

A POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN THE CHARACTER OF NANCY OBI IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S "DEAD MEN'S PATH"

Hafiz Muhammad Jamil

Associate Professor of English Department of Higher Education, Archives and Libraries KP, Pakistan

muhammadjamil385@gmail.com

Received: 28 February, 2024

Revised: 29 March, 2024

Accepted: 08 April, 2024

Published: 22 April, 2024

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the intricate layers of cultural hybridity as portrayed in Chinua Achebe's short story "Dead Men's Path," employing Homi Bhabha's post-colonial theories as a lens for analysis. Bhabha's conceptual framework, rooted in the notion of "third space" and the dynamics of mimicry and ambivalence, provides a nuanced understanding of how cultural identities intersect and evolve in the postcolonial context. The study investigates how Bhabha's theories illuminate the nuances of cultural hybridity within the narrative, examining the characters' negotiations of identity and the clash between traditional and colonial values. By scrutinizing the transformative impact of Nancy Obi's garden or Michael Obi's village school, the paper aims to unravel the creation of new cultural spaces and the emergence of power struggles within the community or new, modern ways are better than the traditions of the villagers in Nigeria. Through a deep textual analysis of the short story, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on postcolonial literature and studies on cultural hybridity. While bridging the gap between theory and narrative, it endeavors to shed light on the ways in which Bhabha's conceptual tools can enrich our understanding of the complex dynamics inherent in the representation of cultural hybridity within the postcolonial literary landscape.

Keywords: Cultural hybridity, Nancy obi, "Dead Men's Path", Homi K. Bhabha, Post-colonial theory

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Post-colonialism is the critical scholarly analysis of the cultural, political, and economic effects of colonialism and imperialism. It focuses on the ways that human exploitation and dominance impact colonial populations and their homelands. More accurately, it is a critical theory-based analysis of the history, literature, rhetoric, and culture of imperial power, primarily European.

According to Robert Young (2016), post-colonialism is the outcome of human experience of the kind that has not historically been recorded at any institutional level. It is the result of several national and cultural contexts where a person's circumstances, skin colour, and place of birth define their life. Post-colonialism focuses on intense geographic areas that have mostly stayed hidden and deal with challenges related to history, ethnicity, complex cultural identities,

representation, refugees, etc. It also involves dynamic and creative cultural processes that arise in very positive ways from such challenging circumstances. Post-colonialism represents the marginalised, whose knowledge and experiences are dismissed. What gave rise to post-colonial politics' basis and continues to be its source of influence is its fixation with the marginalised, the underclass, and minorities in any given country.

Bhabha proposes cultural individuality as a substitute for cultural plurality. Cultural difference refers to the blending of two or more civilizations, often leading to conflicts. The formation of culture is not preset, but rather emerges via conversation and discussion. This process has a significant impact on shaping culture since it is informed by many perspectives. A culture can be characterized as a "object of empirical knowledge" that exists independently of an

individual's awareness or understanding of it, within the context of cultural diversity. Enunciation refers to the act of communicating or expressing a culture within the context of the Third Space. Given that culture is not inherently predetermined, it must be transmitted. Enunciation refers to the process of recognizing and understanding cultural differences. The act of enunciating disturbs established cultural norms by introducing new cultural meanings and practices inside the current political framework, either as a means of exerting control or as a form of resistance. The reference "Howell, 1996" is provided.

The notion of cultural hybridity has been extensively employed in postcolonial literature to examine the intricate dynamics of cultural identity and the interplay between colonial and postcolonial civilizations. Homi K. Bhabha, an esteemed scholar in the field of postcolonial theory, has made significant contributions to the discussion on cultural hybridity. Hybridity questions the idea of cultural purity and instead highlights the dynamic interaction and negotiation between many cultural aspects in colonial and postcolonial settings. Bhabha's perspective on hybridity emphasizes the constructive capacity of merging cultures, indicating that it can result in the formation of novel identities and cultural manifestations that challenge inflexible classifications.

