

CIVILIZATION OF THE DARK ROMANTIC HEROES IN *THINGS FALL APART* AND *ACROSS THE GOLF*

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Abstract

This study brings to fore the fallibility of the dark romantic heroes in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Johnson's *Across the Gulf*. The human fallibility construed in the internal conflicts and struggle that juxtapose their external achievements reveals the control of the internal construct over the external. Both heroes, Okonkwo and Ofala became very rich and successful in business and family and are highly respected in their communities but committed suicide and died abominably and tragically. The weave of force that pushed them to succeed is the same force that pushed them to their failure and demise. That force is not external or in their actions, it is in the internal construct of their individual minds. This is the place of the highest civilization in the romanticism tenet, where the life of the individual is shaped and becomes the force that drives the individual to the final destination. The dark romantic pursuit of this research discovered that both heroes in their internal construct struggle with fear, guilt, shame, vengeance and self-destruction, all attributes of the internal construct which the romantics have established is the center of all creativity and dictates the variables of individual lives. While Okonkwo was driven by the fear of failure or of being seen as weak triggered by his father's weakness and failure that ended in failure and shameful death, Ofala was driven by the fear and shame of revealing that his wife was not chaste, or later that the only son of the family born to him by his wife is not his son. Both men hide conflict that consumed their minds and while the internal conflict led them to greatness, it ultimately destroyed them. This study establishes that the dark sinister and evil nature can live along with the good within man and can lead to both success and destruction.

Keywords: Civilization, Dark Romanticism, Internal Construct, External Construct

Introduction

This study examines the civilization of the romantic heroes as projected by Chinua Achebe and Dul Johnson in their novels *Things Fall Apart* and *Across the Gulf* respectively. This work will take a sweep through the depiction of the dark romantic complexities that control the behaviour and then project the central position of the romantics on the internal construct leading in the superior road of any civilization of the individual's world. Frye (2006) explaining the Romanticism view of the internal and the external world, he leans heavily on Rousseau representative that "civilization was purely human artifact; something that man made and could unmake ... Above all, it was something for which the only known model was in the human mind." (p. 127) the human mind is the internal construct of the individual's mind that drives for the actions of the individual either in conformity or in the reverse to generate the desired goal of the mind. Yassine, Gabani in his dissertation titled "Dark Romanticism in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of The House of Usher*" relates that: "The main focus of Dark Romanticists was on human psychology and the complexities that control the behaviour. They kept nature as the source of imagination" (7) Dark romanticism writers do not believe that perfection is an innate quality of man. They assert the human fallibility that burdens on fear, shame, guilt, vengeance and self-destruct. G. R. Thompson in "Introduction: Romanticism and the Gothic Tradition." Enumerates as asserted by Aradhana Mathews and Wafa Hamid: "Dark Romantics are much less confident about the notion that perfection is an innate quality of mankind ... present individuals as prone to sin and self-destruction ... For the Dark Romantics, the natural world is dark, decaying, and mysterious; when it does reveal truth to man, its revelations are evil and hellish." (7)

The Dark Romantic Heroes

The dark romantic heroes are Okonkwo and Ofala. In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo, was considered one of the bravest men and was respected all over nine villages. He also grew in wealth and prestige and was greatly honoured but inwardly Okonkwo was not perfect. It started with his father. Okonkwo's father was Unoka, a man who was lazy and worthless. He was highly indebted when he died. Okonkwo was ashamed of him and feared greatly anything that will reveal weakness from him and that was Okonkwo's driving force through his journey in life. He had fear and shame that he must defeat at all cost. His father was described thus: "Unoka ... was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow. If any money came his way, and it seldom did, he immediately bought gourds of palm-wine, called round his neighbours and made merry ... Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbour some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts." (3-4) Even though Okonkwo's people did not measure a man's worth by his father's worth it did not diminish the internal occupation of fear and shame that Okonkwo possessed and worked for: "Fortunately among these people a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father" (7) and despite the achievement of Okonkwo he still feared failure and is ashamed to be called one: "Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village ..." (3) Okonkwo was indeed ashamed of his father "When Unoka died he had taken no title at all and he was heavily in debt. Any wonder then that his son Okonkwo was ashamed of him?" (7)

