

**SCHIZOPHRENIA AS REBELLION IN SELECTED AFRICAN SHORT  
STORIES.**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project titled: **SCHIZOPHRENIA AS REBELLION IN  
SELECTED AFRICAN SHORT STORIES** was carried out by **Success Aisosa  
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**PROF ADEKUNLE MAMUDU**

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**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

To all the supposed mad people...  
The ones who talk to themselves,  
who laugh in the middle of silence,  
who see things the world is too blind to notice.

To those whose truths were too wild for polite company,  
whose pain wore no disguise,  
whose rebellion looked like confusion,  
and whose freedom was mistaken for folly.

This is for you...  
The misnamed, the misunderstood,  
the prophets dressed in rags,  
the visionaries dismissed with a whisper.

May your madness be remembered  
not as shame,  
but as the spark that dared to unsettle the silence.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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I also want to thank myself, for holding it together with paper clips, sarcasm, and occasional crying breaks.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Title Page- - - - -         | i    |
| Certification - - - - -     | ii   |
| Dedication - - - - -        | iii  |
| Acknowledgment - - - - -    | iv   |
| Table of Contents - - - - - | v    |
| Abstract- - - - -           | viii |

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

|                                                                    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1.1 Purpose of Study - - - - -                                     | 1  |
| 1.2 Scope of Study- - - - -                                        | 1  |
| 1.3 Research Methodology - - - - -                                 | 1  |
| 1.4 Theoretical Framework - - - - -                                | 2  |
| 1.5 Review of Related Scholarship/ Justification of Study- - - - - | 5  |
| 1.6 Thesis Statement - - - - -                                     | 11 |

## **CHAPTER TWO: CONSCIOUS REBELLION BY ‘MAD’ CHARACTERS**

|                                                               |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 2.1 Oki. - - - - -                                            | 13 |
| 2.1.1 Oki’s Pre-recovery Silence as Passive Defiance- - - - - | 15 |
| 2.1.2 Post Recovery Disillusionment and Defiance- - - - -     | 16 |
| 2.1.3 The Significance of Oki’s Conscious Rebellion- - - - -  | 18 |

|                                                                                        |           |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----|
| 2.2 The Unnamed Madman-                                                                | - - - - - | 20 |
| 2.2.1 Subversion Through Symbolism; The Madman's Conscious Disruption of Social Order- | - - - - - | 22 |
| 2.2.2 The Madman as a Mirror and Messenger-                                            | - - - - - | 23 |
| 2.2.3 Significance of Conscious Rebellion in Achebe's Narrative. -                     | - - -     | 25 |
| 2.3 Conclusion -                                                                       | - - - - - | 26 |

### **CHAPTER THREE: UNCONSCIOUS REBELLION**

|                                                                |           |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| 3.1 Nwibe-                                                     | - - - - - | 29   |
| 3.1.1 The Ideal Man; Nwibe's Social Position and Aspiration    | - - - - - | 30   |
| 3.1.2 Humiliation as a Turning Point -                         | - - - - - | 32   |
| 3.1.3 Rebellion Through Retreat -                              | - - - - - | 33   |
| 3.1.4 The Unintentional Dissenter; Nwibe's Lasting Impact -    | - - - - - | 35   |
| 3.2 Angwo Tanda -                                              | - - - - - | 36   |
| 3.2.1 Weight of Public Perception; Gossip as Social Violence - | - - - - - | 37   |
| 3.2.2 The Market Dump as a Theatre of Rebellion -              | - - - - - | -39  |
| 3.2.3 The Spectacle of Madness; Laughter, Pity, and Unease -   | - - - - - | - 40 |
| 3.2.4 The Unwilling Rebel; Angwo's Enduring Significance -     | - - - - - | 42   |
| 3.3 Conclusion -                                               | - - - - - | 43   |

**CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION - - - - - 45**

**WORKS CITED - - - - - 48**

## ABSTRACT

This study explored the literary representation of schizophrenia not merely as a mental condition, but as a symbolic and subversive form of rebellion in selected African short stories: “The Madman” by Chinua Achebe, “The Beauty of Madness” by Adekunle Mamudu, and “Angwo Tanda” by Chiweizu.

Drawing from postcolonial theory and psychoanalytic criticism, the research analyzed how madness was employed as a metaphorical tool to challenge socio-political oppression, cultural expectations, and personal alienation. The protagonists in these stories exhibited both conscious and unconscious forms of rebellion: through silence, spectacle, retreat, and disruption, their perceived insanity became a means of reclaiming voice, agency, and resistance in postcolonial African society.

Ultimately, the paper argued that schizophrenia, within these texts, transcended pathology to serve as a mirror reflecting fractured systems and a weapon wielded—whether knowingly or not—against normative structures that silenced dissent.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1. Purpose of study**

This study seeks to investigate how schizophrenia is used as a **symbol of rebellion** in three selected African short stories; Chinua Achebe's "The Madman", Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" and Chiweizu's "Angwo Tanda". It will examine how madness challenges normative structures, disrupts power hierarchies, and serves as a voice for marginalized consciousness. The research also explores how African cultural beliefs and postcolonial realities shape these literary portrayals.

### **1.2. Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on analyzing how schizophrenia is used as a symbol of defiance in three African short stories: Achebe's "The Madman," Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness," and Chiweizu's "Angwo Tanda." It explores the literary techniques and thematic roles associated with madness in each story. The study limits itself to literary interpretation, and does not engage in clinical, or medical analysis of schizophrenia.

### **1.3. Research methodology**

This qualitative study relies on textual analysis of the selected short stories. It will involve close reading to identify how madness is represented, what cultural meanings are attached to it, and how it functions as rebellion within the narrative. Secondary sources such as journal articles, books, and scholarly essays will support the theoretical framing and contextual analysis. Also, the study will be guided by

psychoanalytic criticism (to understand mental instability) and post colonial theory(to explore resistance and social pressure).

#### **1.4. Theoretical Framework**

The study will be anchored in two theories, Post-colonial theory and Psychoanalytic theory.

Post-colonial theory is a critical framework that examines the cultural, political, psychological, and literary impacts of colonialism and imperialism. It explores how colonial powers shaped the identities, narratives, and voices of formerly colonized people, and how literature becomes a place of resistance, reclamation, and rewriting. Scholars like Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri C. Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha have been instrumental in developing this theory. Each focusing on how power, language, and identity operate in colonial and post-colonial setting.

In this study “Schizophrenia as Rebellion” post-colonial theory permits us to explore how madness becomes a symbol of protest against the psychological damage of colonial rule. It looks at how “mad” characters challenges western definition of sanity and resist being labelled by colonial frameworks. In addition, we’ll also examine the way African writers use madness to reclaim agency, disrupt colonial logic, and confront neocolonial power. Fanon analyses and medically describes the nature of colonialism as ‘destructive’. He says the “imposition of a subjugation colonial identify is harmful to the mental health of the native people who are subjugated into colonies.”

Psychoanalytic theory originally developed by Sigmund Freud, explores how unconscious desires, childhood experiences, and inner conflict shape human behaviour. In literary studies, it is used to analyze characters, symbols, and narrative as expressions of repressed emotions, desires, fear or trauma. Later on, theorist like Jacques Lacan explained Freud's work by emphasizing the role of language, identity and fragmented self. Core concept in psychoanalysis include the unconscious, repression, defense mechanism, and fragmented self. The unconscious serves as a reservoir of repressed thoughts, memories, and desires influencing behaviour. On the other hand, repression is the mental process of pushing disturbing thoughts out of conscious awareness. Lacan's fragmentation of self says the human subject is split between who we are and how we are presented in language.

In this study, psychoanalytic theory helps interpret schizophrenia not just as illness, but as a psychic rebellion against oppressive reality. This theory allows us to examine how madness emerges from inner conflict and becomes a psychological response to external oppression, turning the personal into the political.