Applying Bhabha's hybridity theory to literature, particularly to Chinua Achebe's short story "Dead Men's Path," offers an insightful lens through which to examine the representation of cultural hybridity. Set in colonial Nigeria, Achebe's narrative explores the clash between traditional African beliefs and Western modernity through the characters of Michael Obi, a young, ambitious and modernist headmaster of a rural school community and his wife Nancy Obi with her garden mirroring her husband's school. The story depicts the tensions that arise as a result of this clash, ultimately leading to a confrontation between traditions of the Village and the modernity of the Obi's. Through an analysis informed by Bhabha's hybridity theory, one can probe into the nuances of cultural negotiation and resistance depicted in the story, as well as the potential for hybrid forms of identity and culture to emerge in the face of colonial imposition. By examining "Dead Men's Path" through the lens of Bhabha's hybridity theory, it is aimed to shed light on the complex dynamics of cultural interaction and

transformation within colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Therefore, the study's main objective is to project and illustrate Bhabha's theory of hybridity onto literature, particularly African Colonial literature and the short story "Dead Men's Path" by Chinua Achebe. The goal is not to combine (the) two into one, nor is it to substitute local understanding for Western knowledge. Through the insightful prism of Chinua Achebe's short novel "Dead Men's Path," Bhabha's theory on cultural hybridity can be examined. The study aims to analyse the selected African works within the framework of Homi K. Bhabha's applied theoretical theory in order to accomplish the specified research goals. One well-known name in postcolonial theory is Bhabha. The paradigm used supports the effort to better understand Bhabha's concept of hybridity in *Dead Men's Path* (1953). Because of this, in attempt to impose their own, or Western, culture, the imperialists have pushed and rejected native African values and customs. It also explains why the indigenous culture was divided and ignored throughout the early colonisation. This study looks on the effects of colonisation on native African culture. Through colonial power and influence, European imperialists who ruled the world—including the African nations—sought to deepen political, social, and cultural relations. The idea of intrinsic racial, cultural, and otherness is propagated by it. However, residents discover a reflection of their cultures and customs through the expression of their indigenous native culture.

Through close textual analysis and theoretical engagement, this study seeks to uncover how Achebe's narrative represents the interplay between tradition and modernity, and how it reflects broader themes of cultural hybridity, identity negotiation, and resistance. Ultimately, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the ways in which literature both reflects and shapes our understanding of cultural hybridity in postcolonial societies.

1.2 About the Author and selected Work

Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist, portrayed the social and psychological upheaval resulting from the imposition of Western practices and values on traditional African society. In addition, he authored works using the pseudonym Albert Chinualumogu Achebe. He was born in Ogidi, Nigeria on November 16, 1930, and died in Boston, Massachusetts on March 21, 2013. The author's writings include various subjects, such as the first meetings between

a Caucasian person and an African hamlet, as well as the efforts of an educated African to uphold a strong moral code in a rapidly evolving urban environment. His primary emphasis was on the advancement of Africa during times of instability. The individuals responsible for the creation of Encyclopaedia Britannica in the year 2019.

Chinua Achebe became a significant voice in African history during a pivotal time characterised by colonialism and its aftermath. Many people consider his masterpiece, "Things Fall Apart" (1958), to be the foundation of African literature. The work masterfully conveys the complexity of pre-colonial Igbo society and the devastating repercussions of British colonialism, challenging prevalent Eurocentric narratives and emphasising the agency of African voices. Achebe's creative pursuits extend beyond fiction, embracing articles and criticisms that grapple with problems of identity, nationalism, and the role of literature in societal reform. Through his works, Achebe not only pioneered a distinctly African narrative voice but also fostered a newfound appreciation for local cultures and languages. The novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960) portrays a newly hired government employee who has lately returned from studying in England. Although he possesses firm moral convictions, he finds it difficult to maintain them when confronted with the obstacles and allurements that accompany his recent role. *Arrow of God*, published in 1964, is a novel set in the 1920s within a community that is governed by the British. The protagonist of the story is the principal clergyman of the community, whose offspring becomes profoundly committed to Christianity. The leading clergyman harbours animosity against his own community because to the burdensome position imposed on him by the Caucasian individual. *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) examine the topics of corruption and other socio-political obstacles that are widespread in postcolonial African society.