In *Across the Gulf*, Ofala, the dark romantic hero and Ifunanya who were engaged to be married. Ofala had paid her bride price and a night before the traditional wedding war broke out in Okigboli, their hometown. They were together when the

explosions started. Ofala had to go back to the Biafran side of the army. Before they parted they made a promise to each other to remain alive and faithful to one another. Ifunanya said “Offy! But her voice was now cold and dreamy... ‘Will you come back?’” Ofala responded “Of course, I will. For you, I will remain alive and come back.” She also promised “For you, I will remain ... sealed, until you return.” (14) Ofala kept his promise, Ifunanya did not keep her promise and that led to a lot of contradictions in the internal construct of the hero that ultimately shaped the journey of the dark romantic hero. Just like Okonkwo, fear, shame and anger became the driving force of the dark romantic hero.

Dark Romanticism

The Dark Romanticism is a reaction to Transcendentalism and focuses on the darkest sides of human behaviour through mentally ill and sinful characters who have frightening experiences (Dinçer, 2010). American Romantic writers that are considered the founding fathers of Dark Romanticism such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Edgar Allan Poe became so relevant that they constitute the canon of nineteenth-century American literature (Jackson, 2016). They combine the romantic dogma with the Gothic flare to create what is now known as Dark Romanticism, their focus on the individual and the internal construct which is central to romantic thoughts is not altered but they imbibed a darker side of the culture moving away from transcendentalism to blend in the darker side of the human nature which is hidden in the inside world of the mind. Marjiya Baktyer Ahmed in his work on Poe’s Gothic Fiction opines that “Dark Romanticism is characterized by a preoccupation with emotions like apprehension, fear, and the grotesque aspect of imagination.” (7) In concluding his essay on Dark Romanticism, Howard exposes the impact that Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville each left on American literature: “Dark Romanticism in doing so, mixing hope and beauty with pessimism and death, along with styles and themes distinctive to each man; their stories take two opposing styles and merge them in a profound and important way.” (9)

Howard in his essay *A New Genre Emerges: The Creation and Impact of Dark Romanticism* opines that: “Authors usually do not combine genres. However, three authors—Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville—each combine two styles, Romanticism and the Gothic, that at first glance appear radically opposite.” (7) He further states that: “They viewed the world darkly. Although some stories do contain elements of hope, in general their works tend to be pessimistic, and deal particularly with death. Morality, the question of evil, and the human psyche all play a role in the canon of all three men” (3) Howard says of Poe “Rather than longing for the beauty of nature, he longs for beauty of the spirit. The link between beauty and death fascinated him, and this ‘is Poe’s dominant theme’ (The Romantic Movement 12).” (3)

Analysis

Frye (2006) explaining the Romanticism view of the internal and the external world, he leans heavily on Rousseau representative assumption that “civilization was purely human artifact; something that man made and could unmake, could subject to his own criticism and was at all times responsible for. Above all, it was something for which the only known model was in the human mind.” (p. 127)

This is what was said of Okonkwo: “Okonkwo was clearly cut out for great things” (7), he was considered a strong and fearless man and at a young age he had achieved so much :

He was still young but he had won fame as the greatest wrestler in the nine villages. He was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams and had just married his third wife. To crown it all he had taken two titles and had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars. And so although Okonkwo was still young, he was already one of the greatest men of his time. (7)

Ofala was also considered rich and successful in farming and business. “Ofala was one of the few young men in Okigboli who could roof their houses with Zink before the war. He was an enterprising young man whose farm produce, especially his yams, were sold all round the year.” (110) and even after the war he was still considered rich. “Immediately after the war, two things consumed his time and energy; repairing his house and getting married ... she did not think he was going to get one hut ready. She could not believe what she saw of the houses after two weeks.” (110-111) she did not know that he had hidden pounds in his house. (110) Ofala was still rich and that surprised his fiancée and later his wife Ifunanya.

Okonkwo's Fears

Achebe describes Okonkwo's fear as internal, within his mind which is where the romantics believe creation begins and thus influences the outside action of man. The romantics' belief in the internalised structure is exemplified in the internal construct of the dark romantic hero shown in this excerpt “Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and of the forces of nature, malevolent, red in tooth and claws ... it was not external but lay deep within himself” (11) Okonkwo's fear of failure made him a cruel man. His whole life was dominated with the fear of weakness or failure associated with him so he hid well his emotions; be it that he is sorry or in love.