### **Definition of terms.**

#### **Schizophrenia**

Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. It is characterized by delusions, hallucinations, psychosis, and cognitive impairments. Its clinical understanding is rooted in western medicine, literary interpretation often extends beyond pathology. It can symbolize inner

fragmentation, existential crisis, or resistance to rational order. African writers often appropriate this concept to represent colonial trauma, cultural dislocation, and a breakdown of imposed structures. In literature, schizophrenia is often portrayed not just as illness but as a symbol of alienation, rebellion, or visionary insight, making it a powerful metaphor on many literary texts.

## **Madness**

Madness a broader term than schizophrenia is often socially defined rather than medically. It refers to behaviour perceived as irrational or deviant by society standards. Oxford dictionary defines madness as “extremely foolish behaviour”. However madness in literature refers to the depiction of characters whose mental state deviate from societal norms, often reflecting psychological, emotional, or spiritual disturbance. In African literary tradition, madness serves as a complex metaphor —sometimes representing divine possession, suppressed memory, colonial injustice, or spiritual awakening. Therefore, madness symbolize the refusal to conform to societal expectations or unbearable weight of historical trauma. In literary contexts, madness is not just about illness, it's frequently symbolic and used to explore deeper themes such as alienation and isolation, rebellion and resistance, insight and vision, inner conflict and critique of society.

In all, madness in literature is both a character condition and a narrative device, a lens through which writers explore the boundaries between sanity and insanity, self and society, conformity and freedom.

## **Rebellion**

Rebellion refers to the act of resisting or defying authority, control or establishment norms. It can be political, social, personal, or psychological, and often involves a deliberate rejection of rules, traditions or power structures. It is the acts or expressions of resistance against dominant forces.

In literary narratives, rebellion can manifest through silence, disruption, insanity, or violence. When madness is framed as rebellion, it allows characters to challenge power structures without using conventional tool of protest, especially in oppressive or silencing environment. More so, in Literature, rebellion is a common theme often explored through characters who reject oppressor injustice, struggle for freedom, identity or truth and a character who resist conformity or sanity. In all, rebellion is a tool authors use to explore conflict, transformation, and limits of power and resistance.

### **1.5. Review of related scholarship**

Bradley Kaye challenges conventional understanding of mental illness, by framing madness as a socially and politically constructed experience. Drawing on critical theory, Marxism, he argues that what society labels as “madness” is often a rational reaction to an irrational world, particularly one defined by capitalism, systemic oppression, and alienation. Rather than viewing madness solely as a medical condition, Kaye interprets it as a potential form of dissent and rebellion against dehumanizing structures in his book “Critical Madness Theory; a political analysis

on mental illness”. He critiques psychiatry for serving capitalist interests by normalizing conformity, and suppressing nonconformist behaviours through diagnosis and treatment.

Kaye proposes a radical shift in how mental illness is approached by advocating for frameworks rooted in justice, collective care, and recognition of lived experience. He sees the increasing majority of mental health issues not as individual dysfunction, but as a reflection of widespread societal breakdown. In this light, madness becomes not just a clinical issue but a political one, requiring structural change. His work calls for a compassionate response to mental suffering that moves beyond stigmatization and medication, embracing madness as a voice of resistance within an unjust world.

Translated by Drystan Lynx “Modern Madness”, a book originally written by Rafael Palacois in French “La Locura Moderna; MK Ultra social” begins with the assertion that it's no sign of good health to be well adapted to a profoundly sick society, echoing Jiddu Krishnamurti's sentiment. He argues that much of what is considered “madness” in modern society, is not rooted in individual pathology but it in widespread social manipulation and cultural decay. He draws attention to how mass media, political agendas, and psychological conditioning have contributed to a collective mental distortion. One where disconnection from reality is normalized. Referencing historical programs like MK Ultra, he suggest that social engineering techniques are still at play today. Subtly shaping how people think, feel and behave, often without their awareness. Palacois critiques the medicalization of normal emotional responses and the over reliance on psychiatry, arguing that these system

serves power rather than healing. He believes that the proliferation of identities, emotional instability and spiritual emptiness seen in contemporary life are symptoms of a deeper societal disorder not individual dysfunction. For him true sanity requires breaking free from imposed narratives, and reclaiming inner autonomy, consciousness, and a spiritual connection to truth. Through this lens, “madness” becomes less an illness, more a form of resistance, and a wakeup call against an insane world.

Paul Williams offers a deeply personal and psychoanalytical exploration of psychosis, drawing from his own lived experience with madness, and his work as a psychoanalyst. The book “Psychosis” examines psychosis not purely medical or neurological condition, but as a deeply human and emotional response to overwhelming trauma, psychological conflict, or unbearable reality. Williams argues that psychosis is a breakdown in mind’s ability to maintain internal coherence, often triggered by intense emotional pain, early developmental trauma, or unprocessed grief. He describes the psychotic state as one where the boundary between self and reality collapse, leading to hallucinations, delusions, and fragmented thoughts. Rather than demonizing or pathologizing this state, Williams urges for empathetic understanding, emphasizing that people experiencing psychosis are often expressing profound truths through their symptoms...truths that are too painful or complex to articulate conventionally. Ultimately, the book bridges clinical insight and human compassion, calling for a more nuanced, less stigmatizing approach to madness. An approach that recognizes the inner world of the psychotic person as a meaningful and

worthy of attention, rather than simply something to be silenced or cured.

In their journal article “Photo-genesis of Nwibe’s Alienation in Chinua Achebe’s “The Madman”, Emeka and Jephta Portray alienation with emphasis on the impact of societal misconceptions of the protagonist’s psychological alteration. The society perception shapes Nwibe’s identity, leading to “his objectification for medical experiments” based on common judgment. They argue for a compassionate approach to mental health challenges, advocating increased awareness, education and stigmatization of individuals battling with psychological disorders.

Konstein Trinya says that Chinua Achebe’s “The Madman” finds a robust attempt at redefining the concept, not merely from the traditional perspectives of the ‘sane’ majority, but also that of the unpopular and stigmatized eccentric. According to him in his article, “Redefining madness”, the story has a structure of three prominent parts with gray boundaries. In the first, we see the world through the disoriented mind of the man popularly designated mad, because he is unclothed. The second part represents the perspectives both of Nwibe the “sensible man” “great judge” as well as of the majority in the opposite side of the naked and unclothed soliloquizing wander. The final part is an epilogue, coming after the conflict between Nwibe, the epitome of societal norms and the naked madman at other extreme. In this part, everyone is implicitly invited to make a judgment not just on Nwibe but on every definition and modes of materialization of madness.

Frantz Fanon in “The Wretched of the Earth” examines madness through a post

colonial psychological lens, arguing that mental illness in colonized people often arises from the dehumanizing effects of colonial violence. For Fanon, schizophrenia can reflect internalized trauma and cultural dislocation. In Literature, this interpretation allows for an understanding of madness as a psychological rebellion against colonial domination and identity crisis, aligning well with African narratives that links insanity to societal collapse.

Scholar Foucault argues in His book “Madness and civilization” that madness is a social construct used historically to marginalize those who challenge societal norms. He presents a foundational argument that madness is not merely a medical condition but a social construct created to define and marginalize nonconformity. According Michel Foucault, societies have historically used institutions and language to isolate those who deviate from social norms. This perspective supports the literary interpretation of madness as a form of symbolic resistance, particularly in narratives where madness is portrayed as not dysfunction, but as defiance of moral or social hypocrisy.