Achebe has authored numerous anthologies of short stories and literary compositions specifically intended for children, such as *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (1973; co-authored with John Iroaganachi). "Soul-Brother" (1971) and "Christmas in Biafra" (1973) are anthologies of poetry. Another *Africa* (1998) is a collection of an essay and poems written by Achebe, complemented with images captured by Robert Lyons. Achebe's collection of

essays comprises the following literary works: *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975), *Hopes and Impediments* (1988), *Home and Exile* (2000), *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (2009), and the autobiographical *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (2012). In 2007, he was awarded the Man Booker International Prize.

"Dead Men's Path" is a concise narrative penned by Chinua Achebe and published in 1953. The brief narrative has been acknowledged as an exemplification of cultural discord and functions as a reflection on a reoccurring theme in the Nigerian writer's oeuvre: the confrontation between indigenous Nigerian traditions and the Western standards imposed by European colonisers. The narrative examines this theme in a humorous yet genuine way, as the ambitious and conceited headmaster, Michael Obi, and his wife, Nancy Obi, bring about their own downfall through their passionate pursuit of "modernization" and their contempt for the villagers, particularly those they consider "outdated" or old-fashioned. The final downfall of Michael Obi's carefully crafted tactics at the climax of the story suggests that attempts to eliminate deeply rooted ideals and lifestyles through superficial means are bound to fail.

1.3. Research Statement:

Nigerian village is transitioning from tradition to modernity. However, a gap exists in understanding how Homi K. Bhabha's post-colonial theories, particularly the concept of the "third space," can be effectively applied to dissect the nuances of this cultural hybridity in the text. The problem at hand lies in the need to bridge this gap and unravel the intricate ways in which Achebe's characters (especially Nancy Obi) navigate the interplay of tradition and modernity, as well as how this cultural hybridity is manifested and contested within the story. This study aims to address these gaps by examining how "Dead Men's Path" portrays cultural hybridity through Bhabha's theoretical lens. The exploration of cultural hybridity is an imperative undertaking in the contemporary era, marked by rapid globalization, migration, and cultural interchange.

1.4. Research Objectives:

To explore Nancy Obi's character through cultural hybridity in the light of post-colonial literature.

To analyze the change in the village school and its garden in Dead Men's Path in creating new cultural spaces and struggle among characters.

1.5. Research Questions:

How does Homi Bhabha's post-colonial theory facilitate an understanding of cultural hybridity in Chinua Achebe's "Dead Men's Path" through Nancy Obi's character?

What is the role of Nancy Obi in the transformation of the village school premises and in contribution to the power struggles among the characters in the story?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilises Nancy Obi's character as a vehicle to utilise a qualitative technique in order to evaluate the predetermined research objectives in Chinua Achebe's "Dead Men's Path." This component of the study presents a thorough elucidation and examination of the research framework and methods. This text provides a clear explanation of the procedures for gathering data and the specific research tools utilised. Research involves the systematic use of established methods to comprehensively examine a question, evaluate and explore a topic, or provide novel insights by employing diverse approaches and tools. The main objective of qualitative research is to analyse non-numeric data gathered while studying human behaviours, acts, events, ethics, norms, and other relevant elements. Individuals, who encounter many events in their everyday lives, are regarded as the main source of data and are able to contribute data from their own point of view using the qualitative technique (Bryman, 2004). Thus, the fundamental basis of qualitative research lies in the application of the naturalistic technique to gather and acquire data.

2.1. 1. Research method

The data collection methodology in a study involves a thorough and comprehensive process (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). Research typically utilizes two primary methodologies: qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative techniques contain a wide range of variations, intricacies, and subtle distinctions (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Textual analysis normally commences with a comprehensive examination of the text, during which you acquaint

yourself with the content and pose inquiries regarding it.

Furthermore, these categories include its genre, subjects, metaphorical features, language usage, narrative structures, and other related aspects. After acquiring a deeper comprehension of these elements, one can then analyse the ways in which the text utilises them to reveal underlying meanings and cultural dialogues via qualitative analysis methods for texts (Skains, 2018). This study utilises a qualitative research methodology. Thematic analysis is a fundamental method for undertaking qualitative analysis.