The week of peace

In the week of peace, a week where violence is prohibited, Okonkwo desecrated the land by beating his wife because she went to plait her hair and did not cook at the right time. “Okonkwo was provoked to justifiable anger by his youngest wife ...” (23) he waited for her to return and then beat her severely. “And when she returned he beat her heavily. In his anger he had forgotten that it was he Week of Peace. His first two wives ran out in great alarm pleading with him that it was the sacred week. But Okonkwo was not the man to stop beating half-way through, not even for the fear of the goddess.” (24) He was more afraid of being seen as weak that anything else including the fear of the goddess; he feared weakness and failure more that the spirits and the laws of his land so he was punished: “The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan. The earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall all perish.” (24) Okonkwo had to make the necessary sacrifices to the goddess for the land to be cleansed. When he went to see the priest “inwardly he was repentant” (25) but because he shielded his emotions so as to avoid being considered weak, people assumed that it was arrogance. They believe his wealth was getting to him. Okonkwo is able to risk anything that is good, his love for the gods and the land, his love for people, his humility and his love for his wives and children for the fear of being seen as weak and as a failure.

Ikemefuna

Ikemefuna stayed in the house of Okonkwo for three years. Okonkwo and his family became Ikemefuna's family. They all loved him including Okonkwo "Even Okonkwo himself became fond of the boy- inwardly of course. Okonkwo never showed any emotion openly, unless it be the emotion of anger. To show affection was a sign of weakness" (22), he allows Ikemefuna to carry his bag and follow him to meetings; this is a privilege for the favoured male child of the family. "He allowed Ikemefuna to accompany him, like a son, carrying his stool and his goatskin bag. And, indeed Ikemefuna called him father." (23) after three years, the people said the oracle has decided that he should die. Ikemefuna was a replacement to avoid war with the people of Umuofia "As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings and elders. And that was how he came to look after the doomed lad who was sacrificed to the village of Umuofia by their neighbours to avoid war and bloodshed. The ill-fated lad called Ikemefuna." (7) the Ogbuefi Ezendu, the oldest man in the village of Umuofia had come to warn Okonkwo not to be the one to kill the boy "that boy calls you father, do not bear a hand in his death" (45) Okonkwo then asked why the caution and Ogbuefi replied "Yes, Umuofia has decided to kill him. The oracle of the hills and the caves has pronounced it. They will take him outside Umuofia as is the custom, and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it. He calls you father." (46)

Okonkwo and the men set out to kill Ikemefuna. Okonkwo was not the person that hit him first and he looked away when it happened because he cared deeply for the boy but he feared more to be called a coward and so he threw the punch that killed Ikemefuna "As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, 'my father, they have killed me!' as he ran towards him dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak." (49) This fear of being called weak over shadowed any goodness in Okonkwo. He killed a boy he loved so much. He had an argument with his best friend on the killing of Ikemefuna "His mind went to his latest show of manliness" (52) he asked his friend why he did not go with them to kill Ikemefuna and if his friend was afraid of blood or if the friend challenged the Oracle. His friend replied: "And 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. Okonkwo replies "The Earth cannot punish me for obeying her messenger ... A child's fingers are not scaled by a piece of hot yam which its mother put's into its palm" (53), his friend did not agree with him and said if his son were to be killed as prescribed by the Oracle, he will not be the one to do it but Okonkwo did it because of a show of manliness "And indeed he was possessed by the fear of his father's contemptible life and shameful death" (15)

Ezendu had died and celebrations were taken place and as was customary guns were fired. Okonkwo's gun hit and killed Ezendu's son mistakenly. "It was as if a spell had been cast. All was silent. In the center 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 the father. Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart" (99) Okonkwo was banished from the land for seven years. "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.” (99) Okonkwo went to stay with his mother’s people for seven years during that time, the white man and Christianity confronted the people.

