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OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**THE FLIGHT FROM MODERNITY IN  
CHINUA ACHEBE'S  
*GIRLS AT WAR AND OTHER STORIES***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree**

**Candidates:**

Mr. Yacine TOUAHRIA

Mr. Fethi BEN KHELIFA

**Supervisor:**

Mr. Bachir SAHED

**2019**

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## **DEDICATION**

*To our families,*

*To our friends,*

*To all those who love us.*

## ABBREVIATIONS

*Girls at War and Other Stories: GWOS*

## ABSTRACT

The present study examines the conflict between the Africans' traditions and the Western culture in Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories*. It aims to analyze the effect of Western culture and practices on the Igbo traditional life. Moreover, the study examines the reaction of the *Igbo* people against modernity to preserve their cultural heritage. This study employs *Bhabha's* postcolonial theory of Hybridity and Mimicry. Thus, chapter one presents the theoretical framework and socio-historical context of the work. The second chapter scrutinizes the theme of modernity and tradition in the following selected short stories "Dead Men's Path", "Marriage is a Private Affair", "Chike's School Days", "Uncle Ben's Choice", and "Sacrificial Egg".

**Keywords:** Igbo, Modernity, Tradition, Hybridity, Mimicry

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Introduction ..... 1**

## CHAPTER ONE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1. The Rise of the Postcolonial .....9  
2. Bhabha's Hybridity, Ambivalence, and Mimicry.....15  
3. The Igbo Culture in Achebe's Short Stories .....22  
4. The Impact of Colonialism on the African Culture..... 30  
5. The Role of Achebe's Writing in Portraying the African Culture.....35

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE POLITICS OF BELONGING IN *GIRLS AT WAR AND OTHER STORIES*

1. Hybrid Identities in *Girls at War and Other Stories*.....40  
2. The African's Response to European Colonial Schemes.....46  
3. Achebe's Appropriation of the English Language.....59  
4. The Necessity of Writing Back.....64

**CONCLUSION.....68**

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....71**

## INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that literature is the ability of the writer in portraying the true life of humanity and its surrounding. It is like an ocean that the writer plunges in order to understand their meaning of life. Therefore, it is reasonable enough to opt one of the African literary produces as a sample of this study.

Owing to the fact that literature is the mirror of the society, countless African writers tend to present and provide a truthful insight about their culture, their traditions throughout literature. Indeed, the colonial period has a lasting impact on the Africans' life. Hence, it is among the reasons that pave the way to the emergence of many African literary writings.

Unsurprisingly, after the advent of British colonialism, the Africans were exposed to Western thought, culture, and civilization, and which attempt to ruin and eradicate African legacy and tradition.

*Chinua Achebe* has been held up to us as the shining example of how an African can rise against colonialism and Western practices. Being from an Igbo tribe helps him to write novels and short stories that exemplify the Africans' situation especially Nigeria under the effect of the colonizer, he takes upon himself the responsibility of fighting against colonizer. He writes about Igbo life from within and presents the traditional Igbo life with the clash with modernity.

As a continuation to his remarkable novels, *Girls at War and Other Stories* strongly deals with the Igbo society during colonialism and after, and focusing on the traditional values of the Igbo culture. It is important to say that Achebe portrays the African identity, and defends it against the corrupt thought of the colonizer and their

attempts to break everything traditional. So Achebe throughout the selected short stories depicts the impact of colonialism in the African nation.

In this research, the corpus of this study will give a clear insight into the Igbo culture in relation to Western culture. Thus, this dissertation sheds light on the clash between modernity and tradition and explores the effect of the European customs and beliefs on traditional African culture. In addition the work will draw attention to the characters' flight or escape from the modern life.

The relationship between modernity and tradition has been a central theme in postcolonial African literature. In fact, Countless writers present these two perspectives in their works. Modernity is the result of the European influence on the colonizer while tradition is the combination of social and cultural features characterizing African identity. Achebe in *Girls at War and Other Stories* illustrates the Igbo culture with the Western culture.

Therefore, this study investigates how Achebe depicts the clash between modernity and tradition in the collection of Short Stories. The research will also focus on the effect of Western culture and thought on the Igbo society and examines the reaction of the Africans against change and how Achebe presents these elements in the short stories.

It is worth noting that the colonizer wants to impose Western values on the Africans' identity. Thus, colonialism violently ruins African culture and tradition and imposes European forms of thought and social organization upon colonized people. This clash between the two cultures fighting for their coexistence and the attempts of the colonizer to dominate and the African struggle for identity and traditions makes

the topic the topic important to investigate. The clash between these two perspectives is indeed what makes *Girls at War and Other Stories* is worthy to analyze its content.

This project aims to demonstrate the clash between tradition and modernity in the selected short stories which intends to highlight postcolonial theory through focusing on Bhabha's concepts. The work is going to examine the effect of Western beliefs, concepts and manners on the life of the Igbo traditional culture. Furthermore, the study will tend to analyze the content of the selected short stories which represents the predicaments of the heroes when they are in between two cultures. Moreover, the research also aims to examine the reaction of the Igbo people to preserve and revive their cultural traditions. To this end, the study is going to underline the writer's potential in presenting the traditional life of the Igbo people.

This research seeks to answer the following main question: how does Achebe portray the conflict between modernity and tradition in the selected short stories? In addition, the study will attempt to answer the following sub questions: how does Achebe depict the reaction of the Africans to modernity? How could Achebe demonstrate the cultural heritage of the Africans? and Why does Achebe employ the colonizer's language to depict his homeland culture?

Many researchers have shown interest to Chinua Achebe's works, which sustain a reputation due to his debatable themes. His brilliant stylistic narration that put on display is aesthetically a combination of English language and African's proverbs that create an exceptional art of writing for the Africans.

Among researchers who are concerned with Achebe's works is Ed Pilkington, in his article, "In Long Way From Home», Chinua Achebe, Pilkington Discusses Achebe's Creations Of A New Language, His Years In Exile From His Beloved

Nigeria, And Why He Changed His Name From Albert (Pilkington, 20). Through his set of magnificent works as *Things Fall Apart* successfully captures great attention of readers to *Girls at War and Other Stories* which is a narration about the life of Igbo individualism after the arrival of the white man, and the colonial legacy they leave behind, in the same article Ed Pilkington mentions a memorable line quoted from his conversation with Chinua Achebe. Achebe states, “*During the last planting season a white man had appeared in their clan. The white missionaries and the terrible destruction they brought had arrived*” (qtd in Pilkington,20).Achebe believes that the white man indeed destroys the harmony of the African society and that the African people are being irrevocably changed, in many ways for the worst.

