reasons, Achebe “*seeks to reproduce the structure of native discourse within an alien language*” (Snyder, 2010, 185) and navigates between indigenous and foreign viewpoints.

Okonkwo’s psychological and physical exiles will be analysed but now it is time to focus on Ikemefuna who is the first embodiment of Exile. Due to his father’s crime, he was taken away from his clan and exiled to Umuofia to be killed. He is only fifteen and “*As for the boy himself, he was terribly afraid. He could not understand what was happening to him or what he had done.*” (Things Fall Apart, 4) Ikemefuna is a reluctant exile here and not in search of any deeper meaning of life. He is simply taken away from his home by force as a payback and has to obey the clan’s rules in the form of banishment. His will is not a matter of question. Moreover, he is not at an age to comprehend his situation and “... *he had been too surprised to weep.*” (Things Fall Apart, 4)

Ikemefuna is physically free at his new home but mentally paralyzed.

At first Ikemefuna was very much afraid. Once or twice he tried to run away, but he did not know where to begin. He thought of his mother and his three-year-old sister and wept bitterly. Nwoye's mother was very kind to him and treated him as one of her own children. But all he said was: "When shall I go home?". (Things Fall Apart, 8)

As can be deduced from these sentences, Ikemefuna desperately misses his home and his family although he is treated very friendly and warm in Okonkwo’s house. Okonkwo too becomes very fond of Ikemefuna like his son Nwoye but unlike Nwoye, he knows the secret story of Ikemefuna’s arrival and inevitable final of his

innocent life. As time passes by, *“Ikemefuna had begun to feel like a member of Okonkwo’s family. He still thought about his mother and his three year old sister, and he had moments of sadness and depression.”* (Things Fall Apart, 10) These strong and permanent emotions of "sadness" and "depression" become an exile’s daily meal. Although *“The New Yam Festival seemed to him to be a much bigger event here than in his own village, a place which was already becoming remote and vague in his imagination”* (Things Fall Apart, 11), his village and his memories never totally disappear from his mind.

For three years Ikemefuna lived in Okonkwo's household and the elders of Umuofia seemed to have forgotten about him. He grew rapidly like a yam tendril in the rainy season, and was full of the sap of life. He had become wholly absorbed into his new family. He was like an elder brother to Nwoye. (Things Fall Apart, 17)

There is a key word here which clearly explains the psychological and the physical conditions of an exile, this magical word is ‘*like*’. Every feeling or every action is like something else. This being of ‘*like*’ is the mentality of an exile. He has to mimic and try to be different. That is the reason of his never ending yearnings or pains. Ikemefuna lives in an illusion of happiness in Okonkwo’s compound and the only complete reality is his inevitable death.

The next day a group of elders from all the nine villages of Umuofia came to Okonkwo's house ... Later in the day he called Ikemefuna and told him that he was to be taken home the next day. Nwoye overheard it and burst into tears, whereupon his father beat him heavily. As for Ikemefuna, he was at a loss. His own home had gradually become very faint and distant. He still missed his mother and his sister and would be very glad to see them. But somehow he knew he was not going to see them. (Things Fall Apart, 18)

The sense of home and exile dissolve and merge in his new condition and begin to trust his feelings rather than his reason. He feels that his end is near and this time he is exiled to death from life but does not expect to be murdered by someone whom he calls 'father'. Maybe it is better to be killed by someone beloved instead of a stranger but this is a question without an answer. He experiences an identity crisis for three years in Okonkwo's house and by this final strike, he acquires a solution which shows that his own will is not important and he has to obey his predetermined destiny. What is shocking and prophesizing about Ikemefuna's murder is explained by Nnoromele as "... *the death of Ikemefuna had no immediate impact on the Umuofian people. It was, however, definitely an apocalyptic step towards things that were yet to come.*" (Nnoromele, 2010, 47)

There is also another exiled character in the novel almost not mentioned at all. The little girl taken from the same village like Ikemefuna as a gift to the man whose wife had been killed. There are only a few sentences about her in the novel and the reader is left to wonder her destiny. Furthermore, it is not clearly indicated by the author in the novel why he prefers not to focus on her feelings or experiences at such a young age as an exiled character physically forced to be a wife of a completely stranger man in a completely stranger clan. The reader's questions about her are left hanging in the air.