Textual analysis generally begins with a close reading of the text, wherein you familiarize yourself with the text and pose questions about it. This study is primarily adopting a post-colonial paradigm, focusing on understanding the cultural dynamics in "Dead Men's Path" within the context of colonialism and its aftermath. The post-colonial paradigm allows for an exploration of power structures, cultural hegemony, and hybridity. This study is qualitative aiming at to probe into the meanings and interpretations of cultural hybridity in the narrative rather than numerical data. "Dead Men's Path" is examined to explore the representation of cultural hybridity within the specific context of the story especially through the character of Nancy Obi. A close reading of the text is conducted to identify instances of cultural hybridity and analyze their significance within the narrative.

2.1. 1. Theoretical Framework:

The study investigates the notion of cultural hybridity within the post-colonial context, examining the sociological, cultural, and psychological effects of colonialism and imperialism. Bhabha's Theory of cultural hybridity, third space, and mimicry offers a conceptual framework for comprehending the intricacies of cultural identity and negotiation in colonial and post-colonial settings. The research involves examining power dynamics in colonial and post-colonial civilizations and how they impact cultural exchanges and conflicts depicted in the story.

2.1. 1.1. Cultural Hybridity:

Cultural hybridization is the process by which a cultural element is incorporated into another culture, where it is modified to fit the cultural standards of the receiving culture. Bell, K. (2014). The term hybridity is used to describe a condition

when the boundaries of identification are crossed, resulting in illegal mixing of different racial backgrounds. Derogatory phrases such as 'half-breed' and 'mongrel' represent negative racial interactions. The preservation of a 'white' identity has been accomplished by classifying individuals of mixed descent as both racially and culturally impure. The fear and concern around the mixing of different races, known as miscegenation, led to the belief that mixed-race individuals were associated with sickness and moral decline. The existence of intersexual connections, particularly the prohibited union of individuals of diverse racial backgrounds, revealed the deep-seated colonial desire for the racial "other." The referenced source is "Colonial Desire" authored by Robert Young and published in 1995.

Hybridity, a concept frequently discussed in postcolonial theory, pertains to the formation of new cross-cultural manifestations in areas impacted by colonisation. In horticulture, "hybridization" refers to the act of producing a novel species by merging two distinct species through grafting or cross-pollination. Hybridization is seen in several forms, such as linguistic, cultural, political, racial, and other areas. Instances of linguistic occurrences that exemplify this concept encompass pidgin and creole languages. The languages stated here correspond to the initial definition of the phrase formulated by linguist and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. He used this term to explain the potent and disruptive impact of situations when there are several voices, including both language and narratives. Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque posits that specific literary works mirror the societal and religious liberation, bawdy humour, and extravagant indulgence that characterised mediaeval European carnivals. Polyphony refers to the presence of multiple distinct voices within a certain society. In the Middle Ages, there was a range of humorous expressions and performances that arose, creating a noticeable contrast to the formal and solemn atmosphere of the clergy and feudal society of that time (Clark & Holquist, 1984: 4).

There are two primary approaches to studying hybridity in a cultural context: essentialists or modernists, and critical theorists. The essentialist or modernist viewpoint of the development of a hybrid identity posits that there exist underlying, ingrained identities - namely, white (coloniser) and black (colonised) or host and immigrant - which merge to generate a robust and cohesive hybrid self. They

participate in borrowing and appropriating without ever questioning the existing system. Postcolonial authors employ subversive amalgamations to attack, ridicule, and complicate the existing framework and the inflexible identities of modernism that uphold it. These hybrids present a challenge to the binary and classificatory logic that underlies the creation of Western knowledge. Conversely, advocates of critical hybridity theory advocate for a blended identity that directly challenges and undermines the stability and certainty of the existing social, cultural, and racial framework. They highlight the unpredictable and easily penetrable nature of cultural and social barriers.

