

Hybridity in Culture and Identity: Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*

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ABSTRACT: Identity and culture are two interrelated terms. Culture can shape the identity and make a fixed identity or hybrid one. This paper examines the formation of hybrid cultural identity of the male educated character, Obi Okonkwo, in Chinua Achebe's (1930-2013) *No Longer at Ease* (1960). The researchers make use of the issues of postcolonial arguments based on the theories of Homi K. Bhabha (1949-) and Frantz Fanon (1925-1961). One of the consequences of confrontation between two different cultures during colonisation is transforming of identity, which results in hybridity of identity of the colonised people and culture. According to Bhabha, the space between different cultures, in which a hybrid identity is created, is third space. This third space depicts how colonialism and colonial power can transform the identity and make hybrid identities in Nigeria. By considering the situation of a hybrid character like Obi and British power, Achebe tries to focus on the problems of identification among Nigerians. Obi's life and identity have been formed based on the effects of colonialism. Fanon usually puts emphasis on the role of education and literature in the reviving of self-respect of Africans. For Fanon, 'inferiority complex' caused by colonial education, invites the black man to follow white man's values and forget his own culture. This process results in the rejection of native values by the black people. *No Longer at Ease* provides a picture of beauties and complexities of Nigerian culture. Achebe shows that religion and rituals are two important factors in keeping the native culture, identity and social norms of Nigeria alive. Illustrating the old tradition of Nigeria, he tries to reject the colonial thinking about Africa as a land without history and civilisation.

Keywords: Culture, Cultural Identity, Hybrid Identity, Religion, Rituals, Third Space.

INTRODUCTION

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) is one of the most important figures, writers, and critics in the field of postcolonialism. Nigeria's colonisation by British power during Achebe's childhood and the interaction between traditional culture of Ibo and modern European culture had an important influence on Achebe's writings. This interaction became a main theme of his novels. *No Longer at Ease* (*NLE*), takes its title from one of the poems of T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), "Journey of the Magi" (1927), which creates a sense of alienation. The idea of being both traditional and new in this novel shows the unpleasant situation of the central character.

The protagonist of the novel is a grandson of the first novel's protagonist. *No Longer at Ease* is set in the 1950s, on the early days of the Nigeria's independence. The novel begins with a trial against the protagonist, Obi, who has been back from England after studying at a university for four years. Obi is unable to combine his indigenous values and European attitude. He finds himself uprooted and alienated.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the colonised countries, identity is transformed through the process of exposure of the colonised to the culture of the coloniser. Identity is a concept through which a person, or a large group of people is recognised or identified and consequently distinguished from person or a large group of people. Based on this definition, the distinction and difference between people are the essence of identity. Being introduced to two different languages, customs, religions, and worldviews, as the result of colonisation the identity of people undergoes a kind of transformation.

The result of the clashes between two cultures is the inward struggle to achieve fixed identity; therefore, a new identity is created. According to Homi K. Bhabha, in his *The Location of Culture* (1994), this new unfixed identity is a 'hybrid' identity. Bhabha argues that the "third space of Enunciation" is a space of "in-betweenness and liminality" in which a new form of identity is recreated (37). In this space, two different cultures connect to each other. Bhabha declares that, "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" (ibid). Bhabha criticises the binary opposition which is created by European writers for describing Europeans and non-Europeans. He argues that binary opposition between the coloniser and the colonised (civilised and savage) creates images of the coloniser and the colonised; therefore, they reshape the identities of both.

Unlike those theorists who argue for the possibility of assimilation and equality, Fanon advocates a revolutionary and radical response on the parts of all oppressed and marginalised groups- to return to one's traditions and values, and to reject the settler's value. The colonised prepared to reject the settlers. The native elites, who had studied in the colonisers' nation, played an important role in decolonisation and independency. According to Fanon, in order to end European domination over Africa, not only should the natives totally reject European discourse, but also they should fight against colonialism.