Okonkwo's twofold exile creates the second phase in the novel. To begin with, his first crime is murdering Ikemefuna whom he loves like his own child and therefore he feels a deep and very strong sense of guilt. He smokes and drinks for relief and he cannot eat anything for three days. He is in a situation of utter silence, amnesia and loss. What's more, there is nothing to do at this time of the year and lacking a physical work increases his pain. His killing of Ikemefuna, although not a crime according to his clan's decision, can be considered the underlying reason of his psychological exile because he is mentally and spiritually cast out of his own clan long before he is physically sent away for another killing. He always tries to show the world that a man is in control of his own destiny

whereas these two bloody events totally shift his path in life and lead him astray. Okonkwo's close friend Obierika's utterances are meant to show Okonkwo a reality which he is afraid to confront.

"... let me tell you one thing, my friend. If I were you I would have stayed at home. What you have done will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families." "The Earth cannot punish me for obeying her messenger," Okonkwo said. "A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm." "That is true," Obierika agreed. "But if the Oracle said that my son should be killed I would neither dispute it nor be the one to do it." (Things Fall Apart, 22)

The only relief to overcome this guilty feeling is to talk and he tries to justify his position and his crime by mentioning about the Oracle and his innocence in obeying the decision which he himself had not taken. On the other hand, he desperately regrets his action deep in his heart. Here, Obierika must also be mentioned because he symbolizes thinking and questioning mind, he uses his reason in his actions or in his decisions. He is not like Okonkwo as he questions the authority.

"Sometimes I wish I had not taken the ozo title," said Obierika. "It wounds my heart to see these young men killing palm trees in the name of tapping." "It is so indeed," Okonkwo agreed. "But the law of the land must be obeyed." "I don't know how we got that law," said Obierika. "In many other clans a man of title is not forbidden to climb the palm tree. Here we say he cannot climb the tall tree but he can tap the short ones standing on the ground. (Things Fall Apart, 23)

Obierika's eldest brother is also aware of the relativity of the truth and the superficiality of the local customs. From this point of view, a person who is not fitted to his people in his own land and not thinking parallel to them may be exile anywhere; home or abroad or another clan are not different to him.

"All their customs are upside-down. ... "But what is good in one place is bad in another place. In Umunso they do not bargain at all, not even with broomsticks. The suitor just goes on bringing bags of cowries until his in-laws tell him to stop. It is a bad custom because it always leads to a quarrel." "The world is large," said Okonkwo. "I have even heard that in some tribes a man's children belong to his wife and her family." "That cannot be," said Machi. (Things Fall Apart, 24)

Right after the above sentences, there is the first introduction of the concept of whiteness and the white man in the novel by referring the crippled black man. Whiteness is a disease and sickness for them and once again, the difference in point of views and the reciprocity of the virtues are stressed.

"It is like the story of white men who, they say, are white like this piece of chalk," said Obierika. He held up a piece of chalk, which every man kept in his obi and with which his guests drew lines on the floor before they ate kola nuts. "And these white men, they say, have no toes." "And have you never seen them?" asked Machi. "Have you?" asked Obierika. "One of them passes here frequently," said Machi. "His name is Amadi." Those who knew Amadi laughed. He was a leper, and the polite name for leprosy was "the white skin." (Things Fall Apart, 24)

Okonkwo is not only a man of physical strength, but also a spiritual man chosen to represent his clan in the tribal court as one of the nine Egwugwus in Umuofia. Yet, was he chosen for his mighty power or his wit is not clear. Being an Egwugwu is a symbol for him and it shows his rank in his own society. Unlike his friend Obierika, he has not got a questioning mind and the clan's rules maintain the ultimate priority for him. He defends his clan's orders without knowing what is expecting him in the future. He gradually reaches the threshold in his life and during a funeral he accidentally kills the dead man's sixteen year old son. What is ironic here is that he always condemns female attitudes and ignores them but he himself commits a 'Female' crime. It is like a sacred revenge of the mother goddess. His

being sent to exile from his fatherland due to a female crime carries a tragic meaning in double.