Many critics surprisingly denounce the neglect of Chinua Achebe’s Short Stories which are observed as poor genre as compared to his novels. Hence they make great exertion in order to prove that his short stories have been exceptionally and perfectly written, and are globally known and appreciated as his novels.

Dekunle Mamudu, in his article, “The Significance of Chinua Achebe’s Short Stories”, mentions a handful of critics who highlight the importance of Chinua Achebe’s short stories among them a critic named Patricia Emenyonu who claims that Achebe’s *Girls at War and Other Stories* is universally acknowledged when she observes that “*the international community had recognized great art like Achebe’s short stories*”(1) .

Moreover, the critic Charles Dameron in same article carries out an analytical development on Chinua Achebe’s short stories and unveils a clear upshot that Achebe’s objective is to “*augment the historical portrait of African people that he*

*has elaborately created in his sequence of novels*". Hence, to promote African history is to cast valuable insights upon customs, beliefs, way of life, of the African people.

Another writer Balogun in his book, *Tradition and Modernity in Africa Short Stories*, presents Achebe's short stories as exceptional work where Achebe portrays stories that are borrowed from the African folklore (58). Achebe depicts his Igbo culture and society which flourishes on the pillars of art, music, and poetry, where the art of conversation is highly estimated therefore the language is a crucial part of the Igbo culture and it is highly privileged by the use of proverbs. This is why Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart* stresses the point that "*proverbs are the palm oil which words are eaten*"(Achebe,7), which means that the proverbs are creative set of words that hold a strong weapon of impressing words within minds of the individuals.

Another writer C.L. Innes in his book, *Chinua Achebe*, reveals the cause that makes Achebe uses English language in his set of works. Achebe once claimed "*I feel that English language will be able to carry the weight of my experience. But it will have to be new English. Still in full communion with its ancestral home but alerted to suit its new African surrounding*" (2). Likewise, other critics like Brenth Lindfors, Gareth Griffiths, and Felicity Riddy make some attempt by studying and analyzing Achebe's Africanized Shakespeare's language while his usage of Igbo language and Pidgin English has frequently raised a fierce debate in which regularly thrilled or disappointed reviewers (2).

Regardless, all the aforementioned works indeed reveal an outstanding insight about Achebe's writing style, and provide some views about how the collection of these short stories participate for the portrayal of African traditional culture but apparently they did not get through some other themes that are offered throughout the

short stories. Thus, this study will be devoted to undertake the theme of the African tradition after the advent the European occupation which results a clash between the Igbo traditional cultures and Western cultures in Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories*.

Many critics have unveiled Achebe's depiction of the conflict between tradition and modernity in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* that present a spectacular image of the pride and validity of the culture of Igbo people with all its wondering aspects such as puzzles, pains, and pleasures. I.L. Innes in his book, *Chinua Achebe*, points out the critic David Carroll who affirms “with great skill Achebe in his novels of traditional life combines the role of novelist and anthropologist, synthesizing them in a new kind of fiction. This is where his essential genius lies” (2). A lot of other critics of the individual novels admit with this perspective.

Another article entitled, “Themes in African Literature”, evokes that Achebe is a worthy prototype in demonstrating customs and tradition expanding from birth, through marriage to death and of the educational, religious and hierarchical systems Of the Africans concentrate on issues Achebe delivers in his literary works which touch either explicitly or implicitly upon cultural tradition, effect of colonization, and local quarrel existing among contemporary Africans. Concerning the theme of culture and tradition, Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* and *Man of the People* explore the issues of educated classes that appear in the modern society, and how the circumstances of the Nigerian people altered as a result of the imperialism's influence (Aneeta, 3).

A further research paper entitled, “The Conflict of Cultures in African Novels of Chinua Achebe”, Chiek Hamidou Kane, and Ferdinand Uoyo, states that Achebe's major novels *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God* integrated the

willing to demonstrate to the West that Africa was never devoid of culture or cultural values. Besides, Achebe appeals that the African writer should be a patriot of his culture dutifully bear the weight as a vital source to explain the traditions and African history and values of his people to the Westerners' aggressiveness (Saber 30).

Aasif Rashid in his research paper, "Tradition and Modernity in the Major Novels of Albert Chinua Lumogo Achebe an Analytical Study", critically studied tradition and modernity in the representation novels of Chinua Achebe such as *Things Fall Apart*, and *No Longer At Ease* which are mainly about the life of Igbo people as it collided with the colonial power in forms of missionaries and colonial government. Therefore, Achebe's novels can be regard as platform of the struggle either for the willing to restore traditional values or being assimilated which is an essential step for survival. (18)

This part is devoted to research design and methodology for this work. This research paper is going to tackle critically and analytically Achebe's selected short stories. It employs the postcolonial approach to literary criticism. The study endeavours to focus on the predicaments, and the issues the Igbo people confront, as well as the attempts in preserving their traditional culture with a special focus on Bhabha's major concepts such as Hybridity and Mimicry, which are considered as curial elements in studying postcolonial identity. In "The Sacrificial Egg" as one of the selected Chinua Achebe's short stories the protagonist, Julius Obi, has a hybrid identity as the name indicates.

Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories* portray the issue of traditional Igbo cultures affected by the Western cultural practices which result in a loss of Igbo cultural traditions, and adoption of newly Western concepts, thereby creating a clash

and division inside African society. At last, Bhabha with regard to his remarkable ideas will offer a great help to figure out the subject more profoundly, and investigate the thoughts, attitudes, and the actions in a living condition at the crossroad of cultures.

This study is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to socio-historical context and theoretical framework. It will focus on the postcolonial theory and its contribution to the African identity by mentioning its pioneers. Then we rely on Bhabha's concepts of Hybridity and mimicry by focusing on Bhabha's view to cultural clash. This chapter gives an insight on the impact of colonialism on the African identity and culture. In addition, it shows Achebe's depiction of the Igbo culture and their traditions. The chapter presents the contribution of Achebe to the African culture and identity.