Furthermore Lilian Feder demonstrates that humanity has long been intrigued with the mind, especially with the extreme forms of psychic experience. Feder’s “Madness and Literature” is concerned with western literature, where interest in insanity is linked to interest in the workings of the mind. In her study, Feder investigates how madness is represented in literature, focusing on characters who are mentally disturbed and writers who use madness as a form of personal insight. Covering texts from ancient Greece to contemporary works, she reveals that these

literary depiction of madness mirror and often critique the cultural norms, values, and taboos they engage with.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o reflects on the distorted idea of madness within oppressive systems, in his book "Detained". He describes how the mental asylum, once meant for the truly mentally ill, is now used to imprison those who challenge political authority, hereby revealing how societies label dissenters as "mad." He suggests that in such corrupt systems, questioning injustice (like metaphorical cannibalism, exploitation and oppression) is treated as insanity, while the real madness lies in the so-called "civilized" world that normalizes exploitation and greed. Madness, he argues, is relative defined by those in power. Ultimately, he insists that despite the forces of dehumanization, true human sanity and resistance will endure, refusing to accept the morality imposed by oppressive, exploitative systems masked in noble ideals.

Harry Olufunwa's article "Who is the madman?", poses a good argument on who the madman might be. He says the madman might be the naked, angry, gesticulating bather whose fury at the theft, has certainly overcome his modesty, a lapse whose synonymy with insanity in specific cultural context is underscored by the presence of his clothed adversary, who seems to be far more aware of the culturally-determined propriety of keeping the body covered in public. Harry says the madman might be both of them; it might be either; it might be neither. He asks if he for instance, mad because he is naked, or naked because he is mad. According to Harry, there is nothing to confirm the belief that the wandering madman is indeed "insane". He is a

madman only because he is said to be a madman by the teller.

### **Justification of study**

This research is significant because it reclaims madness from the margins of pathology, and repositions it within literary and cultural discourse, as a tool of resistance and insight. By exploring how schizophrenia is narrated in African stories, the study also constructs to a broader understanding of mental health within African societies, challenging the normative definition of madness and enriching literary interpretation.

### **1.6. Thesis Statement**

Schizophrenia is depicted not simply as mental disorder, but as a layered form of rebellion emerging both consciously and unconsciously, expressed in intentional and accidental ways, and unfolding through acts of overt violence and subtle defiance.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONSCIOUS REBELLION BY MAD CHARACTERS.**

A conscious rebel is an individual who intentionally resists, challenges, or rejects established norms, values, or systems of authority with full awareness of the implications of their actions. Unlike impulsive or passive dissenters, the conscious rebel acts with deliberate purpose, often motivated by a clear sense of injustice, disillusionment, or a desire for change. Their rebellion may take the form of overt defiance, symbolic gestures, or unconventional lifestyles that critique societal expectations. In literature, such characters often embody ideological resistance, using their choices however radical or misunderstood, as a form of protest against oppressive structures or existential constraints. This chapter explores the conceptual and theoretical grounding for understanding conscious rebellion in literature, specifically through the lens of madness as a form of deliberate rebellion. Madness, often dismissed as a clinical or psychological deviation, has long held a compelling space in literary imagination, not only as a narrative device but also as a symbol of rupture and subversion. In African literature, particularly within post colonial contexts, madness frequently emerges as a metaphorical site where the person collided with political, and social deviant becomes a mirror for societal dysfunction. This chapter aims to position madness as a deliberate and conscious act of rebellion, where characters refuse to conform to the norms that defines sanity, success, masculinity, or morality.

Drawing on the selected text; Chinua Achebe's "The Madman" and Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness", this chapter focuses on two characters: the unnamed madman and Oki. Both of whom represent figures of rebellion who confront, and challenge established social orders. Their respective "madnesses" are not random eruptions of mental instability, but a calculated performance of resistance. One through unsettling disruption of social respectability (as seen in Achebe's unnamed madman) and the other through willful withdrawal and rejection of societal false structures (as seen in Mamudu's character Oki). In both cases, madness functions as a conscious tool, a way to critique the hypocrisy, injustice, and emptiness of their society.

By examining these characters through lens of conscious rebellion, this chapter contends that madness when stripped of its purely medical connotation, can become an empowered, intentional, and even revolutionary act. One that challenges reader to rethink the boundaries between reason and resistance.

## **2.1. OKI**

"There is beauty in madness! Leave me in it". With these defiant words, Oki in "The Beauty of Madness" boldly declares his conscious break from society he deems far more insane and chaotic, than the madness he is accused of. Unlike portrayals of mental illness as helpless descent, Oki's madness is deliberate, almost philosophical. Oki rebellion is staged through silence, observation and eventual action. Subsequent paragraph explores Oki as a conscious rebel, a character who despite undergoing

“healing” ultimately choose to embrace madness as a more authentic, and liberating response to the absurdity and corruption of the world around him.

Far from being a passive victim of mental illness; Oki’s actions, his silence, his refusal to conform, and his final return to the market square, reveals a deliberate rejection of social norms. His rebellion is not rooted in ignorance but in clarity, not in disorder but in protest. His rejection of sanity is a direct indictment of a society plagued by oppression, corruption, hunger, and fear conditions he describes after scanning the newspaper headlines. In that moment, he recognizes the madness not within himself, but in the structures around him. After years of muteness, he awakens not with gratitude but with a piercing awareness of the world’s dysfunction. His act of undressing and spreading his arms like “a hawk” in flight is symbolic. It marks a reclaiming of self, a shredding of societal expectations, and an embrace of personal truth. His decision to return to the market square, shouting in defense of madness, is an intentional disruption of the very norms that once sought to “heal him”. It is here that madness transforms from a condition into conscious strategy, a refuge from the world he no longer seeks to validate.

By embracing madness on his own terms, Oki rejects the definition imposed on him by institutional psychiatry, and social conformity. His rebellion is not violent and chaotic, it is symbolic and calculated. In reclaiming his madness, he exposes the contradictions in a world that calls itself sane while normalizing injustice. Oki becomes a mirror, reflecting the real madness of the society back at itself. In doing so, asserts a radical form of agency from the margins.

### **2.1.1 Oki's pre-recovery silence as passive defiance.**

Before Oki's admission into Gomina Psychiatric Hospital, he lives in a prolonged state of muteness and physical withdrawal. While the community labels this behavior as madness, a closer literary and psychological reading suggests that Oki's silence is not merely a symptom of illness, but a deliberate retreat and a passive form of rebellion against a society that has failed him. This stage of his character development can be seen as the quiet incubation of inner conviction. His silence functions not only as psychological withdrawal but also as an emphatic non-verbal protest against the false moralities and hypocrisies of his world.

In the story, there is no clear indication that Oki has lost cognitive awareness. Instead, his behavior reveals a refusal to engage with the performative expectations of society. By choosing silence, he denies the community the typical language of conformity. He strips himself of societal identity and becomes an empty vessel, free from imposed roles. This muteness unsettles those around him, who cannot comprehend rebellion that lacks violence or articulation. Here, Mamudu uses Oki to critique how societies are quick to 'medicalize' what they cannot morally understand that someone would rather choose silence than partake in a corrupt system. Moreover, Oki's state parallels the classic archetype of the "wise fool" or "holy madman" found in postcolonial African literature, where madness becomes a veiled language through which the individual protests colonial residues, failed leadership, or cultural alienation. His silence can be read as a survival mechanism, a way to preserve internal sanity in the face of external madness. The community's reaction to Oki's

behavior reveals more about their discomfort with deviance than his mental state. Thus, his passive defiance becomes a mirror, exposing the instability of societal values. Additionally, Oki's silence critiques the futility of dialogue in a space where truth has lost its place. His refusal to speak may signal the collapse of language itself. An indication that language as shaped by corrupt politics and broken promises, no longer holds meaning or power. By becoming mute, Oki rejects the lie embedded in everyday speech. This is what makes his madness politically charged even before he says a word: it is a quiet rejection of performative normalcy.

In sum, Oki's pre-recovery silence is a slow-burning resistance, a conscious retreat that is more strategic than it appears. It is in this silence that the seed of rebellion is planted. Rather than erupt in violence or complaint, he chooses to vanish into himself, a gesture that speaks louder than words. This silence becomes the foundation for the conscious and symbolic rebellion, he later enacts after his release. Through Oki, Mamudu presents silence not as helplessness, but as power. A form of protest that disrupts by withdrawing.