Frantz Fanon's concern was African and Caribbean colonies. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon tries to reveal the psychological impacts of racism and colonialism. In Fanon's view, binary oppositional and static misrepresentations of the third world and particularly Africans is among the most harmful aspects of colonialism. For him, the total rejection of African customs and culture was the dominant and repeated technique that the Europeans used to destroy the self-confidence or the self-esteem of the colonised people. Fanon made a great attempt to revive and reconstruct a new understanding of black people. For him, the main destructive aspect of the colonial discourse was its attempt to divest the black of their identity as black. Therefore, the best strategy to save a colonised society is to recover and revive its traditions and customs. As Fanon says:

The conscious of self is not the closing of a door to communication; philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension. (1963: 246)

This 'international dimension' can be achieved in different ways, one of which is 'Diaspora', believed by many postcolonial critics to be instrumental in postcolonial formation. This separation of people and cultures, opposes an old appeal to 'essence' and purity and it is an appreciation of difference. 'Diaspora' can have bearing on 'hybridity' which assists and elevates cultural difference together with a resistance to the oppression and suffering that colonialism represented. Therefore, to many critics, diaspora is the best way to oppose colonialism and its effects. It is a way to reach what Said calls "postnationalism" (Anderson et al 3), the two aims of which are to show how colonialism changed the lives of both the coloniser and the colonised, and to create an association against international misery and injustice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Bhabha, the process of colonialism involves the change in the culture of both the colonisers and the colonised in a way that neither side is "independent" of the other (116). The result is that there is no "unified self," whether claimed by colonialists or nationalists in this situation "the symmetry and duality of Self/Other, inside/outside" are broken (ibid). This is what makes the aim of nationalist to regain a pre-colonial purity impractical because the culture of colonial nations is certainly a hybridised phenomenon involving a relationship between the European cultural systems and natives. Accordingly, hybridity is asserted by numerous postcolonial writers as a good element for creating new cultural identities.

Cultural identity and the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised have considerable significance in Bhabha's works. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha investigated the question of cultural identity and identity formation of both the coloniser and the colonised. His notions of 'mimicry,' 'hybridity', and 'third space' explore the

interrelation of the coloniser and the colonised and illustrate how cultures are always in contact with one another. Such cultural contact and interaction lead to 'cultural mixed-ness,' 'hybridity', and 'ambivalence.'

Bhabha's definition of 'hybridity' stresses the "interaction between the coloniser and the colonised and the interdependence and mutual construction of their subjectivities" (Ashcroft et al 1998: 118). Bhabha maintains that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the "Third Space of Enunciation [...] that may open the way to conceptualising an international culture based on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (qtd in. Ashcroft 124). Consequently for Bhabha, the transcultural interaction between the coloniser and the colonised opens a 'third space' whereby hybrid identities are created.

Hybrid Identity of Character: Obi

The obvious scene in *No Longer at Ease* is the plethora of the instabilities of identity which are inevitable results of colonialism in Bhabha's point of view. This effect of colonialism, which Bhabha calls "unhomeliness", applies to both colonisers and the colonised (ibid 13). In other words, as a result of the cultural interaction between the colonisers and the colonised, neither the colonised nor the coloniser can hold intact to their pure pre-colonial self.

In postcolonial era, a person is no longer at ease with himself, his home country and his cultural identity. Achebe shows this fact with a symbolic play on the words Obi and Ibo, which are anagrams. Obi is a man from the Ibo tribe and his mother tongue is Ibo. However, as his name displays, he is an altered form of his true and pre-colonial self. In other words, Obi is an Ibo, but not without a radical transformation of the original.

Obi loves his country and makes a conscious effort to fight for the rights of the blacks against the whites. Obi believes that the new generation of educated Nigerian uproots the corruption. He is also shocked when he see the bribe-taking of policemen. He wants to fight against corruption in Nigeria, however, he fails to achieve his goal since cultural values in Ibo, send him to the bottom of corruption. He commits exactly what he wants to fight against. Alienation from his people and society stands up for missing his way. Hardly ever can old values last for a long time and new values circulate during colonisation since it features moments of chaos and confusion.