In the centre of the crowd a boy lay in a pool of blood. It was the dead man's sixteen- year-old son, who with his brothers and half-brothers had been dancing the traditional farewell to their father. Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart. The confusion that followed was without parallel in the tradition of Umuofia. Violent deaths were frequent, but nothing like this had ever happened. The only course open to Okonkwo was to flee from the clan. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman, and a man who committed it must flee from the land. The crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female, because it had been inadvertent. He could return to the clan after seven years. (Things Fall Apart, 41)

Okonkwo had been raised in his father's land and although had never envied him, he had strong ties with his father's clan. Therefore, his exile to his long passed away mother's land due to a female crime increases his tragedy. His whole compound is destroyed by his close male friends due to the customs and his whole life dissolves right in front of his own eyes. Still, he is not the one to question but Obierika ponders on.

Obierika was a man who thought about things. When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend's calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. ... If the clan did not exact punishment for an offence against the great goddess, her wrath was loosed on all the land and not just on the offender. As the elders said, if one finger brought oil it soiled the others. (Things Fall Apart, 41)

This tragic scene is the end of Part One of the novel and Part Two starts with Okonkwo's settling down in his mother's land Mbanta by the help of his mother's kinsmen, after having completely lost all his property and also his titles back in his old clan. He and his family dramatically feel all the psychological pains and troubles of exile. "*He was taking his family of three wives and their children to seek refuge in his motherland.*" (Things Fall Apart, 43) On the other hand, his exile is not shameful according to his relatives in Mbanta because his crime is a 'female ochu' as pronounced by his uncle Uchendu. Therefore, Okonkwo is not physically in a very desperate position as his relatives help them.

Okonkwo was given a plot of ground on which to build his compound, and two or three pieces of land on which to farm during the coming planting season. With the help of his mother's kinsmen he built himself an obi and three huts for his wives. He then installed his personal god and the symbols of his departed fathers. Each of Uchendu's five sons contributed three hundred seed-yams to enable their cousin to plant a farm, for as soon as the first rain came farming would begin. (Things Fall Apart, 43)

Their exile may also be regarded as a rebirth in a new land because leaving everything behind and starting a new life has a positive and refreshing effect on them too. Nature encourages them to overcome their sense of loneliness and isolation. As long as they hold onto each other, they can survive this catastrophe and this new territory may help them grow bigger and wiser.

Okonkwo and his family worked very hard to plant a new farm. But it was like beginning life anew without the vigour and enthusiasm of youth, like learning to become left-handed in old age. Work no longer had for him the pleasure it used to have, and when there was no work to do he sat in a silent half-sleep. (Things Fall Apart, 43)

His losing of his social status, titles and respect in Umuofia affects Okonkwo more than being physically banished from his environment and being sent to exile even if for a limited period of seven years. Here, the duration of his exile may have a



symbolical importance because according to Genesis, the earth was created in seven days and then there is a new beginning. Therefore, seven years is considered an enough period for him to cleanse from his sins and restart his life, yet to restart everything at the age of forty is not as easy as it seems. Things not only fall apart but also become harder and harder as days and years go by.

His life had been ruled by a great passion--to become one of the lords of the clan. That had been his life-spring. And he had all but achieved it. Then everything had been broken. He had been cast out of his clan like a fish onto a dry, sandy beach, panting. Clearly his personal god or chi was not made for great things. A man could not rise beyond the destiny of his chi. The saying of the elders was not true--that if a man said yea his chi also affirmed. Here was a man whose chi said nay despite his own affirmation. (Things Fall Apart, 43)

Apart from his bad luck, he is welcomed warm-heartedly in his mother's land Mbanta by his kinsmen because first of all, his uncle is a very wise and understanding person. He does not blame, criticize, despise or ignore Okonkwo and he always tries to explain to his own people that life is full of surprises and anything can happen anytime, therefore man must be prepared for everything but also submit to his fate. One day he can be a prince but the other day he can be a pauper. In addition, he tries to educate Okonkwo and the younger generation in Mbanta by praising the irreplaceable importance of mother figure. For him, Okonkwo is still a child because he is not aware of the holy tie between a mother figure and the earth goddess.