### **2.1.2 Post recovery disillusionment and defiance.**

Oki's post-recovery experience marks the climax of his transformation. Upon regaining clarity, Oki's first interaction with the real world is not one of celebration, but of deep disillusionment. After his supposed healing, Oki's return to the world is met not with joy, but horror. The shift in Oki's character after his time at Gomina marks a pivotal moment in his journey from silence to self-assertion. No

longer passively detached, Oki emerges from institutional care not with the expected “cure”, but with clarity and conscious rebellion. His so-called madness transforms into an intentional performance, a symbolically charged defiance against the societal structures that once imprisoned him. He no longer suppresses his disillusionment but now wears his dissent openly, rejecting reintegration into a hypocritical social order. When he declares, “It’s nice to be free on the streets, brother, isn’t it?”, it’s a deceptively simple line loaded with subversive meaning. Oki reclaims the street, an unregulated and chaotic space as a zone of personal freedom. The use of “free” is crucial: he’s not referring to legal freedom or even physical escape, but rather to a deeper kind of liberation from societal roles, expectations, and imposed definitions of sanity. The passage paints a vivid picture of his calm resistance. He sits at the back of the car, gently tapping the driver and speaking softly, so as not to attract attention or have his sanity doubted, an act of strategic silence, not submission.

Another telling episodes of this transformation is Oki’s symbolic act of confronting members of the community with uncomfortable truths. He speaks now, but not as he once did. His language is laced with irony, fragmented wisdom, and coded resistance. What society hears as the rantings of a lunatic are, in truth, sharp critiques of power, corruption, and societal decay. His madness becomes a performance of disruption, a conscious embodiment of protest that challenges dominant narratives and unsettles the community’s comfort with silence and complicity. Rather than hiding or conforming, Oki embraces his altered identity. His choice to dwell on the margins is not a mark of failure but of autonomy. He becomes a paradox, both outcast and

oracle holding a mirror up to a society in denial. In doing so, Mamudu reimagines madness not as a deficiency but as a tool for liberation, one that allows Oki to exist beyond the reach of societal judgment. His madness protects him from the pressures of “normalcy,” even as it empowers him to speak unfiltered truths. This stage of rebellion is especially significant in postcolonial African narratives, where trauma, displacement, and societal betrayal often find expression in non-normative behavior. Oki’s post-recovery persona echoes this tradition. His rebellion is no longer silent, it is loud, symbolic, and unashamed. Through Oki, Mamudu questions the very categories of sanity and madness, suggesting that in a disordered world, madness may be the only rational response.

Oki’s post-recovery behaviour reflect a conscious and calculated rebellion. His madness becomes a form of liberation, an escape from oppressive expectations, and a declaration of his own philosophical truth. He rebels through sustained irony, symbolic action, and radical reclaiming of his own identity.

### **2.1.3. The Significance of Oki’s conscious rebellion.**

Oki’s rebellion in “The Beauty of Madness” is not the frantic cry of a broken mind, but the measured defiance of a man who chooses to be misunderstood in order to live authentically. His conscious rejection of societal norms (particularly after the trauma of Gomina's institution) signals a shift from enforced silence to deliberate expression. The significance of Oki’s rebellion lies in its purposeful embrace of madness as a language of protest, offering both a critique of social expectations and

a redefinition of identity on his own terms.

Through Oki, Adekunle Mamudu presents madness as a metaphor for liberation. After enduring emotional suppression and the loss of self in a society that weaponizes “sanity” to enforce conformity, Oki does not passively re-integrate. Instead, he rewrites his identity through symbolic madness, refusing to be boxed by the binary of sane/insane. His rebellion, though quiet and nonviolent, is potent; it resists expectations of recovery by rejecting normalcy altogether. In doing so, Oki exposes how societal definitions of mental health often serve to silence alternative forms of being, especially those that challenge dominant narratives of masculinity, productivity, and success.

More than a personal stance, Oki’s rebellion bears communal implications. It unsettles those around him, not because he poses a physical threat but because he reflects a truth they refuse to confront. His presence in the market square, his riddled speech, and eccentric attire compel the community to acknowledge the cracks in their constructed sanity. Oki’s conscious rebellion is thus significant not only for its personal catharsis, but for its social critique. It urges a re-evaluation of how society defines normalcy, and who gets to decide what is acceptable. Ultimately, Oki’s rebellion is a radical reclamation of agency. It defies the erasure that institutions like Gomina represent, and reclaims visibility, voice, and value through performance. His madness is no longer a condition to cure but a strategy of survival and resistance. Transforming him from a victim of societal control into a symbol of inner freedom.

Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" expresses Oki as a compelling representation of conscious rebellion. Through a series of deliberate acts and symbolic gestures, Oki transforms madness from a perceived weakness into a form of resistance. His refusal to return to societal norms after his experience at Gomina's, and his engagement with the public as a "mad" man, underscores a powerful choice: to reject the healing that demands silence and conformity in favor of a voice, however fragmented that challenges the status quo.

## **2.2. THE UNNAMED MADMAN.**

"Madness, when it comes as a response to sanity's failures, is no longer a condition—it becomes a strategy." In Chinua Achebe's "The Madman", the unnamed mad figure disrupts the traditional notion of madness as mere irrationality. Instead, he operates with an eerie precision that suggests intent. His silence, strange behavior, and most significantly, the act of stripping and donning Nwibe's clothes in the market square, are not just random outbursts, they form a quiet rebellion. Through these actions, he creates a rupture in the societal fabric, destabilizing the identity of a respected man and turning a symbol of order into a subject of ridicule. His madness, therefore, is not portrayed as weakness or confusion, but as an instrument of challenge to postcolonial constructs of power and respectability.

While the madman remains unnamed and voiceless, his presence is overpowering. Achebe crafts him as a symbolic force, a mirror reflecting society's obsession with appearances, class, and control. The madman's invasion of Nwibe's identity is a

metaphorical stripping away of social masks. It is not accidental that he chooses to appear at the market, a public and performative space, where reputations are built and unmade. His conscious decision to assume Nwibe's garments (and by extension, his status) highlights how fragile constructed identities are. The madman does not speak, but his actions loudly question the legitimacy of what society calls 'sanity' and expose the vulnerability of those who think themselves secure within societal norms. The unnamed madman emerges as a conscious rebel not by declaring a manifesto, but by embodying one. His rebellion lies in silence, unpredictability, and the calculated disruption of social codes. Achebe uses him to question who truly defines madness and sanity, and whether madness can be a form of critique, an unsettling but necessary truth-telling. Through this character, Achebe elevates madness from pathology to philosophy, showing that sometimes, it takes the mad to reveal the madness of the world.

This section sets the foundation for a deeper analysis of how Achebe manipulates the image of madness to foreground a deliberate resistance to oppressive norms. By doing so, the text elevates the madman from an object of ridicule to an instrument of critique. The following sections will unpack the specific ways in which the unnamed madman's actions are not only conscious but calculated, and how his presence destabilizes the community's assumptions about order and status.

### **2.2.1 Subversion Through Symbolism: The Madman's Conscious Disruption of Social Order**

In "The Madman", Chinua Achebe masterfully constructs the unnamed madman as a symbolic disruptor of societal norms. An agent of conscious rebellion whose seemingly irrational actions reveal the fragility of social order. While the madman utters no words and remains unnamed, his behavior is far from meaningless. Each act; wandering into the market, seizing Nwibe's clothes, and forcing the protagonist into public nakedness, carries layered implications about identity, hypocrisy, and power. Achebe uses this character not to evoke pity or horror, but to unveil the absurdity of a society obsessed with surface respectability while ignoring deeper moral and psychological decay.

The madman's seizure of Nwibe's clothing at the village stream (a sacred communal space) is a pivotal moment of symbolic rebellion. Clothing in this context functions as a marker of social identity, class, and dignity. By stripping Nwibe, the madman forcibly erases those socially assigned markers, returning the man to a state of raw humanity. It is not simply a prank or madness for madness' sake; it is a bold disruption of the symbolic economy that upholds the community's moral structure. In this way, the madman challenges the illusion of order, stripping Nwibe not just of garments but of pride, reputation, and control. The choice of location and the timing of the act (at Nwibe's most vulnerable moment) highlight its intentionality: this rebellion is meant to be seen.