As mentioned earlier, Obi's firm determination to retrieve his African identity is dismantled by his unconscious tendency in praising English culture and lifestyle. In other words, Obi's identity has been shaped by African and the European culture. Accordingly, he is representative of hybrid identity and cannot claim to be a pure African. Achebe embodies this reality in various spot of the novel. For example, young Obi's love of Nigerian folktale is against his father's Christian teachings. Nigerian folktales are symbolic of Nigeria's true cultural identity and Obi's love of these folktales is a fight against his father's Christian and European faith. His father considers Nigerian folk tales heathen rites and he orders his wife, Hannah, not to teach them to their children:

And Hannah had stopped telling her children folk- stories. She was loyal to her husband and to her new faith. Her mother had joined the Church with her children after her husband's death. Hannah had already grown up when they ceased to be 'people of nothing' and joined the 'people of the Church'. (NLE 58)

Ironically enough, the same folktales which represent African identity extend Obi's love for narration and literature. Folktales also prepare the ground for his choice of English literature as a course of study. Here, Achebe wants to show that pure national identity is rotten at the core because cultural identity during postcolonialism and in the postcolonial situation is always hybrid.

When Obi returns to Umuofia to attend his graduation ceremony, he hears the songs of the traders on the wagon. Obi has heard this song many times in his life before his departure for England. As a graduate of English literature, obi translates these songs to English in his mind. Suddenly he realises that the English translation of these songs help him to understanding them for the first time. Achebe uses this occasion to confirm that Obi, as a man in postcolonial era, requires the language of the coloniser to understand himself, his identity as well as his culture, even though the song is a mixture of English and Nigerian language and understanding of it for such a person with a hybrid identity poses no difficulty:

The traders burst into song again, this time there was nothing bawdy about it. Obi knew the refrain, he tried to translate it into English, and for the first time its real meaning dawned on him [...] On the face of it there was no kind of logic or meaning in the song. But as Obi turned it round and round in his mind, he was struck by the wealth of association that even such a mediocre song could have. (NLE 46)

Achebe has shown the hybrid nature of the postcolonial situation not only in the character of Obi but in other characters and in the fabric of the Nigerian society as a whole. The description of places and of ways of life in Lagos, Umuofia and other places in Nigeria shows the intermingling of British and Nigerian culture in the clear ways. For example, Achebe shows that the UPU members take pride and pleasure in speaking full and formal English, though their English is in many ways different from the one that Obi finds in London. This English will never attain its pure pre-colonial form.

Upon his return from England, Obi finds out that Nigeria is not the Nigeria of his memories and his nostalgic poems. It was "in many ways different from the picture he had carried in his mind during those four years" (*NLE* 13). He finds Lagos a "strange city," and crowded city:

Obi was away in England for a little under four years. He sometimes found it difficult to believe that it was as short as that. It seemed more like a decade than four years, what with the miseries of winter when his longing to return home took on the sharpness of physical pain. It was in England that Nigeria first became more than just a name to him. That was the first great thing that England did for him. But the Nigeria he returned to was in many ways different from the picture he had carried in his mind during those four years. (*NLE* 131)

Nigeria has no similarity with Obi's romantic and idyllic image as an African nation. Through Obi's eyes, Achebe tries to show the extent to which colonialism has changed the face and the soul of Africa. African people, the colonised people, themselves cannot see the transformations and they unaware of them.