"Why is Okonkwo with us today? This is not his clan. We are only his mother's kinsmen. He does not belong here. He is an **exile**, condemned for seven years to live in a strange land. And so he is bowed with grief. ... Be careful or you may displease the dead. Your duty is to comfort your wives and children and take them back to your fatherland after seven years. But if you allow sorrow to weigh you down and kill you they will all die in **exile**."

He paused for a long while. "These are now your kinsmen." (Things Fall Apart, 44)

The above quotation is a little bit long but it is compulsory to get the gist of perception of exile in Mbanta and to show the solution for this sad and bitter experience. The word "exile" has been highlighted as it is used twice and there is also a distinction between these repeated words, one signifies to live in exile and the other to die in exile. Okonkwo's situation is temporary but it could be worse and he could even die in exile. Although nobody's life expectancy is certain, there is hope for him to return to his father land sooner or later. Moreover, Okonkwo has never pondered on his mother's role in his existence but due to this exile, he is reminded of his mother and where he can really find peace, love and tolerance. Life is not only fighting and killing but also loving and caring. Only if he lives a harmonious and balanced life, he can truly find the meaning of life and existence.

There is a comparison made by Uchendu between past and present because he sees that everything is different than before. Travelling was more difficult in the past but people had friends in different clans, they were more social ignoring the distances and isolation was not a word in their vocabulary. Yet, people are more introvert now, loneliness and fear of strangers become widespread notions and Uchendu declares his ideas during Obierika's visit to Okonkwo by saying: *"I knew your father, Iweka. He was a great man. He had many friends here and came to see them quite often. Those were good days when a man had friends in distant clans. Your generation does not know that. You stay at home, afraid of your next-door neighbour. Even a man's motherland is strange to him nowadays."* (Things Fall Apart, 45) According to him, there is no need to be sent away to be an exile, exile is a feeling and a mental condition and when the contact with other people is lost, even in your own clan, you become an exile.

Then, the narrator focuses on the details of Abame clan's wipe-out story and the first bloody contradiction between the locals and the new comers, missionaries. The people of Abame are all massacred and this may be another form of exile. After

this tragic event in Abame, the missionaries arrive to Umuofia when Okonkwo is away. On the other hand, he is not completely absent in this new situation as his son Nwoye becomes one of the first converts.

When nearly two years later Obierika paid another visit to his friend in exile the circumstances were less happy. The missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. ... What moved Obierika to visit Okonkwo was the sudden appearance of the latter's son, Nwoye, among the missionaries in Umuofia. "What are you doing here?" Obierika had asked when after many difficulties the missionaries had allowed him to speak to the boy. "I am one of them," replied Nwoye. "How is your father?" Obierika asked, not knowing what else to say. "I don't know. He is not my father," said Nwoye, unhappily. (Things Fall Apart, 47)

Achebe explains the reasons and results of the above mentioned situation problematic in his own non-fictional sentences in his book *"Home and Exile"*.

Let us imagine that someone has come along to take my land from me. We would not expect him to say he is doing it because of his greed, or because he is stronger than I. Such a confession would brand him as a scoundrel and a bully. So he hires a story-teller with a lot of imagination to make up a more appropriate story which might say, for example that the land in question could not be mine because I had shown no aptitude to cultivate it properly for maximum productivity and profitability. It might go on to say that the reason for my inefficiency is my very low I.Q. and explain that my brain had stopped growing at the age of ten. (Achebe, 2000, 40)

Different beliefs, traditions and customs are inevitably going to create problems between these two societies but these problems are just postponed due to tolerance and ignorance of both party. Moreover, there is still no Okonkwo and Reverend James Smith in the scene who are both strict and brutal in their actions. In addition both the leaders of the clan and Mr. Brown hesitate to clash with each other.