The main difference between the two hybrid subjects lies in the fact that the modernist hybrid self is unaware of its ability to challenge and question societal norms, while the hybrid subject described by critical hybrid theorists is consciously aware of its revolutionary individuality and adopts a sarcastic and rebellious perspective. An analysis of hybridity exposes the imbalanced and paradoxical connection between the host and migrant, or between the colonizers and the colonized. It reduces, analyzes, and modifies the influence of the prevailing Western, Caucasian host identity. From this viewpoint, hybridity carries substantial political importance and extends beyond the simple fusion or incorporation of two separate cultures. Instead, it elucidates the fundamental struggle that emerges within and among several civilizations (Marotta, Vince. (2021).

The critical hybrid subject challenges the current representation of cultural, ethnic, and racial identity by creating a new and unique cultural "third space" (Bhabha, 1994). In the subject of migration studies, cultural hybrids deviate from the conventional depictions of Lebanese, Italian, Greek, or Vietnamese identities. They interrogate and scrutinize the nationalist and racial stereotypes linked to the identities of "Lebanese-American," "Pakistani-British," or "Chinese-Australian," therefore addressing and examining both facets of this dual identity. A critical hybrid perspective recognizes that cultures are not homogenous entities and that hybrids encompass more than a mere amalgamation of existing identities. The concept posits that all cultures, irrespective of their classification as "dominant" or "minority," possess fundamental characteristics of variety, contradiction, fusion, permeability, and adaptation. The notion of cultural hybridity emphasizes the complex and

adaptable character of contemporary identities (Marotta, Vince. (2021). Hence, while we may differentiate between binary and non-binary perspectives when analyzing cultural hybridity in theory, there are also other classifications of hybrid individuals in practical scenarios that can occasionally cause confusion. The hybrid experience is typically associated with those who are either immigrants or have a biracial heritage. However, empirical research occasionally merges these two categories into the cultural hybrid category, implying that they have comparable experiences. While these cultural hybrids can exist simultaneously in two different realms, the qualities of these worlds and the manner in which they are encountered are fundamentally separate. Moreover, the way in which these two groups of people express themselves and are seen by others suggests that the "cultural hybrid experience" is fundamentally complex, both in terms of its theoretical framework and real-world manifestations.

The analysis of the immigrant hybrid issue takes an intergenerational approach, exploring the experiences of persons who are part of the second or third generation of immigrants, sometimes referred to as "ethnic/migrant youth." These folks are either native to the local community or have immigrated at a young age (between 6 and 14 years old). Migration studies conducted after World War II mostly focused on European immigrants originating from non-English-speaking nations, who were moving to colonial cities situated in the western areas. The majority of residents in these cities were white Europeans, and English was the prevailing language. The majority of these studies adopt a Eurocentric viewpoint on migration, portraying migrant communities as "minorities" that are anticipated to adapt or integrate. Since the 1970s, there has been a growing focus on studying young migrants from Asia and Africa who are moving to North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Western European nations.

In Homi K. Bhabha's most recent publication, he has established a connection between the concept of 'hybridity' and the comprehension of the dynamic between those who colonise and those who are colonised. Bhabha underscores the interrelatedness and reciprocal generation of their subjectivities, as elucidated in his notions of mimicry and ambivalence. Bhabha posits that cultural statements and systems originate within a conceptual realm he

terms the 'Third Space of enunciation' (1994:37). Cultural identity emerges in a location that is characterised by contradictions and ambiguity, according to Bhabha's argument. This makes it impossible to maintain the notion of cultures having a hierarchical 'purity'. Understanding the conflicting nature of cultural identification can help us get past our fixation with cultural diversity and instead recognise the powerful possibilities of a blended cultural experience, where cultural differences can flourish.

The significance of the manufacturing capacities of this Third Space, whether they originated from colonial or postcolonial sources, is immensely crucial. By accepting a willingness to explore unfamiliar ground, individuals have the potential to create a conceptual framework for understanding a foreign culture. This culture places a higher importance on the incorporation and manifestation of cultural hybridity, rather than highlighting the newness of multiculturalism or the variety of civilizations. The citation is derived from Bhabha's publication in 1994, specifically on page 38.