The novel is cyclicled, it ends where it began. Obi stands in a court room with a Western legal system. The novel starts to answer the judge question; "I cannot comprehend how a young man of your education and brilliant promise could have done this" (*NLE* 2), and ends without answer:

everybody wondered why. The learned judge, as we have seen, could not comprehend how an educated young man and so on and so forth. The British Council man, even the men of Umuofia, did not know. And we must presume that, in spite of his certitude, Mr. Green did not know either. (*NLE* 170)

The desire to preserve traditional values and to recognise the necessity of change to survive are depicted in the novel. And they have been illustrated in the novel by individual's hybridity, fall, and the death of his dreams.

Hybrid Identity of Society: Nigeria

Achebe takes the reader to variety of places whereby a 'third space' with all its combination of African and European cultures is created by the synthesis of the two groups. Among these places is the suburb of Ikoyi where Europeans and Nigerians with "European posts" live (*NLE* 18). Ikoyi was once a European habitat, but now it is an example of Bhabha's 'third space.'

In one scenes of the novel, Achebe takes the reader, with Obi and Joseph, to a restaurant owned by an old British woman in Lagos. The readers learn that this restaurant is dining place for British colonialists and educated Africans who occupy high positions. The place itself is a symbol of the postcolonial world in which no cultural purity is found. The foods and the way they are served are an indication of the hybrid nature of the place. The narrator mentions:

The second generation of educated Nigerians had gone back to eating pounded yams or garri with their fingers for the good reason that it tasted better that way. Also for the better reason that they were not as scared as the first generation of being called uncivilised. (*NLE* 21)

This second generation of educated Nigerians is not a passive receiver of English culture. They use English education, English language, and English culture in their own way. This description is an example of Bhabha's argument to clarify the dialectical relationship between the colonisers and the colonised. According to Bhabha, the colonised people struggle for cultural purity is neither possible nor desirable, since the culture of the colonisers is not received passively, but actively; it changes the colonised culture, but the culture itself is changed mutually. Indeed, after colonialism no culture can be at ease and the phrase 'no longer at ease' applies to both the English colonisers and the Nigerians.

In another scene, there is an interesting scene that shows the hybrid nature of Nigeria as a postcolonial society and as an example of Bhabha's 'third space'. Obi returns to Umuofia and the village is holding a graduation ceremony for him. During the feast an old man proposes to serve kola nuts but Obi's father, who is a catechist, rejects the offer and considers it improper. They discuss the matter and, in the end they agree to serve the kola nut in a Christian way. By doing this, they are able to pay tribute to and respect both of cultures. This scene shows that in postcolonial Nigeria, Christianity itself is no longer at ease, because it is subject to continuous modification and change by the native culture.

A clear indication of Obi's dependence on English culture is the time when he uses English language to express his feelings of Nigeria. Ironically, Obi expresses his nostalgic feeling of home in English and in a poetic genre which belongs to the English literature. More significantly, a few months after his return from Nigeria, he finds his nostalgic poems about Nigeria in A. E. Housman's (1859-1936) book of poetry:

He looked along the shelves a number of times without deciding what to read. Then his eye rested on A. E. Housman's *Collected Poems*. [...] He opened the book where a piece of paper was showing, its top frayed and browned from exposure to dust. On it was written a poem called "Nigeria." (*NLE* 102-103)

This is a symbol of the interweave of languages, cultures, and identities which, according to Bhabha, characterises the postcolonial situation. Obi, like Achebe himself, chooses the language and the literary form of the colonised but he does not use them in their pure form. Indeed, both Achebe and Obi use English language and English literary forms and their purpose is to fight the English with their own weapons.

As a novel written in the postcolonial era, *No Longer at Ease* not only pictures the hybridisation, as happened in Africa, but also is a hybrid form itself. Although the book is written by an African author and it depicts the lives of Africans and their encounter with the white Europeans, it is written in English and in the form of a novel, which is European literary genre. Consequently, the novel cannot be counted as a pure African text.