But Nwoye's accepting new religion and becoming a Christian enrages Okonkwo and his family's falling apart continues. He is left alone by his own son and his exile shifts into a new path. The following sentences clearly express Okonkwo's emotions.

... How else could he explain his great misfortune and exile and now his despicable son's behaviour? Now that he had time to think of it, his son's crime stood out in its stark enormity. ... Okonkwo felt a cold shudder run through him at the terrible prospect, like the prospect of annihilation. He saw himself and his fathers crowding round their ancestral shrine waiting in vain for worship and sacrifice and finding nothing but ashes of bygone days, and his children the while praying to the white man's god. If such a thing were ever to happen, he, Okonkwo, would wipe them off the face of the earth. (Things Fall Apart, 50)

Looking at the new situation from the suppressed and silenced minority's point of view in the clan creates an alternative perception of the new religion. Umuofia is ruled by a form democracy but it still has dogmatic customs and prejudices regarding twins, slaves and outcast. It is not a society free of exile and many people suffer in their world as well. In contrast to their ancestral beliefs, the new religion offers them salvation and freedom. They are respected and considered equal with other people, black or white. To be regarded as a human being and an individual creates frenzy in their hearts and the number of converts gradually increases.

These outcasts, or *osu*, seeing that the new religion welcomed twins and such abominations, thought that it was possible that they would also be received. And so one Sunday two of them went into the church. ... The whole church raised a protest and was about to drive these people out, when Mr. Kiaga stopped them and began to explain. "Before God," he said, "there is no slave or free. We are all children of God and we must receive these our brothers." (Things Fall Apart, 51)

Okonkwo is in exile but manages to become an important and respected man in his new clan and he does not miss the chance of speaking his ideas out-loud. He has a supporting reason for his rage against the new religion because his own son turns his back to him and chooses to live with missionaries and converts. Yet, he is once again left alone and his words are not realized into action.

"Let us not reason like cowards," said Okonkwo. ... These people are daily pouring filth over us, and Okeke says we should pretend not to see." Okonkwo made a sound full of disgust. This was a womanly clan, he thought. Such a thing could never happen in his fatherland, Umuofia. ... Everybody in the assembly spoke, and in the end it was decided to ostracise the Christians. Okonkwo ground his teeth in disgust. (Things Fall Apart, 52)

Days pass one by one amidst crisis and Okonkwo's seven years of exile is about to end. He submits his destiny in Mbanta and he does not rebel to his Chi, but he yearns for his past and ponders on how to start everything anew back in Umuofia. He is accepted as a son of Mbanta and paid tributes but he never forgets his father's land.

It was going to be Okonkwo's last harvest in Mbanta. The seven wasted and weary years were at last dragging to a close. Although he had prospered in his motherland Okonkwo knew that he would have prospered even more in Umuofia, in the land of his fathers where men were bold and warlike. In these seven years he would have climbed to the utmost heights. And so he regretted every day of his exile. His mother's kinsmen had been very kind to him, and he was grateful. But that did not alter the facts. (Things Fall Apart, 54)

Just before the end of his exile and his departure, Okonkwo gives a feast to his mother's kinsmen and he desires to thank them and also to be remembered as a generous man. This feast turns about to be an important gathering of people in the old way. All traditions and customs are revived in honour of Okonkwo but what is

more important than celebrating the end of his punishment is the speech given by Uchendu, the eldest member of the clan. He is an old man who has seen much and his fear of future is a great signal for the younger generation. His sentences explain the real danger of isolation and losing contact with each other. Fragmentation and lacking a sense of identity create the fall, not the white men's religion, education or government.