Moreover, Achebe subtly positions the madman as a mirror to Nwibe, revealing that madness is not solely in erratic behavior but in the illusions people construct around power, success, and righteousness. Nwibe, who once aspired to become a titled man, is rendered powerless and reduced to an object of ridicule. The community's swift turn against him, despite his prior status, underscores the hypocrisy of societal judgment, how quickly respectability is revoked when one's outward image is compromised. In this light, the madman becomes a conscious rebel who exposes the truth: that societal order is a performance, vulnerable to the slightest disruption.

Thus, the madman's rebellion is deliberate, silent? yes, but heavy with intent. He operates outside the linguistic and political codes of the community, yet exerts tremendous power over it. His madness becomes a tool of exposure and resistance. In portraying this, Achebe aligns the figure of the madman with a tradition of literary tricksters, prophets, and dissidents who unsettle the status quo not through reasoned argument but through symbolic action. The madness here is not a symptom of weakness, it is a force that reorders the social field by laying bare its contradictions.

### **2.2.2. The Madman as a Mirror and Messenger.**

The unnamed mad figure is more than a silent disruptor, he operates symbolically as both a mirror reflecting societal hypocrisy and a messenger delivering uncomfortable truths. Though he does not speak, his actions become a narrative device through which Achebe critiques the postcolonial Nigerian society, exposing its fragility, pretenses, and obsession with appearances.

As a mirror, the madman reflects Nwibe's deepest fears, shame, and suppressed anxieties. Nwibe, a respected man of status and wealth, prides himself on self-discipline and social image. However, the madman's act of stealing his clothes and parading around in them shatters that constructed identity. Stripped naked, Nwibe becomes the subject of public ridicule, effectively replacing the madman in societal perception. In this reversal, the madman exposes the thin veil separating the "sane" from the "insane," the "respected" from the "disgraced." This reflection forces the reader to question: what truly defines madness; behaviour, or society's reaction to it?

As a messenger, the madman's disruptive act becomes a symbolic pronouncement: that beneath the order and hierarchy lies chaos waiting to surface. His intrusion into the market becomes a prophetic gesture. He disrupts not just an individual, but a system of values. His silence is thus paradoxically loud; his message, though wordless, is urgent. By reducing Nwibe to the very madness he once scorned, the madman becomes a vessel of poetic justice, delivering a message society refuses to hear: that dignity built on social approval is fragile, and that madness can be a powerful mode of truth-telling.

Achebe's use of this character transcends plot; the madman functions as a symbolic conscience, one that does not moralize but reveals. His presence compels a reevaluation of power, status, and sanity. In this way, the madman is both mirror and messenger, reflecting society's flaws while silently prophesying its contradictions.

### **2.2.3. Significance of conscious rebellion in Achebe's narrative.**

In Chinua Achebe's "The Madman", the theme of conscious rebellion is masterfully embodied in the actions of the unnamed madman, whose silence and calculated disruption of order reveal the fragility of societal constructs. His decision to wear the clothes of Nwibe, a respected member of society, is not a random act of madness but a deliberate inversion of identity that unsettles the social order. Through this symbolic gesture, Achebe critiques the performative nature of respectability and sanity in a postcolonial society. One where the legitimacy of individuals is often based on appearance and perception rather than inner truth or justice. The madman, by stepping into Nwibe's identity and walking through the village with composure, forces the community to confront its own superficial metrics for judgment.

What makes the madman's rebellion particularly compelling is the power of his silence. Unlike the conventional rebel who speaks out or fights openly, Achebe's madman never utters a word. His silence becomes a radical tool of defiance, denying the community the comfort of explanation. In his refusal to communicate, the madman resists the very language that upholds social structures, laws, and expectations. This quiet noncompliance suggests that power can reside not only in speech, but in the denial of speech and in the refusal to conform to systems that demand justification. Achebe uses this silent rebellion to explore how the boundaries between sanity and madness are not only socially constructed but also politically charged, often used to exclude, punish, or control those who deviate from the norm.

Ultimately, the conscious rebellion of the madman in “The Madman” serves as a metaphor for postcolonial critique. By destabilizing identity, order, and the moral codes of the village, Achebe invites the reader to consider how madness can be a form of political and philosophical resistance. The madman’s actions expose the hypocrisy of a society that prides itself on order, yet crumbles when its symbols are slightly rearranged. In portraying madness as both a disruption and a mirror, Achebe challenges us to question who truly holds power, and whether sanity is merely the name we give to the collective agreement of the majority. Through this character, Achebe transforms madness into a vehicle of subversion, capable of revealing deeper truths about human nature and societal failure.

### **2.3. CONCLUSION.**

Oki in “The Beauty of Madness” and the unnamed madman in Achebe’s “The Madman” both embody conscious rebellion, but they channel their defiance through distinct modes that reflect their contexts and personalities. Oki’s rebellion is visceral and performative; he deliberately embraces madness as a liberating force, consciously rejecting societal expectations and norms that have oppressed him. His madness is loud, often marked by outbursts and symbolic actions, such as his disruptive presence in public spaces like the market square. Through this, Oki asserts his autonomy and critiques the socio-political structures that constrain individual freedom, turning his “madness” into an act of protest and self-empowerment.

In contrast, Achebe’s unnamed madman wields his madness as a subtler, more

enigmatic form of rebellion. His defiance is characterized by silence, cryptic pronouncements, and symbolic disruption. Rather than confront society with loud defiance, he unsettles the postcolonial elite by exposing their moral and intellectual complacency. His madness acts as a mirror reflecting societal flaws, a role that positions him less as an agitator and more as a messenger whose rebellion is deliberate but veiled in mystery. Both characters consciously use madness to challenge the status quo, but while Oki's rebellion is overt and physical, the unnamed madman's is covert and psychological, both revealing different facets of madness as a tool for social resistance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **UNCONSCIOUS REBELLION.**

Unconscious rebellion refers to acts of defiance or disruption carried out by individuals who are not fully aware that their behavior challenges established norms, systems, or authorities. Unlike deliberate revolutionaries, unconscious rebels resist societal expectations through involuntary, instinctive, or psychologically driven actions that arise from deep internal conflicts or suppressed traumas. In literature, such characters may appear irrational, erratic, or "mad," but their actions often unveil hidden tensions within society, expose injustice, or question dominant ideologies. Though they may not intend to rebel, their behavior symbolically destabilizes the status quo, making unconscious rebellion a powerful and often tragic form of resistance.

This form of rebellion is vividly illustrated in Chinua Achebe's "The Madman" through Nwibe, a respected man whose encounter with madness begins with a seemingly minor, humiliating incident but unfolds into a complete rupture of his social identity. While Chiweizu's "Angwo Tanda," the titular character, becomes an agent of cultural and psychic disruption, making his rebellion not a political stance but a mystical resistance to erasure. Together, Nwibe and Angwo Tanda embody unconscious rebellion: their minds fracture under the pressure of societal expectations, yet in doing so, they reveal the underlying cracks in communal structures and inherited ideologies. This chapter will analyze how these characters

through madness, silence, and dislocation, unintentionally confront and unsettle the systems that once defined their identity and place in society.

This chapter explores unconscious rebellion, a mode of resistance enacted not through deliberate intent, but through instinctive or psychologically driven responses that nonetheless challenge dominant social and political structures. Unlike conscious rebels who intentionally defy authority or question norms, unconscious rebels often emerge from a space of internal turmoil, trauma, or dislocation. Their rebellion is veiled in madness, silence, or inexplicable behavior, yet it shakes the foundations of societal order and exposes the fragility of what is deemed “normal.”