Religion and Hybrid Identity

The traditional tribal's cultural identity is mostly constructed upon its customs and religious beliefs. Traditionally, Nigerian religion practices various gods and spirits and Ibo people believe in Chukwu, the supreme god and creator of all other gods. Religion has kept the society for centuries alive. The natives respect and believe in their gods and goddesses. Ibo people also believe that their dying relatives can lead and protect them and their spirits help them to do good things:

'Remark him,' said Odogwu. 'He is Ogbuefi Okonkwo come back. He is Okonkwo *kpomkwem*, exact, perfect.' Obi's father cleared his throat in embarrassment. 'Dead men do not come back,' he said. 'I tell you this is Okonkwo. As it was in the beginning so it will be in the end. That is what your religion tells us.' 'It does not tell you that dead men return.' (NLE 54)

Religion like education and language is the means of exploitation. One of the aims of the colonisers to gain their wills, is to transform the natives' religion. For the first time, education is brought in Ibo by missionaries and through establishment of a church, Europeans converted the natives to Christianity. According to Fanon:

I speak of the Christian religion, and no one need be astonished. The Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen. (1963: 41)

The new religion is confusing and the indigenous people's behaviour is based on their gods and the new religion, too. In Ibo culture, Christianity can be considered as one of the invisible bullets targeting ancient beliefs and it plays an important role in the life of Ibo people. The traditional ethics of Ibo is disintegrated by Christian ethics; Ibo people adapt to Christianity and modernity while keeping the connection with the traditional beliefs.

Issac Okonkwo, Obi's father, and a catechist, adheres to Christianity and is well known in Umuofia for his notable cultural identity. He was Nwoye, the son of *Things Fall Apart* protagonist. He rejects his father, people, tradition, and culture, and converts to Christianity for his own personal reason. Everyone in Umuofia knows Issac's attitude towards the traditional and cultural beliefs; his religion makes him different and he refers to other non-Christian Ibos as heathen. He does not allow his wife and children to eat anything in neighbor house and when "a neighbor offered a piece of yam to Obi [...] He shook his head like his older and wiser sisters, and then said: 'We don't eat heathen food'" (NLE 58).

In one scene of the novel, the people of Umuofia criticise Obi's father for his passive acceptance of Christianity and rejection of Ibo beliefs. It is when people are giving their offering to the "chief rain-maker" (NLE 48). Isaac Okonkwo criticises those who believe in traditional Ibo religion and the power of a man to make rain for the village. Other people criticise him for being an empty container of Christian beliefs:

only Christian we have seen,' said one of the men. 'But it is like the palm wine we drink. Some people can drink it and remain wise. Others lose all their senses.'

'-Very true, very true,' said another. 'When a new saying gets to the land of empty men they lose their heads over it.' (NLE 48)

As a Christian, Issac refuses to take a second wife in a polygamy society even when his fourth daughter was born. He challenges his people when they say Obi is Okonkwo (his father). Issac abandons his father and his people for the sake of Christianity. But as a hybrid person, he takes a side against Christianity. When Obi decides to get marry to an *osu*, Issac suddenly understands that culture, traditions, and customs are not such things that he can throw away for the respect of Christianity. When Obi insists that "the Bible says that in Christ there are no bond or free," his father answers: "*osu* is like leprosy in the minds of our people" (NLE 133). Therefore, one can say although Issac spends his life in Christianity and his family practice it, he turns against it and returns to his tradition.

As shown in *No Longer at Ease*, Nigerian people do not accept Christianity completely. Many people respect their ancient beliefs and practice them as well as the new European religion. In a hybrid society even Christianity is mixed with traditional beliefs. Some of the Ibo people consider Christianity as a way of cultural destruction and combine indigenous rituals into Christian beliefs, therefore, no pure religion can be seen in the society. Christianity

and colonialism destroy the common way of life in Ibo, and Achebe depicts the effects of this new religion on the Ibo people's life and culture. During colonisation many principals are reconstructed by the colonisers and religion is an important system which undergone change.