I fear for you young people because you do not understand how strong is the bond of kinship. You do not know what it is to speak with one voice. And what is the result? An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and his brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors, like a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. I fear for you, i fear for the clan." (Things Fall Apart, 55)

Nobody is irreplaceable. Okonkwo is not an exception either. *"Seven years was a long time to be away from one's clan. A man's place was not always there, waiting for him. As soon as he left, someone else rose and filled it. The clan was like a lizard, if it lost its tail it soon grew another."* (Things Fall Apart, 56) The drawbacks of exile are not only felt during absence but also after return. Okonkwo considers his seven years wasted and plans his return on his first day in Mbanta. *"Even in his first year in exile he had begun to plan for his return"* (Things Fall Apart, 56) What is more, he gradually reconciles with his Chi because *"As the years of exile passed one by one it seemed to him that his chi might now be making amends for the past disaster. His yams grew abundantly, not only in his motherland but also in Umuofia, where his friend gave them out year by year to sharecroppers"*. (Things Fall Apart, 56) Against all troubles during his exile, Okonkwo does not stop to grow his family and gets married to two new brides and have new children.

Along with the new religion, the new government also becomes strong in the territory. What is tragic here is that white man's brutality can be connected to his ignorance of the local culture, but the local converts' aggression to their own

brothers cannot be understood. They become more violent and support the queen at far distance by their fists rather than by their wits. Lack of communication due to language barrier and translators', or traitors', hideousness make the situation worse. As a result, community values are lost and every man thinks of himself.

"Does the white man understand our custom about land?" "How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad, and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably 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." (Things Fall Apart, 57)

Under such conditions Okonkwo returns home but many things have changed during his exile. As Bloom puts it "*He returns, after a seven-year exile, to his own clan, and is fundamentally unchanged, but British supremacy has changed his people, particularly by conversion to Christianity. Grieved, the returning warrior mourns for his lost world, and then rejoices in the destruction of the Christian church*". (Bloom, 2010, 2) First, he was physically exiled from his home, but he quickly understands that his return does not bring any relief and his mental and psychological exile start the day he steps his foot back on his own land. He is the same person just like seven years ago but he cannot recognize his friends and understand the transformation, or to put in a more appropriate way, mutation in his clan. It becomes very difficult for him to adapt to the new world and he staggers. "*During his exile, Okonkwo is suspended outside of Umuofian time and its colonial encounter in a limbo...*" (Lovesey, 2010, 125) Unfortunately it is not a completely fresh and rejuvenating start for Okonkwo when he is back at home. The changes in his 'own' clan are not promising for Okonkwo at all.

Okonkwo's return to his native land was not as memorable as he had wished. It was true his two beautiful daughters aroused great interest among suitors

and marriage negotiations were soon in progress, but, beyond that, Umuofia did not appear to have taken any special notice of the warrior's return. The clan had undergone such profound change during his exile that it was barely recognisable. The new religion and government and the trading stores were very much in the people's eyes and minds. There were still many who saw these new institutions as evil, but even they talked and thought about little else, and certainly not about Okonkwo's return. (Things Fall Apart, 59)

It is impossible for Okonkwo not to feel anything because he yearns for an identity which looks like a utopia now. *“Okonkwo was deeply grieved. And it was not just a personal grief. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart, and he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women.”* (Things Fall Apart, 59)

Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, is another important character in the novel because he is like the embodiment of the proverb “What goes around comes around!” During his childhood until Ikemefuna's killing, he yearns to grow and prosper like his father but Ikemefuna's loss dramatically changes the course of his life. It is extremely difficult for him to bear the burden of losing Ikemefuna whom he saw as an older brother and learnt a lot from him. As a result, he not only leaves his family but also he leaves his ancestral religion. He converts into Christianity and attends the church. Just like Okonkwo's dislike for his own father, Nwoye dislikes and condemns Okonkwo too. He turns out to be another exiled figure within the same territory. His departure from his father is spiritual, psychological, mental and lastly physical. His own personal grief and pain determine Nwoye's destiny, not his father's yams or physical victories.