Moreover the second chapter discusses the conflict between modernity and tradition and depicting the African response to the Western culture. Also the corpus shows Hybridity in the selected short stories in term of culture and identity. In order to reinforce the idea, we are going to see the importance of language for Achebe as weapon to defend the Africans.

## **CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

*Girls at war and other stories*, published in 1973, is one of Chinua Achebe's important works. This work portrays the impact of colonialism on the Igbo culture and society and the radical changes that come after the departure of the British colonialism. Achebe's short stories depict the conflict and the cultural clash between the Africans and the Western in terms of religion, politics, education, individual and collective conflicts, war, in tribal conflicts. All these elements are carefully handled through characterizations, themes and language.

Achebe views the traditional life of the Africans as a display of the African identity. It is embedded the ways they wear clothes, their oral tradition and their customs and rituals. In *Girls at war and other Stories*, Achebe presents characters who are struggling with their identities, between modernity and tradition and the effect of Western values on their cultural identity.

The dissertation will focus on how Achebe presents the African identity in his works. This chapter will give a summary of postcolonial theory, its concepts and roots. The chapter also highlights Bhabha's concepts as a way to analyze the short stories.

Furthermore, this chapter will attempt to give a brief summary of the Igbo culture and their rituals and traditions. In addition this chapter will analyze the impact of colonialism on the African culture. At the end it will give an insight on Chinua Achebe and his contribution in defending the African identity.

## 1. The Rise of the Postcolonial

Postcolonialism as literary discourse comes to light during the nineteenth century, numerous territories across the world were controlled by the British Empire. So, English people were able to spread and set their norms, and institutions throughout those colonized areas, especially in Nigeria and India. Duncun Ivison in his article “Postcolonialism Historical Period” states that the declaration of the principal of self-determination marked the beginning of postcolonial age in the history of the world. In the beginning of the twentieth century, postcolonialism gained much recognition (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

In his book, *Literary Theory: The Basics* Bertens states “*in the course of 1980s, Commonwealth literary studies became part of the then emerging and now vast field of literary, cultural, political and historical inquiry that we all call postcolonial studies*” (p. 200). Hence, postcolonialism has been gaining a reputation since the 1980s in which turns out to be the leading field in the world of literature.

According to *Postcolonial Studies* by Deepi kaBahri, for some historians, postcolonial studies marks its birthdate in the Western academy after the publication of Edward Said’s renowned book *Orientalism*. Moreover, postcolonialism witnesses a great growth strengthened by the appearance in 1981 of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin influential book *The Empire Writes Back: The Theory and Practice in Postcolonial*. Since then, terms like Commonwealth and Third World which are used to represent the literature of European former colonies start to be less used. Despite the fact that there is an intense controversy over the exact parameters of the field and the definition term of postcolonial. In their article, Post-colonialism Literature the Concept of self and the other in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*:

An Analytical Approach, Afaf Ahmed Hasan Al-Saidi state that postcolonialism is about the relations between the European nations and the countries they formerly colonized. Since postcolonialism is movable term, often harsh debates arise within postcolonial countries which suggest issues in postcolonial studies that surpass the boundaries of clear definition. Simply put, postcolonialism refers to a period that represents the aftermath of European colonization (p96).

Postcolonialism carries a set of theories that have been concerned with investigating cultural historical perspectives with literature written in English in countries that were or still are colonies of other countries. Postcolonialism, in the words of Charles E. Bressler, “*is an approach to literary analysis that concerns itself particularly with literature written in English in formerly colonized countries*” (265).

In other words, postcolonialism refers to all the characteristics of a society or culture from the time of colonization to the present day, in most situations, it puts much emphasis on writing from colonized or formerly colonized cultures in Asia, Africa, and South America .moreover, postcolonial occasionally refers to countries that have already sought after independence or even colonies get liberated which now are facing new form of neo-colonialism through new type of intensifying containment such as capitalism and globalization, the emergence of Postcolonialism’s theoretical and social matters can be viewed to the 1950s. This decade witnesses the end of colonialism in many countries across the continents along with the appearance of liberations movements and the publication of Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin White Mask* (1952) and Achebe’s novel *Things Fall Apart*.

It is assumed that postcolonial is to be deceptive since the colonies of ex-European powers are granted their sovereignty and independence which would mean

that colonial rule ceases by its all practices. In her article, “The Development of Postcolonial Theory”, Elem Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu claims that post colonialism is simply regarded as a continuation of colonialism that the former colonies get only their political independence. The given political independence is even considered as an illusion where Colonialism transmits to a new colonial form. This political independence is not able to achieve in solving problems that are expected to be overcoming by dismissing the colonial masters, but new shape of authority emerges (2).

Regularly, new intellectuals in these independent countries appear having influenced by Western thoughts and concepts; try to grasp the power based on exploitation of a certain class in which colonialism rebirth itself in new shape. In so doing, Postcolonial literature makes considerable attempts to dismantle these practices that appear in this new form of colonialism through analysing the colonized society across multiple points of views. By all means, literature, thereby displays an agreement to shed light on postcolonialism to portray all the practices within the colonies of ex European empire.

According to Robert J.C. Young, postcolonialism is simply the creation of human experience that is more specifically the result of different cultural and national origins. The significant concern of post colonialism is directly destined towards zones that are largely invisible, in other words it refers to people who are marginalized. Thus, the language of post colonialism offers for those whose knowledge and histories are not allowed to be acknowledged, for those who have non belonging or place to settle (14).

In fact, Postcolonialism is an ongoing process of resistance and reconstruction, thereby postcolonial theory involves discussion about several experiences such as slavery, suppression, resistance and difference racial, cultural discrimination and genders, So that postcolonial theory does not involve a single set of ideas, or a single practice. Rather all of these experiences together form the complex framework of postcolonial. The term postcolonial appears to stand for “both the material effect of colonialism and the huge diversity of everyday and sometimes hidden responses to it” (Ashcroft *et al.*, 2003, pp. 2-7) this notion, indicates that the process of imperial power of suppression still exists and spread throughout various societies, and within their practices and institutions.

The turning point for the development of postcolonial literature has been witnessed by thought provoking writers such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi and Edward Said and Homi Bhabha whose contributions shape the groundwork of postcolonial theory represented in its main concepts and assumptions as well as to its specific terminologies.