Hybridity, in the context of post-colonial discourse, typically refers to the occurrence of cross-cultural exchange. This term has faced substantial criticism for its tendency to disregard and overlook the unfairness and injustice of the power dynamics it symbolizes. This has been construed as endorsing assimilationist methodologies by downplaying or concealing cultural disparities, while emphasizing the substantial cultural, linguistic, and political ramifications on both the colonized and the colonizer. The concept of hybridity is also apparent in other endeavors to emphasize the interconnectedness of cultures during the colonial and post-colonial periods, as demonstrated by the expressions of syncretism, cultural synergy, and transculturation. The criticism of the aforementioned phrase arises from the perspective that concepts which prioritize reciprocity have a tendency to diminish conflict and sustain an ongoing reliance on post-colonial structures. However, the concept of hybridity does not imply that reciprocal influence completely eliminates the hierarchical structure of the imperial process or that it entails a symmetrical exchange. Some advocates of decolonization and anti-colonialism have recognized its current significance through the use of colonial discourse theory.

Critics contend that the claim that a post-colonial condition, like hybridity, is universally experienced across cultures is faulty because it fails to consider the historical, spatial, geographical, and linguistic elements that influence discourse. This can result in a universal understanding of literature that overlooks the unique characteristics of specific cultural contexts. Robert Young argues that the study of how language influences colonialism does not aim to supplant or disregard other approaches, such as historical, geographical, economic, military, or political analysis. Alternatively, he suggests that employing colonial discourse analysis, which includes terms like hybridity, offers a beneficial perspective.

This work establishes a fundamental basis for future research by emphasizing that all perspectives on colonialism employ the same language and communication techniques as colonialism itself. The user has not provided any text. Colonial discourse analysis can scrutinize the wide array of texts related to colonialism beyond their mere function as documentation or 'evidence'. The citation "Young 1995: 163" denotes the specific source of information or quotation from page 163 of the publication authored by Young in 1995.

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In Chinua Achebe's "Dead Men's Path," a detailed examination reveals a captivating exploration of cultural hybridity. The narrative skilfully intertwines contrasting realities to portray the coexistence of tradition and modernity. Critical moments within the story unveil deeper layers of significance, making evident the clash between ideologies and cultural disparities.

"That was some time ago. But it will not be used now," said Obi as he walked away. "What will the Government Education Officer think of this when he comes to inspect the school next week? The villagers might, for all I know, decide to use the schoolroom for a pagan ritual during the inspection." Heavy sticks were planted across the path at the two places where it entered and left the school land. These were further strengthened with barbed wire. (Achebe, *Dead Men's Path*, 1953).

The narrative revolves around Mr. Obi, the recently appointed headmaster, and his wife Nancy Obi, who become entangled in a conflict between traditional ideals and contemporary advancements as they contemplate their evolving aspirations. Although

they feel a sense of satisfaction from their accomplishments, their encounter with an old woman walking on a limited pathway on the school premises initiates a series of symbolic events. In Achebe's "Dead Men's Path" (1953), Nancy Obi's path is embellished by splendid hibiscus and allamanda hedges in vibrant hues of red and yellow. This illustrates the clash between the traditional ideas held by the villagers and Obi's modern aspirations. Their prompt use of barbed wire and sturdy sticks to reinforce the road highlights the striking contrast between his contemporary ambitions and the traditions of the peasants, transforming the conference into a symbolic arena where progress is confronted with opposition.

The once neglected path, now a tangible representation of looming cultural conflict, highlights the intensity of this struggle. Mr. Obi's concerns about potential pagan rituals during a school inspection further emphasize the broader societal conflict between tradition and modernity. The confrontation between Mr. Obi and the village priest, Ani, serves to underscore the cultural significance of the path as a conduit for departed souls and new life, adding depth to the story's cultural relevance.

Our dead relatives depart by it and our ancestors visit us by it. But most important, it is the path of children coming in to be born... (Achebe, *Dead Men's Path*, 1953).

The eventual destruction of Nancy Obi's meticulously designed garden and parts of the school compound reflects the profound clash resulting from her refusal to embrace traditional beliefs. She was so inspired from her husband's views that she had already imagined herself as the *QUEEN* of the village:

"We shall do our best," she replied. "We shall have such beautiful gardens and everything will be just modern and delightful..." In their two years of married life she had become completely infected by his passion for "modern methods" and his denigration of "these old and superannuated people in the teaching field who would be better employed as traders in the Onitsha market." She began to see herself already as the admired wife of the young headmaster, the queen of the school. (Achebe, *Dead Men's Path*, 1953).