Nigerian Culture through Proverbs and Rituals

Culture contains customs, beliefs, and way of life that are shared and accepted by people in a particular society. Culture has the potential to transmit from one generation to another one. The culture of Nigeria is a product made by array of different tribes and people and with different cultures, traditions, and religions. Nigeria suffered under British colonialism almost one century. During colonisation, all separated parts of Nigeria were banded together by the colonial rule.

Nigeria is a society with abundant rich cultural heritage which varies in religion, language, proverbs, folktales, music, and rites. Some of these traditions have went off the stage and emerged in new form because of the authority of European culture. Ibo is one of the largest tribes in Nigeria, which is depicted in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, and Ibo's people speak Ibo alongside English. Ibo political system was fragmented before colonialism. The society included a variety of subgroups and it was governed by clans and groups of elders.

Ibo culture is rich in proverbs which reveal the soul of oral culture. African people praise their proverbs and folktales because they have an important role in the lives of African people. Ibo people use proverbs in every aspects of their life and the proverbs transmit verbally as a tool for communication from one generation to another one.

One of the strategies that the novelist applies in *No Longer at Ease* is the usage of proverbs and folktales. Achebe's use of African oral culture has made the novel a perfect picture of Africa. According to Simon Gikandi in "Forward: Chinua Achebe and the Institution of African Literature," Achebe's novels "play their unprecedented role as the mediators of the African experience and the depository of a certain idea of Africa" (xi). The main role of proverbs and folk stories in Achebe's works portray a vivid image of Ibo culture that enable the readers to go further into the Ibo society and expand their knowledge of the society.

Achebe shows that proverbs and oral stories play an important role in Nigerian culture. These proverbs and stories associate with meanings and concepts usually different from those of other cultures. Indeed, the entire value system and morality of traditional Ibo culture are based on these proverbs and stories, which are equivalent to the Biblical stories in Christianity.

An example of the significance of proverbs in the lives of Nigerians is seen in a moment when Clara and Obi are talking about Obi's insurance. Clara is trying to convince Obi to accept her offer of giving him a loan:

- 'You know the proverb about digging a new pit to fill up an old one?'
- 'Why did you trust so much money to that sly-looking man?'
- 'You mean Joe? He's a great friend of mine. He's a ward servant.'
- 'I didn't like his looks. What is the proverb about digging a new pit to fill up an old one?'
- 'I have always said you should go and study Ibo. (NLE 108)

In this scene, Achebe shows that Ibo society is rich with wisdom. As the scene indicates, traditional Nigerians have a proverb for almost every situation. Clara expresses her respect to these proverbs and suggests that Obi should study Ibo, because he needs these traditional teachings for his life. In contrast to the British society which uses written stories in its communication, Achebe uses oral stories to show that Nigerian people are familiar with orality, and written technology is unfamiliar to the most of the people.

In another scene, when the UPU talks about Obi's problem, another proverb is used. "If you want to eat a toad, you should look for a fat and juicy one" (NLE 6) is used to describe Obi's thinking of a good offer of bribe. Here, bribery is the symbol of modern life that ruins the Ibo society. Another feature in Achebe's writing is his use of rituals. Achebe puts the characters in different situations to encounter the readers with different rituals and customs.

One of these rituals is the eating of kola nuts, which is a characteristically African ritual. The eating of kola nuts is one of the most important social and ritual acts in Ibo society. The kola is the symbol of hospitality. Nigerian people hold a belief in kola nut divination. The colour of the kola nut is also significant in Ibo society; the white kola nut symbolises future prosperity and social status. A kola nut is offered through a special ritualistic ceremony with three stages. As it is shown in Obi's homecoming party, the offering of kola nuts and porridge to family and friends takes place in the day of the ceremony.

No Longer at Ease is an attempt to provide a picture of the beauties and complexities of Nigerian culture. Although the novel is written in English, it is filled with Nigerian cultural elements, such as rituals, traditional customs, proverbs, folktales, etc. Achebe's aim is to use this novel as a reservoir of African cultural elements. By

using these proverbs and other elements of African culture, Achebe is showing that Nigerians are not empty people, as the Europeans think.