According to Shrikant B. Sawant in his book, *Postcolonial Theory: Meaning and Significance* by Fanon is one of the leading figures who analysed the psychology of both the colonized and the colonizer under colonial rule. He defines colonialism as a source of violence and concentrates on its influence on human consciousness where he realizes that the problem of blacks lays in the effect of colonialism. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is a fundamental text in postcolonial discourse. Fanon considers violence as the framework of colonial rule mostly as a form of distraction of all what is called the native social forms, to Fanon, due to this violence and aggressiveness, the white man gets allowed to wear the cover of superiority over all

ways of life. Although Fanon his samples are observed and analysed from his around environment in the Antilles. His writings are profoundly inspired by the people opposed to the colonial rule notably in the African continent (122).

In her paper named ,The Development Of Postcolonial Theory, Elem Eyrica Tepeciklioğlu mentions another influential figure in current postcolonial writers, Aimé Césaire, who claims that the colonizer devastates cultures, institutions, religion, and the harmony of such societies, he therefore believes that the colonial societies in order to face the subjugation of colonial rules they need to rely on their own sources in another words, he points out to the marginalized people urging them to realize their inner strength. Kunne comments to the term Negritude in Cesar's poetry book *Return To My Native Land* that is basically a doctrine "which assert the Blackman with his own culture , his own civilization and his own original contributions" (20).It is simply clear that Césaire's aim is that the Negroes have to be greatly proud to their own achievements in social and cultural ground (5).

Another crucial work is Edward Said's *Orientalism* which is a revolutionary innovative work of postcolonial studies. It displays the inequality between the West and the Orient, illustrating the superiority of the West over the Orient. Said defines Orientalism as "a western style for domination, restructuring, and having authority over the orient", he uses such terms and concepts as "the Orient" "the Other" and "the Occident" (Barry, 193), to indicate the interaction between two distinct cultures. According to his research paper titled "Orientalism and Its Impacts Toward the Life Of Umuofians in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*", Heri Prayetno, claims that Orientalism is greatly involved in the life of clans in the African societies especially its impact on Chinua Achebe's novels, the life of clan is simply based on kinship and

tolerance, however white people's perspective towards the Africans in general are seen in many ways as wild, lazy, and uncivilized in which all of these provide impulses for the white man to work on civilizing those people, thus the white man policies that include building church, school, and hospitals is only their efforts to sustain their supremacy over the Africans (Prayetno, 6).

The aforementioned writers, particularly their ideas point out the main features of postcolonial theory in which is represented to study the continued process of colonialism's legacy. Postcolonial theory indulges into a discussion of wide range of issues like the legacy of European colonialism which is the main cause that leads therefore to the appearance of issues like slavery, identity, and immigration.

Another major figure in contemporary postcolonial theory is Gayatri Spivak in which her concepts like "Subaltern" and "Other" in her essay can the subaltern speaks? are frequently used in her writings widen the scope of postcolonial literature including the literature of the marginalized women.(Sawant, Datta, 3)

The next significant figure and one of the most influential thinkers and theorists in postcolonial criticism is Hommi Bhabha, who develops a number of the field's neologisms and key concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, these set of challenging concepts are central to postcolonial theory that portray ways in which the colonized people resist the power of the colonizer. Thus Bhabha's concepts help to describe ways in which colonized people have resisted the power of the colonizer within colonial societies. (Huddart, 2006, 1)

All of these terms in literature have a reference to postcolonial literature. Many critics agree upon the validity of postcolonial literature, in which takes it as an appropriate and most authoritative literature that symbolize, describe and study the

emerging of literature in the British former colonies. The main feature of postcolonial literature are resistance, subversion and reconstruction, all languages of postcolonial literature particularly English is based on the clash between traditional culture, politics , and gender.

## **2. Bhabha's Hybridity, Ambivalence, and Mimicry**

This corpus will deal with one of the significant postcolonial theorists Homi K. Bhabha the leading voice in postcolonial studies and an important thinker in postcolonial criticism. He proves himself an original by providing a conceptual vocabulary for the reading of colonial and postcolonial text. Bhabha is highly influenced by a western theorist Jacques Derrida. His theory is expounded in his books nation and narration and the location of culture like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak he popularized postcolonial theory with concepts that reflects the colonized people's ways to resist the unsecured power of the colonizer such as: hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry.

Bhabha states that we should see colonialism as a straightforward oppression, domination, violence but also as a period of complex and varied cultural contact and interaction. He argues against the tendency to essentialize the Third World Countries into a homogenous identity. Instead he claims that all sense of nationhood is narrated. Bhabha stresses on the idea that no one can accept the superiority of the western civilization instead of others' civilization, these differences open a gap in colonial discourse a gap that can be subjugated by the colonized. In short, Bhabha argues that cultural differences are not a threat and everyone should accept and respect the other's culture.

It is worth noting that Bhabha considers identity and mirror that represent the individual or society's culture especially in the third world. His first book *Nation and Narration* in which he strongly argues against the tendency to essentialize Third World Countries into a homogenous identity. Here he also challenges the tendency to treat post-colonial countries as a homogeneous block. This leads, he argues, to the assumption that there is and was a shared identity amongst ex-colonial states. Bhabha argues that all senses of nationhood are narrated. Then he goes on to identify a relationship of antagonism and ambivalence between colonizers and the colonized. This study includes only his significant ideas: Homogenous identity, mimicry, interstice, hybridity and liminality reflected in his literary work.

Homi Bhabha developed the hybridity theory in *The Location of Culture* (1994) which analyses hybridity as a paradigm of colonial anxiety. Bhabha's cultural hybridity stresses the mixture of different cultures and describes the emergence of new cultural forms from multiculturalism. Bhabha (1994) wrote in his book *The Location of Culture*,

For a willingness to descend into that alien territory—where I have led you— may reveal that the theoretical recognition may split the space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing of international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space— that carries out burden of meaning of culture (p.38).

So, Bhabha's statements clearly demonstrate his idea on cultural hybridity rather than differences, which paves the way for the topics of cultural identities and multiculturalism in many literature researches. It is worth to mention that term "hybridity" by Bhabha is very important and is currently in fashion with postcolonial

critics. It refers to the kind of political and cultural negotiation between the colonizer and the colonized. Postcolonial studies have been concerned with issues of hybridity, creolization, and with the in-betweenness, diasporas, mobility and cross-overs of ideas and identities generated by colonialism. Countless writers discuss the issue of hybridity, Robert Young in his book, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* states: A hybrid is technically a cross between two different species and that therefore the term hybridization evokes both the botanical notion of inter-species grafting and the vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right which regarded different races as different species (10).