Nancy wholeheartedly supported her husband's modernist ambitions, seeing him as her role model in making a significant impact on a global scale. She

was confident that her own small obstacle would not hinder her ability to acknowledge her husband's bright prospects. Furthermore, she held the belief that their modernist and progressive endeavors had the capacity to modify the indigenous customs and traditions.

...“I was thinking what a grand opportunity we’ve got at last to show these people how a school should be run.”

(Achebe, *Dead Men's Path*, 1953).

The story's emotional aftermath serves as a poignant cautionary tale, illustrating the repercussions that arise when long-established traditions are disregarded. The vandalized garden and damaged school building serve as powerful symbols of the unexpected consequences that arise from cultural insensitivity and steadfast dedication to personal convictions.

The depicted conflict in "*Dead Men's Path*" extends beyond the school premises, emphasizing the broader societal tensions between traditional values and modern progress. This emphasizes the necessity of implementing a comprehensive approach to cultural negotiation that acknowledges the relevance of traditions while effectively handling the consequences of change. The event's devastation serves as a clear reminder of the interconnectedness between cultural factors and the enduring repercussions of decisions made during ideological conflicts.

This scenario anticipates a significant clash arising from the early indications of a cultural revolution. The road, which was previously ignored in terms of regulating cultural norms, now becomes a battleground where innovation clashes with tradition. This sets the groundwork for a more comprehensive analysis of hybridity inside the narrative. Chinua Achebe's "*Dead Men's Path*" employs nuanced linguistic cues to craft a narrative that is intricate and rich in hybridity. Achebe examines cultural intersections by exploring the conflict between the traditional beliefs held by the villagers and the modern ideas embraced by the Obis. The discovery of a historic road on the school grounds symbolizes the coming together of different viewpoints. The Obis' decision to strengthen the road with barbed wire and sticks symbolizes a resistance to change and the clash between long-standing traditions and modern educational goals.

This conflict serves as a prime example of the broader societal conflicts between traditional values

and modern advancements, showcasing Achebe's expertise in depicting the intricate interplay of cultural influences by employing hybridity. The tension around the walkway symbolizes the challenges of reconciling diverse cultural norms in a post-colonial context.

Achebe adeptly integrates cultural elements in "*Dead Men's Path*" to offer a meticulous examination of conflict and convergence, with a particular emphasis on the notion of hybridity. The narrative emphasizes the conflict between African ancestry and Western values, portraying hybridity as the merging of two distinct worlds. The collision between the villagers' deeply rooted beliefs and Michael Obi's fervent promotion of Western education exemplifies this tension, symbolizing a broader clash of divergent cultural perspectives.

The rivalry escalates as Michael Obi endeavors to improve the institution. His lack of understanding of the significance of the sacred passage to the indigenous people exacerbates cultural disputes, emphasizing the complex process of cultural integration in a post-colonial context. The absence of this element serves as a potent symbol for the challenges that develop when disparate cultural components converge, shedding light on broader societal dilemmas about the clash between tradition and progress.

Achebe's novel skillfully delves into the complexities of cultural hybridity, revealing layers of tension and the interplay between different cultural ideas. "*Dead Men's Path*" functions as a symbolic battleground where conflicts between different civilizations spark a thorough exploration of hybridity, enriching the complexity and depth of Achebe's literary creation.

4. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that Chinua Achebe, a prolific post-colonial African writer, presents indigenous culture as a means of resisting the forceful imperialist goal that endangers the identity and independence of the Nigerian people. The present study employed Homi K. Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity as a conceptual framework to achieve the research objectives. The analysis of *Dead Men's Path* (1953) has successfully accomplished the main study goals stated in the aforementioned theory. The study investigated the influence of Western culture on the way of life and cultural customs of indigenous African traditions and beliefs. The author suggested a solution by including the portrayal of

local/indigenous culture in the narrative, which has been constantly oppressed by their imperial masters. "Dead Men's Path" is a thought-provoking exploration of the detrimental outcomes that result from a deficiency of cultural knowledge, highlighting the importance of cultivating mutual comprehension. The Obis' unwavering dedication to modernization unintentionally serves as a symbol of resistance against the deeply rooted traditions of the Ndume culture. Obi's lack of empathy and disdain for the villagers' persisting beliefs create a substantial conflict between his objectives and the community's strongly entrenched customs.