At the wake of Christianity, a new religion that opposes the traditional Igbo tradition, clashes erupted between the white colonial administrators and the locals and in many villages the locals were wiped out. The Igbo people hated the white missionaries with their new religion and the converts. The converts were the weak and the outcast and the rejected. Okonkwo’s first son Nwoye was converted and joined the Christian faith. Okonkwo was angry. “As Okonkwo sat in his hut that night, gazing into a log fire, he thought over the matter. A sudden fury rose from within him and he felt a strong desire to take up his matchet, go to the church and wipe out the entire vile and miscreant gang” (122) Okonkwo had always seen his son as weak and joining the Christian faith made it worse. He sought revenge and hated his kinsmen whom he considered have become soft like women. He secretly desired to wipe them out. His hatred resentment and disgust for his father and now for his son who was like his father, whom he considers a weakling is deep. “Okonkwo was popularly called the ‘Roaring Flame’. As he looked into the log fire he recalled the name. He was a flaming fire. How then could he have begotten a son like Nwoye, degenerate and effeminate? ... Nwoye resembled his grandfather, Nnoka, who was Okonkwo’s father” (123) His hatred was indeed great. He does not want to have anything to do with his son.

“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.”(146) he has become accustomed the physical show of power because that enables him to hide his fear well and to show his prowess in strength and war. When he got back to his homeland after seven years and faced humiliation in the hands of the white man he became excited about going to war and taking revenge against the white man. There is going to be a meeting of the whole town and Okonkwo is ready to go to war “Okonkwo slept very little that night. The bitterness in his heart was now mixed with a kind of child-like excitement ... Before he had gone to bed he had brought down his war dress ... and he swore vengeance” (159) when the white man who is the District Attorney sent the local bailiffs to call of the meeting Okonkwo confronted them “In a flash Okonkwo drew his matchet. The messenger crouched to avoid the blow. It was useless. Okonkwo’s matchet descended twice and the man’s head lay beside his uniformed body.” (163) he realized too late that he was the only one ready for war because nobody joined him and the rest of the bailiffs escaped. And his kinsmen are asking why he killed the bailiff. Okonkwo went back home and killed himself “Then they came to the tree from which Okonkwo’s body was dangling, and they stopped dead” (165) and when the district commissioner requested and they showed him the body of Okonkwo, they requested of him to ask his men to take him down and be thrown in the evil forest or buried without honour. The district commissioner asked “Why can’t you take him down yourselves?” (156) they could not because Okonkwo died an abominable death. Killing himself makes him an abomination.

Obierike looked at his friend, Okonkwo’s dangling body, then on hearing the question 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...” (165) That is the end of Okonkwo, his friend and indeed the village may allude his death to the white man’s evasion but Okonkwo death is as a result of his internal conflict occasioned by fear and self-loathing for having a father that is weak. The fear, shame, anger and bitterness against anything or anyone he considers

weak led him to revenge and self-destruct which is the fallibility that defines the civilization of the dark romantics.

Ofala's Fear

For Ofala in *Across the gulf*, when the war started he had two battles in his heart: "The battle for Okigboli had begun. But in Ofala's mind, there were two battles" (16) and upon his arrival from the war, he had his life planned out: "All that lay in the future for Ifunanya and him was happiness and then, children. Then he would return to the business of farming, buy a Peugeot 404 Pick-up and then venture into the vehicle spare parts business, which had just started to boom before the war broke out." (111) Ofala came back and quickly established himself as a successful man that had hidden money before the war and even though the war destroyed some of his things, he rebuilt in less than a month and married the love of his life. On the first night, Ofala was drunk and lacked experience, so he was not sure but suspected that his wife was not a virgin but was afraid to find out. "Now he was confused. ... His peers would ridicule him, yet, something told Ofala that he did not meet his wife at home. A combination of fear and shame ... kept his mouth sealed" (87)

He was not just afraid, he felt shame but remained quiet until Ifunanya his wife told him herself that the pregnancy she is carrying is not his own but that of a Hausa soldier she called John.