Here Young refers the term Hybrid as a cross between two different species. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, in their definition of the concept of “hybridity state that

One of the most employed and most disputed terms in Postcolonial theory, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by Colonization. [...] Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political (10).

In this sense, hybridity is used in postcolonial theory to refer to linguistic and intercultural Space, space of in-betweenness. It implies that cultures come after the hybridizing process rather than existing before.

It is no secret that hybridity is the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. Bhabha states that the assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices can be positive, enriching as well as oppressive. According to Bhabha, every culture is an original within every form of identity. He states that the cultures are not detached phenomena, but being always in contact with one another, we find differences in cultures. So Bhabha’s term, hybridity

in colonial text, answers Spivak's question "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" in the affirmative way. It indicates that subaltern has spoken. Here the term hybridity conjures up the notion of in-betweenness, which is further elaborated by the accompanying concept of Diaspora. The term "Diaspora" evokes the specific terms of displacement but it loses its poignancy due to the effect of hybridity. It means that the term hybridity bridges the gap between the West and the East that is the colonizer and the colonized.

Another author named Christopher Bracken precisely suggests that Bhabha's term hybridity opens up the possibility of an international culture of hybridity in the following words:

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha sites repetition as a mode of resistance to today's neocolonialism, particularly the recolonization of migrants within the contemporary Western metropolis. For Bhabha, the human subject is not grounded in a fixed identity but rather is a discursive effect generated in the act of enunciation. When migrants, refugees, and the decolonized take up positions in Western discourse, they divide it from itself by repeating it and a clear space within it for new, hybrid subjectivities (506).

In short, Bhabha's idea of hybridity is important. It suggests that cultures come after the hybridizing process, rather than existing before. He proves that, in colonial relationships, this is just as true of the colonizer as of the colonized. Bhabha reminds us that cultures are part of an ongoing process. He further suggests that majority liberal cultures in the West must view themselves through the post-colonial perspective. We observe that Bhabha's theoretization of hybridity has important consequences for discourses of rights. Bhabha points out those marginal cultures have tended to be ignored or, alternatively, asked to assimilate.

Another concept that Bhabha has contributed to postcolonial literature is “Ambivalence” a term which was adapted into colonial discourse by Bhabha. It is a concept that describes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized as Robert young defines it in his book *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*: it also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (161). So, the relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is complicated and opposed to the colonizer. Thus, Bhabha tries to show how both colonizing and colonized subjects are mingled in the ambivalence of colonial discourse and deflected by other cultures. In his book *Nation and Narration* he says:

It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the origins’ of nation as a sign of ‘modernity’ of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality (1).

The ambivalence arises from the conflict between the historic view of nation and its cultural temporality, an attribute it acquires recently. Bhabha’s creative work has secured his place as one of the fathers of postcolonial studies.

The term Mimicry underlines the gap between the norm of civility presented by European Enlightenment and its colonial imitation in indistinct form. This notion is based on Foucault’s term that was based on Kant’s notion. Bhabha’s term mimicry is a part of a larger concept of visualizing the postcolonial situation as a kind of binary opposition between authority and oppression, authorization and de-authorization. He states ahead that all modes of imposition including the demand on the colonized to be like the colonizer results in mimicry. According to him, the mode of asserting authority over the colonized gave rise to mimicry. He further argues that mimicry can

be taken as a way of eluding control that also gives rise to postcolonial analysis by subverting the colonial master's authority and supremacy.

In his essay "Of Mimicry and Man: the ambivalence of colonial discourse" "mimicry is the act in which the colonized people imitate the colonizer (85-92). In this regard, Bhabha asserts that "*mimicry is a process by which the colonized subject is represented as almost the same, but not quite*" (86). So, he argues that the colonizers attempt to make the colonized like them in terms of language, dress, manners, and ideas. Additionally, Colonizer discourse expects colonized to be like colonist or identical. But the absolute equivalence between the two may fail to emphasize the colonial rule and its ideologies. As these ideologies assume that there is structural non-equivalence, a hole between superior and inferior that explains one group of people can dominate another. He argues further that mimicry does not merely rupture the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a partial presence. According to him, the play between equivalence and excess makes the colonized both reassuringly similar and also terrifying: so mimicry is at once resemblance and menace (86). Another writer named Leela Gandhi explain the term "mimicry",

But mimicry is also the sly weapon of anti-colonial civility, an ambivalent mixture of deference and disobedience [.....] In effect, mimicry inheres in the necessary and multiple acts of translation which oversee the passage from colonial vocabulary to its anti-colonial usage. 'Mimicry' inaugurates the process of anti-colonial self-differentiation through the logic of inappropriate appropriation (149-150)

The above discussion indicates a little difference in the term mimicry that Bhabha has given. Moreover, mimicry is one response to the circulation of stereotypes.

Bhabha makes it clear that “mimicry” is central to colonial discourse. He defines colonial mimicry as:

The colonial desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excesses, its difference(86).

Bhabha expects that a concern of colonizer has to open a space for the colonized to resist colonial discourse. This nervousness is matched by mimicry, with the colonized adopting and adapting the colonizer’s culture. But this mimicry is not unoriginal imitation and the colonized is not being assimilated into the supposedly dominant or even superior culture. Bhabha finds mimicry as central to colonial discourse so the consequence of mimicry is the depression of the colonizer’s apparently stable original identity. The identity of the colonizer is constantly slipping away, being damaged by effects of writing, joking, sly civility and repetition. In conclusion, mimicry implicitly offers an opening for agency, and even a model for agency.