As there are obstinate and reasonable characters within Umuofia, there are obstinate and reasonable characters within the white community as well. Mr. Brown, who believes in reconciliation, represents the soft power of the new religion and the new world system, whereas Mr. Smith represents just the opposite. *“He saw things as black and white. And black was evil.”* (Things Fall Apart, 60) As the white men's



spiritual leader, Mr. Smith increases the tension between two communities and as a result of his bitter words and disrespectful actions, his church is destroyed. He is not aware of the possibility of another world view just like any colonial ruler and his monolithic stubbornness paves the way for the clash of civilizations. His position in the local people's eyes is also tragic.

Ajofia laughed in his guttural voice. It was like the laugh of rusty metal. "They are strangers," he said, "and they are ignorant. But let that pass." He turned round to his comrades and saluted them, calling them the fathers of Umuofia. He dug his rattling spear into the ground and it shook with metallic life. Then he turned once more to the missionary and his interpreter. (Things Fall Apart, 61)

The annihilation of the church is the beginning of Okonkwo's end. It is like the silence before the thunder and Okonkwo finds peace in destruction. He wants to fight a heroic war and to do something to alter things back. The disappearance of the church, which is the ultimate symbol of the white men's civilization, gives a deep gladness to Okonkwo. *"For the first time in many years Okonkwo had a feeling that was akin to happiness. The times which had altered so unaccountably during his exile seemed to be coming round again. The clan which had turned false on him appeared to be making amends."* (Things Fall Apart, 63) Notwithstanding, his action against the white man and his church is not deeply welcomed by his tribesmen. Although Okonkwo considers what he did as a heroic achievement, heroism is no longer necessary and respected in his transformed clan.

Okonkwo collapses like the church when he and the other five leaders of his clan are examined by the white District Commissioner and tortured by black servants of his. He is filled with anger and revenge and he swears to do something even if it causes his death. He first kills Ikemefuna and this causes him great regret, then he kills a sixteen year old boy during the funeral accidentally and this causes his banishment from his land and is sent to exile, his final blow is killing the messenger during the clan's meeting and this costs his life. He is once again left alone but now

comprehends everything when he sees that his people let the other two messengers escape. He yearns for the past by saying “*Worthy men are no more.*” (Things Fall Apart, 65) The reason for his killing of the messenger cannot even be understood by his people. He prefers to act rather than to watch even if it changes nothing. He once again shows the world that he is a man of action, not words.

The waiting backcloth jumped into tumultuous life and the meeting was stopped. Okonkwo stood looking at the dead man. He knew that Umuofia would not go to war. He knew because they had let the other messengers escape. They had broken into tumult instead of action. He discerned fright in that tumult. He heard voices asking: “Why did he do it?” He wiped his machete on the sand and went away. (Things Fall Apart, 67)

His death is tragic but it can also be considered heroic. He takes the most difficult decision a man can take by finishing his own life. He hangs himself in his backyard instead of being punished, disrespected and tortured by the new ruler once again. He does not give them the chance of a revenge for the messenger he killed. Thus, for the first time, he chooses to decide on his own and take the full responsibility of his action. He becomes the first person to commit suicide in his own clan’s history and this is not accepted according to the clan’s customs.

It is against our custom,” said one of the men. “It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it. That is why we ask your people to bring him down, because you are strangers. (Things Fall Apart, 68)

Okonkwo is in fact a timeless, universal figure, a symbol; he does not belong only to his own territory, Africa but to a wide geography of colonisation. “*Okonkwo is an Ibo, and Achebe writes what he knows. And yet Okonkwo could be a North American, a Spaniard, a Sicilian, an Eskimo. The end would be the same: he would kill and then take his own life.*” (Bloom, 2010, 2)

However, he is even isolated in his crime and death. "*There is no one to fight alongside Okonkwo; he ends as isolated as Shakespeare's Coriolanus.*" (Bloom, 2010, 3) Obierika declares the end of the novel bitterly. There is wrath and compassion, hopelessness and abhorrence in his words.

Obierika, who had been gazing steadily at his friend's dangling body, turned suddenly to the District Commissioner and said ferociously: "That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself and now he will be buried like a dog..." He could not say any more. His voice trembled and choked his words. (Things Fall Apart, 68)

## CONCLUSION

Exile is a charming term to think on as long as not personally experienced. It is a physical, psychological, mental, cultural and intellectual gap between the self and home. It is an infinite condition of isolation, loneliness, solitude, hope and hopelessness, melancholy, depression, sadness, despair, gloom and monotony.