Nigerian Culture and the Role of Elders

Nigerian culture, especially in pre-colonial era, respects and admires the elders. During colonisation, the European education and religion (Christianity) construct the social structure of the colonised nations. In this process, the attitudes of younger generation toward elders are transformed. The elders defend the traditional lifestyle for their own authority, but new generations attract to Western individualism and disrespect the traditional culture and uneducated elders. Indeed, Nigeria has seen the appearance of different new cultural identities.

Achebe in *No Longer at Ease* depicts that an individual, in order to remain in the community, has to move between two worlds: the traditional world and the modern world or the world of the "white man". Obi is the embodiment of the young Western educated generation in Nigeria who suspects that the old African should be replaced by new generation and educated elites. Obi sometimes disregards old Africans, and theorises that "the public service of Nigeria would remain corrupt until the old Africans at the top were replaced by young men from the universities" (*NLE* 38).

In Obi's view, old Africans are corrupt and they are responsible for Nigerian corruptions. One of the big problems in Nigeria is bribery, and Obi's above mentioned theory comes from bribery and corruption in Nigerian politic structure. Bribery for elder indigenou people is an instrument to obtain their social requirement. In Obi's homecoming party, the Vice president of Ibo wants to offer bribe for Obi's job and he declares; "I would have suggested *seeing* some of the men beforehand" (*NLE* 33). Obi argues that the corruption refers to the lack of education among old generation and bribery is a normal act in Ibo culture: "to [uneducated] bribe is natural" (*NLE* 21).

Staying in England for four years and learning English literature change Obi's behaviour. He even gives up the faith of his parents and the members of UPU. Achebe skillfully depicts that traditional values may be transformed, but they cannot totally destroy. Although Obi disrespects his clan, the clansmen continue to support him with his problem:

'We paid eight hundred pounds to train him in England,' said one of them. 'But instead of being grateful he insults us because of a useless girl. [...] the President pointed out, a kinsman in trouble had to be saved, not blamed; anger against a brother was felt in the flesh, not in the bone. And so the Union decided to pay for the services of a lawyer from their funds. (*NLE* 5)

Although the social structure of pre-colonial Nigeria consisted of communities and the elders are in charge in the village government, this structure is broken down during colonisation. Therefore, there is a conflict between elders and young educated generation for authority. Obi confirms Fanon's notion of bourgeois elites who hate the traditional culture. According to Fanon, "the national bourgeoisie steps into the shoes of the former European settlement" (1963: 151). This new generation who brings hope for future in colonised nations (here Nigeria), continues to exploit the common people like the colonisers, wrongfully takes the power of tribal chief and elders, and brings transformation into the society and social structure.

Revival of Cultural Identity in No Longer at Ease

'Epidermalisation' as Fanon means connotes a situation in which the skin colour of African people is viewed by whites as an illness, which is highly infective and spreads very quickly. The sad point about epidermalisation is that black people have been inclined to view themselves in a similar way as they have internalised this sense of inferiority from their encounter with the white people because they see their skin colour is not the same as the white people. This term clarifies that identity is defined based on the skin colour; this feeling of defeat when they watch a white person forces blacks to emulate and imitate the Whites. Therefore, non-Europeans or coloured people try to wear the white mask of Europeans to veil their lack of confidence or selfhood.

As a consequence of emulation to white values, a black man rejects his native values. Fanon argues that if colonised people choose to adopt European ways of life, it is due to the fact that the values of the white people are glorified through the colonial education. In other words, colonial education uses European heroes and mythological figures as models of morality and heroism:

The black schoolboy in the Antilles, who in his lessons is forever talking about our ancestors, the Gauls, identifies himself with the explorers, the bringer of civilisation, the white man who carries truth to savage—an all-white truth. There is identification—that is, the young Negro subjectively adopts a white man's attitude. He invites the hero, who is white, with all his own aggression—at that age closely linked to sacrificial dedication permeated with sadism. (Fanon 2008: 114)

Fanon made a great effort to recreate a new apprehending of black people. Fanon's work was devised to help the blacks to view themselves in a more positive way. In this section, it will be shown that black characters apply many strategies to preserve their traditional beliefs and customs in order to confront the destructive effects of colonialism.