### **3. The Igbo Culture in Achebe’s Short Stories**

In his book, *The Igbo Culture and History*, Don C. Ohadeke asserts that, the Igbo, also spelled Ibo, considered as one of the leading single groups in Africa, their communities are mostly farming regions that situated alongside the Niger river in the west and across river in the east, their language is also spelled the Igbo in which

contains over 20 dialects that are officially recognized as one of the three major executive languages in Nigeria. It is notable to point out that Igbo language has gained its global reputation thanks to figures of well-known Ibo writers, particularly the highly praised novelist Chinua Achebe. Dissimilarities between dialects are because Igbo land was aggregation of self-contained town and villages that indicate that the Igbo live in independent communities and do not emphasize one shared Igbo identity. (40)

Prior to the arrival of European colonialists in the area of present day Nigeria, it would have been mistaken to assert of the Igbo as one single people are consisted of over two hundred separate groups in spite the fact that they are commonly met in the same customs and languages. An Igbo person from one village can be largely considered as a distinct self to the other villages, while travelling he might face various obstacles and great difficulties to get himself to be understood. However, after the advent of colonialism, many of the Igbo travel towards promoting places and settle in urban cities in pursuing for work places and higher institutional learning. Owing to the meeting from different places many realize that there are no distinct languages. in addition to that, a majority of people speak English alongside Igbo as a result of British colonialism, and consequently the common Igbo identity comes to light in the twentieth century. Achebe, in most of his works offers much concentration toward the language of the Igbo society which is the most crucial element to Igbo, it often gives them a sense of belonging and also is used as tools to safeguard and sustain their culture and heritage. In fact the Igbo is intimately loved and relied on their language to be special to other cultures (40).

It is simply clear that the Igbo language inculcates its people with strong sense of Igbo identity which lead to the Ibo domination over the vast eastern region of Nigeria, due to this they try to secede from Nigeria in 1967 as an independent nation of Biafra (Encyclopaedia Britannica). Owing to the book named *The Igbo People Culture and Character* written by Mazi O. Ojiaku, for the Igbo, the names are essential part in their life in which they are an aspect of personality and cultural identity, these names, hold an important meaning strongly associated with event in one's life, in other meaning, they show the real spirit of individual and reflect the birth's place of someone. (38)

In the short story "Chike's School Day", portrays an example of the use of Igbo names whose meaning is translated into English in the text. Obiajulu is one of the names given to *Chike* where he was born in a family of five daughters. The name he is given indicates the he is the only son of Amos and Sarah. Obiajulu is an Igbo name means "the mind at last is at rest":

the birth of the last child was a boy, and his birth brought a great joy to his family. The child received three names at his baptism – John, *Chike*, *Obiajulu*. The last name means "the mind at last is at peace". Anyone hears this name realizes at once that its owner was either an only son or an only child. *Chike* was an only son. His parents had had five daughters before him (31).

Ibo society is based on small villages and to far extent is governed by an assembly of elders rather than a king or priest king. They organized themselves in lineage groups which mean from fathers to sons. Blood ties is the basis in relationships and each person traces his or her descent to three groups, first a person belongs to the smallest unit in the society known as *Uno*, or a house, this is typical family, consisting of a man, his wife or wives and their children the second group

was the *Umuna*, or lineage composed of number of related houses , the last one a group of lineage formed a compact village or a town, *Obodo* ,in fact the pre-colonial Igbo society made up of self-governing villages and villages groups ruled via unformulated and impermanent authority and or non-hereditary leadership system(Ibenekwu, Ikpechukwuka). One can observe that the Igbo can be seen as a republican by nature. To some point, Igbo society is a democratic and egalitarian, according to Onyemaechi:

An egalitarian society is characterized by the adjustment of the number of valued statuses to the number of persons, or fixing or limiting of persons capable of exerting power. As many persons as can wield power, whether through personal strength, influence or authority, can do so (4).

Thus, the Igbo societies are known to be highly democratic and they have no centralized government, all of their political and social structure rely on the idea of cross-cutting ties. The five most important cross-cutting institutions are the council of elders, age group, council of chief and women's association. It is important to notice that the traditional Igbo society torn down when the Europeans destroyed the Igbo's cross-cutting ties due to colonial practices.

The Igbo regard marriage as the basis of their social structure, the process of leading the marriage is taken not only by the families of the bride and the groom but all the lineages of the village must get involved , and most importantly is that the marriage affair has to be under two main strict conditions, firstly it must be arranged by parents which means that the couple do not have any validity to have a say and in most cases meet for the first time in their wedding day (Igbo women of Nigeria. p 40) , secondly the intended married woman has to belong to the same tribe which means that is to be from the same ethnic group as well as the same blood ties, the process of

marriage in Igbo society can be distinct as “*an undertaking entered into by the close kin of the man and wife, in Particular by their respective lineage kin, with regard to the paternity or the wife's children*» *The Ibo and Ibibio-Speaking People of South East Nigeria*(17). Many of these arranged marriages are not based on love but on family status honor, and loyalty. In “*Marriage Is Private Affair*”, *Nnaemeka* receives a letter from his father telling him that I have found the right woman for you,

“I have found a girl who will suit you admirably- *Ugyoe Nweke*, the eldest daughter of our neighbor, *Jacob Nweke*. She has a proper Christian upbringing. When she stopped schooling some years ago her father (a man of sound judgment) sent her to live in the house of a pastor where she has received all the training a wife could need. Her Sunday school teacher has told me that she reads her bible fluently. I hope we shall begin negotiation when you come home in December” (19).

This letter greatly indicates that marriage in the Igbo society is based on social norms governing this traditional institution. It is important to mention that an adult Igbo man and woman believably have to get married and establish their household, and children are highly valued. Igbo men are at the head of the family and most of them are farmers and hunters, having several wives, and therefore children tend to facilitate the parents workforce in farms and livestock, in this respect, the more such family possesses children the more its status within a society gets higher. Farms, livestock, wives and children are the standards of man’s wealth measurement. Furthermore, man’s ability to marry more than one woman is an advantageous process to increase the size of the household besides the man’s status is enhanced (*Igbo History and Culture*, 32). Many of these arranged marriages are not based on love but on family status, honour, and loyalty.

On the other hand, if an adult Igbo is not married he is called *Oke-okporo* (a male woman). Although he is expected to pay taxes, he is not considered as a full grown adult person in his village no matter of his age and his status. Besides, he does not have the chance to share his ideas in a meeting, if he passes away he is not mourned, and is buried on the same day he dies unlike a married man who stays a while at least one day before he gets buried. For the unmarried woman is called *Ndabili*. She is considered as a high burden to her family. Moreover, she feels that it is not rightful to remain at her parent's house.

For the African people, marriage are the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet to be born. All the dimensions of time meet here and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalized. Marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes an actor and an actress and not just a spectator. Therefore, Marriage is a duty of requirements from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Otherwise he is a rebel and law-breaker; he is not abnormal but 'Underhuman'. Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that the person concerned has rejected society and society rejected him in return (*Igbo Marriage and Family Life*, 434).