### **3.1. NWIBE.**

“Sometimes the strongest people are the ones who suffer in silence.” This quote captures the underlying tragedy of Nwibe in Chinua Achebe’s “The Madman”. Where madness though unintended, becomes a profound act of rebellion against societal expectations. At the story’s outset, Nwibe is presented as a man of wealth, respect, and ambition. One who seeks elevation within his community through admission into the prestigious **Ozo** title society. He embodies the ideals of masculinity, responsibility, and social decorum. Yet, a single encounter with a madman strips him of his composure, and symbolically disrobes him of the identity he so carefully cultivated. Achebe subtly uses this pivotal moment not only to challenge societal expectations but to illustrate how madness, even when uninvited, can expose the fragility of cultural constructs.

Nwibe's rebellion is not vocal or deliberate, it lies in his psychological break and social unraveling. His silence, withdrawal, and the community's altered perception of him mark a quiet but significant revolt against the rigid norms that once defined his life. He no longer fits into the societal mold he aspired to, and his exclusion from the **Ozo** society becomes a rejection of the very system that once validated him. The tragedy is that Nwibe never chooses to rebel, he becomes a rebel by force of circumstance. Yet in losing everything, he indirectly critiques a society that offers no room for vulnerability, error, or mental disintegration.

This section explores Nwibe's unconscious rebellion as a mirror to cultural pressures, and the consequences of public shame. Through detailed analysis of his character arc, this section reveals how Achebe uses madness as both a personal affliction, and a societal commentary. Nwibe's story highlights that not all rebellion is intentional. Sometimes it emerges from breakdown, humiliation, and silence. In that unconscious rebellion lies a powerful resistance, one that forces readers to question the rigidity of social hierarchies, and the cost of upholding them at the expense of human fragility.

### **3.1.1 The Ideal Man: Nwibe's Social Position and Aspiration**

In Chinua Achebe's "The Madman", Nwibe is introduced as the embodiment of the traditional Igbo ideal man; successful, respected, and morally upright. He is a prosperous farmer, a man of substance in his village, and a devoted father and husband. His wealth and integrity place him in high regard among his peers, and his aspiration to join the **ozo** title society reflects his desire not only for personal

fulfillment but also for social elevation. In the traditional Igbo context, the ozo title is not merely an honour; it is a marker of prestige, maturity, and spiritual initiation. It represents the pinnacle of masculine achievement and societal responsibility. Nwibe's intention to take this step signals his deep commitment to tradition and his willingness to live by its moral codes.

Nwibe's position in society, therefore, is not only privileged but also precarious. His standing depends heavily on external validation, and communal acknowledgment of his integrity. Achebe uses this to critique the expectations placed upon men in traditional society. Expectations that leave little room for error or vulnerability. Nwibe's fall is not due to a moral failing, but to a sudden, humiliating incident beyond his control. Yet society judges him not by intent but by outcome, stripping him of honor, and labeling him "mad." This exposes the rigidity and hypocrisy of the very structures Nwibe sought to be a part of. In constructing Nwibe as the "ideal man," Achebe sets the stage for his unconscious rebellion. A tragic unraveling that reveals the oppressive weight of societal ideals.

Achebe crafts Nwibe's character with subtle layers of ambition and vulnerability. While his wealth gives him material power, his pursuit of the **Ozo** title reveals an inner need for communal validation and spiritual fulfillment. He is not content with success alone, he yearns for recognition within the cultural framework that has shaped his identity. His aspirations are noble, but they also expose a rigid sense of self; one rooted in control, dignity, and the appearance of perfection. This delicate balance is what makes Nwibe's fall so tragic and symbolic. His identity is so

entwined with societal perception that when his public image is shattered, he is unable to reclaim his former self.

### **3.1.2 Humiliation as a Turning Point**

In Chinua Achebe's "The Madman", the moment of Nwibe's public humiliation marks the climactic turning point in both his personal journey, and his symbolic descent into madness. This scene, where he is stripped naked by the unnamed madman while bathing at the stream, is not merely an act of physical exposure. It represents a profound stripping of dignity, status, and selfhood. For a man who has built his identity on societal validation, moral uprightness, and visual decorum, this act of violation is deeply destabilizing. Achebe uses the incident to underscore how fragile the social constructs of respectability and honor truly are, especially in a culture where public perception defines a man's worth.

The setting intensifies the symbolic weight of the event. Nwibe is alone, vulnerable, performing a personal and routine task. Yet, it is in this moment of vulnerability that his social mask is shattered. When the madman runs off with his clothes and Nwibe, naked and desperate, chases after him through the village, the scene becomes a grotesque spectacle. The villagers, unaware of the context, see only what appears to be madness: a well-respected man running naked in broad daylight. Their immediate judgment, laughter and ridicule that follow, signify society's unforgiving nature. In one instant, all Nwibe's years of moral discipline and societal contributions are erased by an image that contradicts the expected norm.

This turning point is more than the loss of dignity, it marks the beginning of Nwibe's alienation. The humiliation acts as a rupture between who he was and who society now perceives him to be. Despite his attempts to explain and recover his reputation, the stain of the event lingers. Even his quest for the ozo title is derailed, as the spiritual purity and social honor required are now seen as compromised. Achebe uses this transition to expose the rigidity of social norms, where one mishap (regardless of its cause) can destroy a lifetime of integrity. Thus, the humiliation is not just a plot device but a thematic hinge: it transforms Nwibe from a man of social esteem into an involuntary rebel, whose "madness" becomes society's way of expelling what no longer conforms. This moment initiates his slow, tragic unraveling and positions him as a symbol of how easily systems of power discard those who fall outside their expectations.

### **3.1.3. Rebellion Through Retreat**

In "The Madman," Nwibe's descent into silence and eventual detachment from communal life is a profound form of rebellion. One enacted not through confrontation or protest, but through retreat. Unlike the flamboyant disruption of the unnamed madman or the intentional silence of Oki in "The Beauty of Madness", Nwibe's rebellion is shaped by withdrawal. After the humiliating episode that undermines his social standing, Nwibe no longer strives to reassert his place in society. Instead, he recedes from communal participation, a move that, while interpreted by others as madness or shame, can be read as a silent protest against the society that failed him.

Literarily, Achebe crafts Nwibe's silence and disengagement as layered with meaning. In traditional African society, presence, speech, and performance are crucial markers of belonging. Nwibe's refusal to speak or explain himself after a point; his stoic silence and eventual marginal existence, violates these norms. This passive rebellion is significant because it subverts the social system from within. He does not revolt in violence or madness as performance; rather, his non-participation becomes a haunting reminder of how social systems discard individuals. His retreat mirrors the psychological coping mechanism of those pushed to the margins. More so, it also functions symbolically as a quiet renunciation of a society that values image over truth. In this way, Nwibe's withdrawal is both a symptom of trauma and a subtle act of defiance. Marking him as an unconscious rebel whose silence speaks volumes.

Achebe's narrative suggests that Nwibe's retreat is not purely involuntary or pathological, it also reflects his growing disillusionment with the very structures he once served. His earlier ambition for the Ozo title, his commitment to family and trade, and his moral uprightness were all rooted in communal approval. But when that same community rejects him without question, Nwibe abandons his pursuit of societal validation. His retreat, then, becomes an unconscious form of resistance: by refusing to return to the rhythms and expectations of the society that humiliated him, he exposes its superficiality and lack of empathy.

### **3.1.4. The Unintentional Dissenter: Nwibe's Lasting Impact.**

Nwibe's transformation from a respected member of the community to a symbol of madness illustrates the concept of the unintentional dissenter. One who without a deliberate plan to rebel, ends up disrupting the social order by simply existing outside its rigid expectations. His descent into public disgrace is not a calculated protest, but a moment of personal misfortune that spirals into societal rejection. Yet, this accidental fall becomes deeply significant, as it exposes the community's fragile morality, performative respectability, and deep-seated fear of disorder. In this way, Nwibe's experience, though involuntary, forces a reckoning with the very ideals the society claims to uphold.