In *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe has created some black characters with heroic qualities in order to create black models of heroism. Some of the characters in *No Longer at Ease* try to remind the younger generation, especially the educated people, of Ibo heroes. For example, while the people of Umuofia are holding a celebration for Obi's return, the elders praise him for being a true heir to his legendary grandfather. They praise him because he has not forgotten his traditions and customs although he had studied in England. It is because Umuofia is not the place of "empty people," but a land with its own models of heroism. The following conversation among these characters shows these facts in a clear way:

- 'He is a son of Iguedo,' said old Odogwu. 'There are nine villages in Umuofia, but Iguedo is Iguedo. We have our faults, but we are not empty men who become white when they see white, and black when they see black.'

Obi's heart glowed with pride within him.

- 'He is the grandson of Ogbuefi Okonkwo who faced the white man single-handed and died in the fight. Stand up!' (NLE 53)

Here, Odogwu reminds Obi of his legendary grandfather who fought the early colonialist single-handedly and who chose to die like a hero rather than serve the colonialists. This legendary man was the hero of Achebe's famous novel *Things Fall Apart*. In that novel, Achebe gives Ogbuefi Okonkwo many heroic qualities which rise him above all of the white men. Ogbuefi Okonkwo, Obi's grandfather, is a hero, not only to the people of Umuofia and the nine villages, but also to all Achebe's readers. Achebe's characterisation of this legendary man makes him appear like a universal hero.

For Fanon, inferiority complex which is caused by the colonial education, invites the black man to follow white man's values. This process resulted in the rejection of native values by the black people. Thus, Fanon invites black people to have an education of their own; to revive and glorify black heroes and myths. For Fanon, what Africans need is self-esteem and self-respect. African education should provide these symbols of black heroism in order to overcome their inferiority complex.

CONCLUSION

As discussed in detail, *No Longer at Ease* includes many examples of the instability of identity. According to Homi Bhabha, this instability of identity is the necessary result of colonialism which is defined as 'hybridity'. As shown earlier, hybridity, applies to both the colonisers and the colonised in Achebe's novel. The analysis of Obi and other characters in the novel showed that there is a constant cultural interaction between the colonisers and the colonised. Therefore neither the colonised nor the coloniser can return to their pure pre-colonial self. Obi is 'no longer at ease' with himself, Nigeria, and his identity.

Achebe shows the "hybrid" nature of Nigeria and its religion not only in the character of Obi but also in other characters as well as in the Nigerian society. His descriptions of Lagos, Umuofia and other places in Nigeria show the interaction and mixture of British and African culture. In some places, such as the suburb of Ikoyi and the restaurant in Lagos, Africans and Europeans intermingle and create a "third space." In such places elements of both cultures come together and create a third culture. These places symbolise the postcolonial Nigeria in which no cultural purity is found.

Although Achebe accepts Bhabha's notion of hybridity and the mixture of cultures, he also makes an effort to revive the elements of pure African culture. Thus, *No Longer at Ease* is also an example of Frantz Fanon's emphasis on cultural independence revival. Fanon believes that Africans should glorify their culture and revive their heroes in order to construct their identity. Achebe shows Fanon's theory in the attempt of the black characters. The novel gives readers a picture of the beauties and complexities of Nigerian culture. Achebe introduces his readers to Nigerian rituals, traditional customs, proverbs, folktales, etc, in order to revive them and prevent their demise. Achebe has also created some black characters with heroic qualities in order to create black models of dignity and heroism.

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