Ofala sprang to a sitting position. His head started to pound when he saw Ifunanya. He saw her tears and his head pounded the more. She was pretending and mocking him. He would kill her and damn the consequences. No, he would kill himself instead. The earth could not reject his corpse; no, that was in those days. Besides, it should understand his predicament. What if his enemies got hold of this information? He squirmed at the thought that came to him next. (91)

It is because Ifunanya had told him that the child she is carrying is not his child that he felt betrayed, he had suspected that she was not a virgin on the first night of their marriage when they consummated their marriage "How foolish he had been! How stupid! On the first night he had suspected something, he foolishly dismissed it until she stabbed him with it. Why did he not think beyond that? Why was he so naïve?" (92) He blamed himself which is typical of a dark romantic hero; he felt shame and guilt and pain for what he should have known. Typical of a dark romantic hero he headed for self-destruct. He thought of the best way for his life to end: "Ofala thought and thought until his head fogged with clouds of self-pity and became too heavy to move. ... Ah! The sleep of death! That was far better than suicide. If only it would come! He closed his eyes again, and then passed out." (91-92) He blames himself for not ending it two years ago: "Why had he not ended it all two years ago so as to avoid this pain? Why had he struggled to keep alive when the federal troops forced his platoon into a river and surrounded them until almost everybody drowned or was shot? It was all because of this woman, this ingrate!" (92)

Ofala was successful and rich, the only man who could roof his house with a zinc and also has a bicycle and was trying to buy a pickup and his farm produce sold through the year. He served the elders the best palm wine and his son was offered the best title of the land (111,172 and 173) was in affluence and well respected in the society but his mind was in a battle for dignity. He did not have any other male child outside of Nnanna whom he knew was not his own. Everybody saw that he was not the cheerful Ofala. He was moody and always in a vile mood but people attributed it to the

war. "He spent more time in his farm, but did less work than he did in the past in less time. He no longer dreams of pick-up. He sold his yams, cassava, cocoyam, and palm kernels, but did not know what to do with the money. He prayed for the quick end of every day and dreaded the break of another." (111)

Ofala married another wife as vengeance against his wife cheating on him. But he was still plagued. The internal struggle increased, he promised Ifunanya he would try to love her son but "the Load in his chest grew heavier. Deep down in his heart and especially at night when he was in his bed, he lamented the heaviness of the stone in his chest, the stone that was his heart." (114) nobody understood what he was going through. Everyone though he was doing well and he tried to do all his responsibilities to the best of his knowledge and considering the story of the cross of Christ that was physical, he lamented his cross being spiritual "But his cross was not a physical one ... This cross was surely going to crush him" (114) it was an internal struggle. His believe is that one day that cross will crush him. He tries to love all his children including Nnanna and to be kind to everyone: "Ofala resolved to love his children. His wives were happy together and the family was happy. But down inside Ofala's belly, the embers still burned." (118) Ofala is wealthy and the son of his wife Nnanna whom he accepted as his son is also very responsible and wealthy. Everyone praised him but he felt fear that one day Nnanna's birth will destroy him. His mind was constantly at war and the force, the dark romantic force that always dominates the dark romantic hero is that of fear, shame and guilt that was not even occasioned by anything he did but it still haunted him.

Ofala's internal war came to a full circle when he realizes Ikenna, his half-brother had knowledge of the paternity of his son Nnanna, a knowledge he obtained when he delivered Ifunanya of her baby. The pains of labour forced the truth out of Ifunanya. Ikenna who despised his brother decided and planned to expose the paternity of Nnanna at the coronation where Nnanna would be given the most prestigious title while his son would be given the list title. He unknowingly revealed it to Nnanna that he was not Ofala's son. "You fool! You idiot! How could you be getting drunk and snoring away here like a hog when a bastard son, born of some mercenary *Awusa* soldier, is taking away your birthright from you? Eh, how could you? Nnanna froze in his steps" (184)

Nnanna runs home to confront his parents, Ofala is devastated. His worst fear has come full circle. He feels cheated and his worse fears have been realized. "Ofala felt like a man cheated from all angles, a stick burning from both ends and in the middle. He was a man betrayed by everybody and everything, including fate." (186) when Nnanna, the boy that he had grown to love and respect was asking about his birth father's location "Ofala felt a sharp and deep sting ... Ofala was now burning inside. To answer this question would amount to inflicting more pain upon him. Had he not suffered enough? Or was it wrong to have forgiven Ifunanya?" (186) when more questions were asked by Nnanna and Ifunanya said she had the picture of Nnanna's father "Ofala's heart kicked at his chest. He felt a chill in his spine. He felt his limbs go numb. For a brief moment he lost the power to think." (190) all the situations that happened on the day that would have been his day of greatest honour became the day of doom and his fallibility is activated in vengeance and self-destruct. Ofala as a person did not break his promise to his wife nor did he do anything that he should be punished for but the struggle of the dark romantic hero is not physical but internal. He sought vengeance and self-destruct to avoid experiencing his greatest adversary which is fear and shame and guilt. Back in his room, Ofala was dressing ... He looked at himself in the one-foot-long mirror on the wall ... he tried to force a smile, but hated what he saw,