Though Nwibe never intended to challenge the system, his experience unmasks the community's double standards. A man who once sought to join the class of elders, who prioritized decorum and self-restraint, is swiftly discarded when his dignity is stripped; literally and metaphorically. His lasting impact lies in this exposure: he becomes a silent testimony to the unstableness of social status, and how quickly the "ideal man" can be turned into an outcast. His rejection by the community marks a moral failure, not of the individual but of the collective. Hereby, revealing that belonging is dependent not on character, but conformity.

Furthermore, Nwibe's symbolic fall leaves an enduring psychological imprint, not just on him but on the society that cast him out. His continued wandering, or retreat into silence, becomes a living reminder of the community's harshness and failure to

protect one of its own. The image of Nwibe; broken, misunderstood, yet visible, is unsettling. It serves as a quiet rebellion, one not waged through words or deliberate action, but through presence. A life that resists erasure and compels reflection. In this way, Nwibe the unintentional dissenter, haunts the social conscience, becoming both a casualty and a critique of the very system he once upheld.

### **3.2. ANGWO TANDA.**

\_"The human voice can never reach the distance that is covered by the still small voice of conscience."\_ Mahatma Gandhi

This section explores Angwo Tanda as an unconscious rebel. A character whose descent into madness is not merely an individual breakdown, but a symbolic revolt against the oppressive structures of his community. His rebellion is not calculated or strategic, rather it arises from the emotional toll of persistent gossip, ridicule, and public alienation. Chiweizu's portrayal of Angwo challenges the reader to see beyond his absurdity and erratic behavior, revealing the social wounds that shape his condition. Through Angwo, madness becomes both a shield and a stage. A way to escape the cruelty of society while simultaneously exposing it.

The story presents Angwo as a man gradually stripped of his dignity by the very society that once embraced him. As the rumors about him multiply, they begin to shape his identity, until he is no longer seen as a person but as a subject of ridicule. The market dump becomes his new home and theatre, and his thunderous antics, his only language of resistance. These unconscious expressions of dissent performed

nightly under the moonlight, transform him into a figure of tragic defiance, simultaneously mocked and feared by the community.

By situating Angwo Tanda within the cultural and psychological framework of his society, subsequent sections seek to analyze how his madness is weaponized against exclusion. It argues that his breakdown is a deeply human response to structural cruelty, and in his madness lies an accidental but profound critique of societal hypocrisy. Angwo's story ultimately forces us to confront how easily communities turn difference into deviance, and how rebellion can emerge not only from action but from collapse.

### **3.2.1 Weight of Public Perception: Gossip as Social Violence**

The story refrains from offering clinical explanation for Angwo's condition, instead it exposes how communal narratives can penetrate the psyche so deeply, that one begins to embody them. In "Angwo Tanda", Chiweizu masterfully demonstrates how gossip functions not merely as idle talk but as a form of social violence, capable of shaping destinies and destroying identities. The weight of public perception, embodied in whispers, ridicule, and relentless speculation becomes the crucible in which Angwo's sanity is slowly eroded. This section argues that gossip in the narrative is more than background noise; it is a weaponized communal tool, subtly enforcing conformity and punishing deviation through psychological torment.

Angwo's initial portrayal is that of a man trying to live within societal expectations, but as rumors begin to spread questioning his sanity, masculinity, and value, the

foundations of his identity begin to crumble. He becomes a spectacle, laughed at, pitied, and avoided. These whispers act like verbal blows, internalized over time until they birth emotional instability. Chiweizu carefully presents this degeneration not as sudden madness, but as the logical result of sustained communal pressure and character assassination.

Gossip in the text is shown to operate as an invisible surveillance system, regulating behavior by instilling fear and shame. For Angwo, it is not the truth of the rumors that matter, it is their power. His descent into the role of the market madman is both a retreat and a protest. In becoming what the community already assumes he is, he strips gossip of its sting and assumes agency in his own way, albeit unconsciously. This perverse transformation reflects how societal labels, when reinforced through repetition and ridicule, can manifest as lived realities. The community's whispers, which begins as institutions, evolve into a definitive narrative that pushes Angwo to the market dump. Rather than resisting those imposed labels, Angwo becomes consumed by them, and his behaviour gradually reflects the very madness the society accused him of.

Thus, this section demonstrates that public perception in Angwo Tanda is not benign, but actively participates in the destruction of the individual. Chiweizu invites readers to consider how communities can produce madness, not by cruelty alone, but by the slow, persistent erosion of dignity through socially sanctioned mockery.

### **3.2.2. The Market Dump as a Theatre of Rebellion.**

The market dump in “Angwo Tanda” operates not merely as a setting, but as a symbolic stage. A “theatre of rebellion” where the protagonist enacts his unconscious resistance against a society that has judged, and alienated him. This space riddled with waste and abandonment, becomes the perfect metaphor for Angwo’s own psychological state: discarded, misunderstood, and yet persistently present. His retreat to the dump is not a random wandering of a madman but a significant shift in spatial identity, a migration from the margins of sanity to the visible periphery of society, where his rebellion takes form through performance.

Chiweizu employs powerful irony and pathos in the narrator’s observation: “if he was not visibly mad, his gestures would have been moving.” This single sentence captures the ambiguous nature of Angwo’s presence at the dump. His actions; potentially interpreted as poetic, mournful, or expressive in another context are re-coded by the visible markers of madness. Yet, the line also suggests that there is a deeper emotional or moral message beneath his erratic gestures; something in him still calls out to be understood. This duality—between madness and meaning—transforms the dump into a public arena for silent protest, where Angwo’s body and behavior speak what his mouth cannot.

In a society where the spoken word is dominated by gossip and suppression, Angwo’s non-verbal expression becomes a form of resistance. By choosing the most visible yet disregarded space (the dump) he forces his community to witness what

they have discarded: not just a man, but a conscience, a soul, a life twisted by judgment. His movements, though marked as insane, disrupt the expectations of passivity associated with social defeat. He refuses to vanish, instead he occupies space turns waste into stage, and transforms perceived madness into a haunting echo of sanity lost to society's cruelty.

Therefore, the market dump becomes a crucible of contradiction, where degradation and defiance collide. Angwo Tanda, in his madness constructs a narrative of loss, pain, and protest. He does not need an audience to understand him fully; his mere presence in that space reclaims agency, even if subconsciously, and challenges the town's moral order by embodying what it refuses to acknowledge: that sometimes, society creates its own outcasts, and their silence is louder than their words ever could be.

### **3.2.3 The Spectacle of Madness: Laughter, Pity, and Unease.**

In "Angwo Tanda" Chiweizu crafts madness not only as a private affliction but as a public performance. A spectacle through which the community responds with a complex mix of laughter, pity, and unease. The protagonist, now stripped of dignity and societal belonging, becomes a figure of entertainment and discomfort, embodying how madness is consumed by society as both comedy and cautionary tale. His presence in the public space, particularly the market dump, marks a symbolic inversion: the former man of potential now serves as an object lesson in collapse. Yet beneath the town's reactions lies a deeper cultural tension, a society that mocks what

it secretly fears.

From the narrator's reflections "If he was not visibly mad, his gestures would have been moving", we are drawn into this paradox. There is something tragically beautiful in Angwo's expressions, even in madness. His gestures carry the residue of longing, of grief, of a man broken by memory and rejection. But because he no longer fits the mold of rationality, his audience filters his pain through the lens of ridicule. Townspeople laugh not because what they witness is humorous, but because laughter is a defensive gesture. A way of distancing themselves from the recognition that what happened to Angwo could happen to anyone. Pity too is present, particularly in the narrator's empathetic tone. But it is often buried beneath societal discomfort and the need to label and contain his difference. Angwo becomes a living contradiction: pitied but mocked, watched but avoided. His madness stages an unspoken rebellion by exposing the fragility of societal boundaries. The laughter he evokes is uneasy, the pity he receives is impotent, and the discomfort he causes is revealing. In making his madness public, Chiweizu invites the reader to question the role of the community in both producing and policing madness. The marketplace; center of commerce, gossip, and social order, becomes the perfect stage for this performance, where Angwo's mere presence disrupts the illusion of moral coherence.