In so doing, this process of marriage in Igbo society has a necessary function in which family links and lineage based on moral and ritual obligation generated by the association to protect life, interest, and property of social groups.

Unarguably, The Igbo people are powerfully religious. The religion that is ultimately practiced is the Igbo traditional religion, it is indigenous religion that is inherited from ancestors and delivered to generation that come to be. The Igbo have

an absolute faith in the supreme being (*Chunwu*) and in the afterlife, for them *Chukwu* lives above in the sky, considered as a source of all things and everything is under his control, in addition to gods Igbo people worship other mini deities as intermediaries that are assisted by the priests and spirits, moreover sacrifice is an important feature in which a diviner offers sacrifices in an Igbo religious ceremony (*Igbo Culture and History*, 33).

Igbo people have several sorts which symbolize spirits that habitually took a shape of natural phenomena. These include spirits of rivers, streams, lakes, rain, lightening, iron, the earth, the farm fertility and witchcraft.

The Igbo are well known by having traditional moral values which are essential part generally to all human activities and action. According to Ugwu, these traditional moral values among the Igbos include Truth, and a life of rectitude humility, loyalty or obedience, honesty, sincerity/justice, goodness, hospitality, chastity before and in marriage among the women, respect for sanctity of human life, and the recognition and belief in the existence of God. He adds that morale values effortlessly arise a sense of solidarity and intimacy in which creating quietly a strong social atmosphere. On the other hand, any kind of disobedience or perversion results kind of punishments either by the living or highly respected ancestors. Thus punishment successfully prevents people to be immortals (289-290). For Mbiti,

It is believed in many African societies (Igbo inclusive) that these morals are given to them by God from the beginning. This provides an unchallenged authority for the morals. It is also believed or thought that some of the departed and the spirits help to watch over people to make sure that they observe the moral laws and are punished when they break them deliberately. This additional belief strengthens the authority of the morals (173).

In his book, *The Osu Caste System in Igboland Discrimination Based on Descent*, Victor E. Dike asserts that the Igbo traditional culture has an indigenous practice called outcast system, its societal institution that was generated through traditional belief highlighted via superstition, in which set a certain group of people as sub human beings. Outcast system is a form of discrimination and its function is to discourage social interaction and marriage with a group of people named *Osu*. It is an outcast that is to say someone who is alienated as well as completely exiled by a certain group as a member of a society. The *Osus* are seen as impure and not accessed to make prayers with real born because it is supposed to bring misfortune upon society. It is important to state the real cause that led to the happenings of this, the *Osu* caste system comes to be applied when the Igbo organize their life by a set of laws of the earth namely *Odinani*, some rules are provided by such a deity named *ala*, those set of rules have to be respected and strictly followed by the people, the Igbo land therefore is able to thrive and be blessed, the disrespected people of that rules are cast away as an act to keep away from the rage of the earth god and to cease the dissemination of disgrace among the Igbo people, these outcastes are acknowledged as *Osu* .(3)

In “*Chike’s School Day*”, the father Amos stipulates to marry an *osu* woman Sarah who is regarded as to be the lowest social group in the Igbo class system, “*In the past an Osu could not raise his shaggy head in the presence of the free-born. He was a slave [...] to be despised and almost spat on*” (32). One can figure out that African society reviews the *Osus* slaves. Rev. G.T. Basden made a similar assertion in his *Book Among The Igbos Of Southern Nigeria*, According to him “*an Osu is a slave, but one distinct from an ordinary slave who in fact is the property of the god and when devoted to a god, he has no prospect of regaining freedom and he restricts*

*his movements to the vicinity of shrine to which he was attached.*” Which means that *Osu* is seen as a property of gods. Amos’s mother devotedly represents the Igbo traditional belief that completely refuses her son’s proposed marriage to an *Osu* woman in which it would be an offense and degrade her son’s position.

In his novel, *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe, points out a same issue as the protagonist *Okonkwo* who is an educated young man in Lagos, hopes to marry his girlfriend Clara whom he met with on their way back from England, *Clara* is found out to be unluckily an *Osu*. Hence, obi’s parents reject the thought though obi claims that he doesn’t care due to his Christianity. *Obi*’s father commands him to hold back on his idea, he explains:

But this is no reason to marry an *Osu*...my son... I understand what you say. But this thing is deeper than you think’...our fathers in their darkness and ignorance called an innocent man *Osu*, a thing given to idols, and there after he became an outcast, and his children, and his children’s children forever... ‘I know Josiah Okeke (Clara’s father) very well...and I know his wife. He is a good man and a good Christian. But he is *Osu* (151-152).

#### **4. The Impact of Colonialism on the African Culture**

Colonialism is the direct and the overall domination of one country by another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power for example, the direct domination of Nigeria by Britain between 1900-1960. It is no doubt that Colonialism is a seizure of other people’s possessions such as land and goods by means of invasion control and domination therefore, the purpose behind colonizing Africa is to deny all cultures, history and value system outside the colonizer’s frame even though the colonial powers used pseudo-cultural phrases like “the white man’s burden” to justify their act of domination by concealing it as a mask of civilizing the Africans.

But in reality they came with a mission not only a physical conquest of land but more importantly with the occupation of cultures and minds.

Nigeria is among the African countries that the British imperialism made its presence there. Although the reasons behind invading Nigeria are economic and socio-political reasons, the cultural and religious reasons are the main. The Westerners see the Africans as barbaric and uncivilized; and considered the African culture weak and inferior to the European culture therefore, the British colonizer wanted to propose a new African culture with the promotion of English culture and to tear down the legacy of their culture besides, the westerns wanted to demonize the African religion and elevated Christianity as their new religion.

It is clear that considering the African society as oppressed people, savages is the most painful thing to the Africans .the destabilizing effect of colonialism is put up by the postcolonial theorists Ngugi wa Thiongo in his book “decolonizing the mind”,

The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by Imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves(3).

Africa have a fair share of colonial experience, supremacy and subjugation, and the dignity and pride of its people had been robbed of by the colonizer therefore, impact of colonization targets directly the African culture so the westerns with their bring all what can break the heart of the Africans’ culture because it represents identity and life for the Africans. As it was practically impossible for European Imperial powers to uphold physical control over their African colonies, political and economic colonization have necessarily to be sustained by cultural imperialism as the

mind of the oppressed is the most persuasive weapon in the hands of the Oppressor. The most important area of domination is the mental universe of the Colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves.