It is both a state of being and a form of punishment. A person, a group of people or even a whole nation can be sent to exile because of a war, ideology, ethnicity, religion, colonialism and crime. It is a result of different conditions and the unwanted outcomes of this penalty create terminated lives and communities.

There is no absolute consolation for crashed identities, yet art is one of the solutions and offers a sense of salvation and freedom to the exiled artist. He either creates in the form of literature, music or painting or at least he writes, reads, listens and paints to find a temporary escape from the harsh environment he is in. In *The Mimic Men*, exiled politician Sing turns to writing when he is away from his own island Isabella and tries to overcome his crisis by writing. Unlike Singh, Okonkwo is not a man of arts and he tries to find salvation in physical labour, talking with his friends and relatives and fighting. Singh's exile is in between civilizations whereas Okonkwo's exile is in between tribes. Still, both characters experience similar troubles and pains.

When *Things Fall Apart* and *The Mimic Men* are compared by focusing on the usage of chronology, it is clear that Achebe and Naipaul use different techniques. The events in *Things Fall Apart* take place in a linear, chronological order, following Okonkwo's story but *The Mimic Men* is narrated by flashbacks in Singh's life. *The Mimic Men* starts from the middle, goes back to history in the second part and jumps to the end after the first stage of the main character's life. Naipaul's novel represents

the shattered and fragmented psychology of its postcolonial protagonist in exilic conditions whereas Achebe's novel is more Homeric. Okonkwo's exile is an Odysseus style rather than a Ulysses.

What is also different in these two novels is the usage of language. Achebe uses the language of the suppressed periphery (to quote Bhabha) but Naipaul uses the language of the suppressing centre in postcolonial terms. Okonkwo's dramatic story is reflected from an indigenous African stand point; Singh's fragmented story, on the other hand, is reflected from an arrogant imperial one. But still this imperial focus is not complete and features in-between characteristics.

Not only differences exist between these two novels, but also similarities. Both Okonkwo and Singh are egoistic and selfish characters and they act as if they themselves are the centres of the universe. They consider other people and their lives trivial and worthless. Okonkwo's murdering of Ikemefuna, although reluctantly, is a clear example of his egoism. Singh's marriage with a desperate, white, British girl in London just for carnal desires shows his own kind of egoism.

Another common characteristic of Okonkwo and Singh are their insensitivity and lack of empathy. They live their lives according to their own rules and they have great difficulty in understanding other people and their perceptions thoroughly. One more similarity between them is their desire to rule their own societies and become important and respected people although they do not feel a strong sense of belonging to the community they live in. Their exilic comprehensions build strong walls between them and their societies and becoming a respected person is not a solution for their split identities

Both novels include a rise and fall of the main characters. Singh and Okonkwo acquire unexpected successes at first phase of their lives but right at that moment and at their personal zenith, a climax occurs and their collapse starts.

Regarding the protagonists of these two novels, Singh and Okonkwo are forced to experience physical exile as a form of punishment and here physical exile maybe categorized in two different forms as “internal exile” and “external exile”. Internal exile occurs when a person is banished from his own land but he still lives in in his own culture and according to this definition, Okonkwo’s exile is internal. If someone is totally banished from his own land to another culture, it is external exile and Singh’s exile maybe categorized as external. In physical exile, there is always the probability or hope of going back home one day but this hope increases their tortures too. What is expecting them back home remains a secret. Perhaps it is better not to return home at all.

There is psychological state of exile as well and there is no home and happiness here. The exile is “No More at Ease”. He is lost in a world where he does not belong to. Therefore, he lives in “No Man’s Land”. Singh is reborn in exile but who is this new man? Okonkwo dies at home but who is this new community? Only by recognizing "the stranger in ourselves" can the exile learn to live with others and achieve a multicultural, multiracial society.

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