Ultimately, the spectacle of Angwo's madness lays bare the hypocrisy of communal norms. It underscores how society turns suffering into spectacle, stripping individuals of their humanity while failing to take accountability for its role in their

downfall. The community's response; simultaneously amused and afraid, mirrors a deeper truth. That madness is not totally alien but rather an uncomfortable reflection of the society that created it. Through Angwo Tanda, Chiweizu turns the spectacle of madness into a mirror, daring readers and characters alike to look and see not just a madman, but the invisible lines of pain, rejection, and rebellion that define him.

#### **3.2.4. The Unwilling Rebel: Angwo's Enduring Significance.**

Angwo Tanda emerges as a profoundly unwilling rebel, a man thrust into symbolic defiance not by intention, but by the unrelenting weight of social judgment, personal loss, and psychological trauma. Unlike overt revolutionaries, Angwo does not set out to challenge the structures around him, instead he collapses under them. Yet, it is in this collapse, this disintegration of the self, that his rebellion is born. His madness, though not consciously orchestrated, becomes a living critique of the societal values, pressures, and hypocrisies that left him alienated.

Angwo's significance lies in how his character challenges the very notion of what it means to rebel. He does not raise his voice or lead a movement; he withdraws, disorients, and disturbs. His broken mind and erratic gestures unsettle the comfortable assumptions of the sane. In becoming the "other," Angwo exposes the rigid binaries that society clings to: sanity vs. madness, strength vs. weakness, conformity vs. deviance. His passive rejection of societal norms, especially in his final transformation into the market madman, speaks volumes. It forces the community to reckon with its own failures, its capacity for cruelty, gossip, exclusion,

and silence in the face of suffering.

Moreover, Angwo's endurance, his continued existence on the fringes becomes a lasting symbol of how rebellion does not always require strategy or even awareness. Sometimes, it is the mere survival of a broken spirit in a judgmental world that becomes a revolutionary act. His very visibility; dirty, incoherent, isolated, refuses to let the community forget. He is a living monument to what society chooses to suppress, and in this way, he continues to haunt, to signify, and to provoke thought. His rebellion, though unintentional, is no less powerful. It is a quiet scream, echoing through the marketplace and the reader's conscience, reminding us that every breakdown has a backstory, and every outcast holds a mirror to the society that cast them out.

### **3.3. CONCLUSION**

Nwibe in Achebe's "The Madman" and Angwo Tanda in Chiweizu's "Angwo Tanda" exemplify the figure of the unconscious rebel, individuals who without consciously intending to, challenge the societal norms and expectations that once defined their identities. Both men begin their narratives as symbols of social aspiration and respectability. Nwibe is a wealthy, well-dressed man aiming for chieftaincy, while Angwo is a student navigating the complex terrain of education, elitism and community expectation. However, each character experiences a dramatic collapse triggered by social humiliation and psychological strain. Nwibe is publicly disgraced and stripped naked by a madman, while Angwo is undone by gossip, betrayal, and

emotional disintegration.

Their rebellions are not deliberate acts of defiance, but rather responses to internal and external ruptures, the shattering of their sense of self and social standing. Through madness, both men unintentionally resist reintegration into a society that has failed them. Nwibe's retreat from family and pursuit of healing through traditional methods reflects a subconscious rejection of the social order that demanded perfection. Similarly, Angwo's descent into visible madness and his haunting presence in the market square becomes a silent indictment of the communal structures that mocked, pitied, and ultimately discarded him.

What binds them as unconscious rebels, is their transformation into symbols of society's contradictions. Their madness becomes a form of commentary, speaking truths they themselves may not articulate, but which the society cannot ignore. In becoming the very outcasts they once feared, Nwibe and Angwo force a confrontation with societal values, revealing how madness can serve as both a shield and a spotlight—protecting the self while illuminating the cracks in the collective. Their stories show that rebellion does not always begin with protest; sometimes, it begins with pain, silence, and a quiet unraveling.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION.

“The edge between sanity and madness is a narrow one, and those who walk it often speak the truths society dares not utter.”

This chapter brings to culmination the thematic exploration of schizophrenia as rebellion in the selected African short stories; Chinua Achebe’s “The Madman”, Adekunle Mamudu’s “The Beauty of Madness” and Chiweizu’s “Angwo Tanda”. The study has shown that madness in African literature is far from being a mere descent into incoherence or an individual affliction; rather, it is a potent metaphor for subversion, critique, and resistance. Whether embodied through deliberate silence, public humiliation, or socially disruptive behavior, madness becomes a language through which characters question, reject, or flee from oppressive socio-political systems, cultural expectations, and postcolonial legacies.

Through close readings, the study classified the mad figures into conscious and unconscious rebels. Achebe’s unnamed madman and Mamudu’s Oki emerge as conscious agents of rebellion, whose perceived madness is used deliberately to disrupt societal hierarchies and reclaim autonomy. In contrast, characters like Nwibe and Angwo Tanda represent the unconscious rebel. Individuals pushed to psychological breaking points by betrayal, social violence, or trauma. Yet, whether conscious or unconscious, each character’s madness exposes society’s own fractures, hypocrisies, and unspoken tensions. These madmen become mirrors and messengers,

revealing not their own insanity, but the insanity of the world that cast them out.

By portraying schizophrenia as symbolic rebellion, the texts confront deeply entrenched issues in African societies: the tyranny of social conformity, the remnants of colonial psychological suppression, the burden of patriarchy, and the silence around mental health. These characters are not “mad” in the reductive, medicalized sense; they are “mad” because they have chosen, or have been forced to step outside the lines society has drawn. Their rebellion is a form of truth-telling, often painful, sometimes tragic, but always illuminating.

By classifying the four major characters into conscious and unconscious rebels, the study sheds light on how madness functions on multiple levels: as a personal coping mechanism, a critique of postcolonial alienation, a response to trauma, and a vehicle for deeper existential and communal commentary. The conscious rebels (Achebe’s madman and Mamudu’s Oki) employ madness deliberately, using their disruption of speech, space, and behavior to expose societal hypocrisy. The unconscious rebels (Nwibe and Angwo Tanda) are pulled into madness through humiliation and emotional breakdown, but their madness becomes no less powerful in revealing the failures of societal empathy, respectability, and communal integrity. These narratives affirm that rebellion does not always roar; sometimes, it whispers, trembles, or collapses. Madness, as portrayed in these African short stories, emerges not simply as loss, but as literary gain...a potent lens through which fractured individuals reclaim power, critique oppressive norms, and unsettle the boundary between sanity and truth. In these portrayals, schizophrenia is not the end of meaning but the

beginning of a different kind of sense-making. One that destabilizes order, embraces ambiguity, and compels readers to listen more carefully to the voices on the margins. These stories call us to reconsider madness not as exile from reason, but as an alternate route to liberation, clarity, and even prophecy.

This research is significant because it contributes to an alternative discourse on madness in African literature, one that intersects with postcolonial, psychoanalytic, and disability studies. By focusing on how schizophrenia and madness are literary strategies of dissent, this study challenges the stigmatization of mental illness and opens new paths for interpreting African narratives of resistance. It fills a critical gap by showing how characters marked as “insane” may, in fact, be more conscious, more perceptive, and more resistant than the so-called sane majority. In doing so, the study not only highlights the complexity of African storytelling but also redefines madness as a revolutionary medium of expression.

Ultimately, these literary portrayals remind us that rebellion does not always take the form of protest marches or weapons; sometimes, it is the quiet refusal to conform, the loud cry of a misunderstood soul, or the slow unraveling of a mind no longer willing to be caged. Schizophrenia, then, becomes not just a diagnosis, but a metaphor for liberation.

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