How could he have changed so drastically overnight? Or has this been ongoing and he did not notice?” (199)

Ikenna who had caused so much pain unknowingly was planning to disgrace Ofala and his family at the place of coronation. He took out his gun and prepared it for the occasion but instead of using a plastic bullet he used the real bullets. “He carefully leaned the gun against the wall so that he could pack up the bag and kits he had worked with. As he turned from the wall his eyes fell on Ofala who was already upon him. A chill ran down his spine as fear seized him. He turned again quickly to grab the gun. He was too late. Ofala was faster, and the gun was now in his hand. Ikenna sprang to his feet ready to grab and wrestle Ofala to the ground the gun notwithstanding. But he rose just in time for his chest to come level with Ofala’s aim” (201) After killing his brother Ikenna, Ofala committed suicide by drowning in the sacred pool. “But the news was different. Ofala’s body was floating on the sacred pond, his hands bound. (217)

Conclusion

Okonkwo and Ofala are dark romantic heroes that were possessed with the internal struggle, their enemy was fear, shame, guilt that eventually lead to vengeance and self-destruct, the human fallibility that had possessed the internal construct of their minds and drove them to their end.

For Okonkwo, “Even though the people did not value a man by his father’s worth” (7), he still had the internal struggle when he thought of his father’s weakness, his father’s weakness became the force that shaped his destiny; that drove him to success and excellence and the same force that drove him to his demise and his death. “Whenever the thought of his father’s weakness and failure troubled him he expelled it by thinking about his own strength and success” (52) For Ofala, it was the love for his wife and her betrayal that give birth to the fear, shame, pain, guilt vengeance and eventually self-destruct. “He spent more time in his farm, but did less work than he did in the past in less time. He no longer dreams of pick-up. He sold his yams, cassava, cocoyam, and palm kernels, but did not know what to do with the money. He prayed for the quick end of every day and dreaded the break of another.” (111) Ofala’s thought were of death, instead of blaming his wife, he blamed himself. “Ofala thought and thought until his head fogged with clouds of self-pity and became too heavy to move. ...Ah! The sleep of death! That was far better than suicide. If only it would come! He closed his eyes again, and then passed out.” (91-92) He blames himself for not ending it two years ago: “Why had he not ended it all two years ago so as to avoid this pain? Why had he struggled to keep alive when the federal troops forced his platoon into a river and surrounded them until almost everybody drowned or was shot? It was all because of this woman, this ingrate!” (92)

Conclusion:

Hawthorne in the Romantic Movement 10 was said to embody dark romanticism as such: “He simply writes using a different type of Romanticism, one that combines the well-known aspects of traditional Romanticism with the darker themes of Gothic fiction. He had ‘That expansive idealism and that sense of inexhaustible potentiality and interest in life which are the marks of the Romantic. But in him appears another strain of Romanticism, a strain that is almost inevitably involved in its exaltations- that is, the conflict between the imagined perfect and the limitations and frustrations of actual, everyday existence.” (3) The two Authors successfully presented the dark romantic heroes as they strive for success and indeed, they succeeded but the same force that pushed them to their success pushed them to their demise. While for Okonkwo it was his disdain of his father’s laziness, weakness and failure that gave birth to the demon of fear and shame for failure and weakness.

For Ofala it was his love for his wife Ifunanya and her betrayal that gave birth to his demon of fear, shame, pain and guilt. The two dark romantic heroes subsequently pushed for vengeance and self-destruct as seen in analysis. Both heroes came into full circle after physically committing murder and then committing suicide when they could no longer fight with the internal demons that torment them, exposing the central core of their civilization which lies within the dark romantic sphere. Hawthorne believed “evil existed and was inherent in human nature” (5)

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