The Obis' steadfast efforts to preserve their convictions ultimately led to their ruin. Their indifference towards the perspectives of the peasants and the cultural significance of the route impedes their ability to achieve their goal. The central motif of this narrative surpasses the plot, highlighting the significance of acknowledging and appreciating varied cultural perspectives. The deficiencies of Obis serve as a warning, emphasizing the significance of embracing a complete strategy for cultural assimilation. This strategy should place a higher importance on fostering comprehension and cooperation, rather than promoting discord.

The essay argues that it is preferable to have two civilizations peacefully coexist rather than one civilization dominating the other through the use of force. The collision depicted in the story emphasizes the crucial role of mutual tolerance and a readiness to recognize the substantial disparities between each culture in order to accomplish successful cultural assimilation. Achebe's narrative finally emphasizes the importance of appreciating the richness of cultural diversity and creating an environment where understanding and acceptance triumph over conflict. Chinua Achebe's novel, "Things Fall Apart," examines the influence of Western civilization on the traditional and ancestral culture of the Igbo people. The cultural imposition, as demonstrated in the education system, is illustrated by the priest's participation and is vehemently opposed by the indigenous community.

".....the ruins of his work. The beautiful hedges were torn up not just near the path but right round the school, the flowers trampled to death and one of the school buildings pulled down..." (Achebe, *Dead Men's Path*, 1953).

REFERENCES

- Achebe, Chinua. "Dead Men's Path." In "Girls at War and Other Stories." Heinemann, 1972
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2006). *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1984). "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." *October*, 28, 125-133.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1990). "Dissemination: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation." *Nation and Narration*, 291-322.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.
- Bell, K. (2014). Cultural hybridization definition | Open Education Sociology Dictionary. *Sociologydictionary.org*.
<https://sociologydictionary.org/cultural-hybridization/#definition-of-cultural-hybridization>
- Bhabha, Homi K. "The Location of Culture." Routledge, 1994.
- Bogusław Żyłko. (1986). *Katerina Clark, Michael Holquist, Mikhail Bakhtin, Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London 1984*.
- Brantlinger, P., & Young, R. J. C. (1996). Colonial desire: hybridity in theory, culture and race. *The American Historical Review*, 101(5), 1519.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2170185>
- Bryman, A. (2004). Qualitative research on leadership: A critical but appreciative review. *The leadership quarterly*, 15(6), 729-769.
- Clark, K., & Holquist, M. (1984). *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Belknap Press.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2009). *Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Applications*. By Pearson Education. Inc. New Jersey.
- Gupta, S., & Sharma, A. (2006). "Mapping the Margins: Postcoloniality, Feminism, and the Pursuit of Hybridity." *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, 43(2), 583-593.
- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: Flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3(3), 345-357.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794103033004>
- Huggan, G. (2001). "The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins." Routledge.
- Kerner, I. (2016). Homi K. Bhabha: *The Location of Culture*, Routledge: London/New York 1994, 285 S. (dt. Die Verortung der Kultur, Stauffenburg:

- Marotta, Vince. (2021). Cultural Hybridity. 10.1002/9781405165518.wbeos1616.
- Mikhail Bakhtin. By Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984. xi, 398 pp.
- Said, E. W. (1979). Orientalism. Pantheon Books.
- Skains, R. L. (2018). Creative practice as research: discourse on methodology. *Media practice and education*, 19(1), 82-97.
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2019). Chinua Achebe | Biography, Books, & Facts. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Chinua-Achebe>
- Tübingen: 2000, 408 S.). In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 392–395).
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-13213-2_91
- Young, R. (2001). Post colonialism: An Historical Introduction. Wiley-Blackwell.