The colonizer affected mostly the African society. The conception of sexuality has changed completely; the desire to be like Westerners by Africans children has suddenly made them immoral; doing things that are never imaginable several years ago. This does not, however, in any way support. Cultural isolationism is not possible in the context of globalization. Cultural ideas and values raise and flow across borders without hindrance, but that should not make them lose sight of the fact that the weaker you are; the more likelihood of cultural dominance. The society is divided and the westerns break the traditional life of the Africans' society. An example of the influence of colonialism on society can be founded in Achebe's short story "marriage is a private affair" *"when Nnaemeka wants to marry Nene and control his life rather than follow the traditions that his father abides to. He insists on a more modern path to marriage and rather than having a wife chosen for him by his father prefers instead to choose who he is to marry."* (GWOS, )

The colonizer affects the African language because language is a part of their identity.. Proficiency in the African language is declining in Africa because they are obliged to embrace Western culture and civilization as Western language; Western language has created a dichotomy between a privileged and mass of people who still cannot do business with foreign language. It causes isolation for people who cannot speak English or French. Language is a vehicle of culture. Williams and Chrisman portray the importance of language by stating that *"Languages as communication and as culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture:*

*culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our places in the world”* (441- 442). As a result, cultural characteristics like language changed for Africa. Several Africans learn the European languages so they will have the opportunity for economic mobility. Africans do not traditionally have formal education systems. Europeans introduce a system that can teach Africans to participate in the colonial process. In other words, the schooling of Africans is not done for their benefit, but to instruct a section of the population that can be mobilized to assist in the political, social, and economic development of Africa. After Europe is through exploiting Africa, the African languages are weak; therefore the language of the colonizer dominates over their traditional language.

Furthermore, religion also play an important role in the Africans’ identity, William Boyd asserts, *“it must be kept in mind that the church undertook the business of education not because it regarded education as good in itself, but because it found that it could not do its own proper work without giving its adherents, and especially its clergy, as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the sacred writings and for the performance of their religious duties”*(qtd. in Fafunwa, 70).

It can be presumed from this passage that advent of colonial masters led to the introduction of new religion, Christianity, which is added to the two available religions: Yoruba traditional religion and Islam the western type of education crept in through the coming of Christianity. Noticeably and without embellishment, all these have negatively on religions on the ground. As it could be obstruct from earlier

discussion, the idea of religion does not limited to rituals only but also includes culture, economic, politics and other aspects of human endeavours as Islam claimed it. However, the economic and political aspects, for instance, will be investigated from religious perspective not from the economist or political scientist perception. So colonialism brings Christianity in order to dismantle all the rituals and superstition that are considered a heritage of the Africans. in addition , The arrival of colonialism attached with appearance of Christianity bring the Western education which is considered as vehicle of flourishing civilization to the Africans but the reality is that the influence of the westerns on Africans' religion take a huge part of Africans' identity.

Colonialism affected the African women negatively by westernization and by loss of tribal identity. The black woman is treated as uncivilized, and inferior to the westerns. Ashish Nandy, a social theorist, and critic, in his book *The intimate Enemy* says that:

This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. In the process, it helps to generalize the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds (11).

Ashish Nandy states that one of the modes of colonization is the colonization of the minds and cultures. It is the idea of those rationalists, modernists, and the liberals who claim to have the responsibility of civilizing the uncivilized world. He argues that colonization is most powerfully a product of the mind, and decolonization is the process of resisting internalized colonial structures of thought.

The impact of Western civilization on Africa has occasioned a discontinuity in forms of life throughout the Continent. This has led to a cultural dualism that often presents itself as a real dilemma in, real-life situations. In other words, the African experience of modernity is fraught with tensions at every level of the communal and social settings. This is more noticeably on the field of culture.

## **5. The Role of Achebe's Writing in Portraying the African Culture**

Chinua Achebe is one of the prominent African postcolonial writers who attempt to portray the impact of European imperialism on the traditional African societies. Besides, he stresses the importance of cultural traditions of the Africans. Through his novels, Achebe writes about the African history not as inferior to western civilization but, as equal in order to defend the African identity and displays that the African exist in this world.

It is worth to mention that Achebe inspires many African writers. He is the father of modern African literature. His writings shed light on the Africans' past to better understand their present and future in order to restore to Africa its pride, identity, dignity lost during the colonial period. Colonialism and colonial transactions and their effects on the native culture have captured the creative attention of Achebe thus he illustrates the way that European colonialism divided, disrupted, and dismantled the traditional Igbo societies of Nigeria. Under the pretext of religion and economic prosperity, the European colonizers gradually created opposition among the Igbo villages by introducing Christianity and persuading native Africans to join their schools. In the article titled *The Great Chinua Achebe Was The Man Who Gave Africa Voice*, the African writer Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi, in her review of Achebe's last work, *"There Was a Country: a Personal History of Biafra"*,

Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi speaks of her countryman's memoir as a "*Nigerian nationalist lament for the failure of the giant that never was; Achebe is mourning Nigeria's failures*". I do not think it stretches things too far to say that Okonkwo's story is entirely applicable to Africa as we know it today. Adichie, therefore stresses the idea that Achebe's novels express and depict the real picture of the Africans. (Ellah Wakatama Allfrey, The Guardian Newspaper . March ,2013)

Achebe is the invention of two different cultures, in his early age he clearly witnessed the arrival of new comers having represented with new philosophy that comprises different ways of practices notably Christianity, Achebe notices that white missionaries have drastically changed the traditionally former life of his village to worse over time, he irritably claims that "*The white missionaries, and the terrible destruction they brought, had arrived*" (Achebe TFA p, 55). Due to this, he tries to assume that the white man is seeking behind erasing the authenticity of the Africans in one way and that he wants wrongly to mislead the public opinion in which also includes the European novels that depict the Africans as savage as well as having no history and civilization in which Achebe extremely opposes to this notion.

Achebe defiantly attempts to rewrite the western view of Africa as a reaction to Joseph Conrad heart of darkness that presents the Africans as uncivilized, and "Dark Continent".

Achebe wants to correct the misrepresentation of Africa in the western fiction. The quest for cultural identity greatly echoes through Achebe fiction, his works that took place in villages during colonial and postcolonial phase attempt to emphasize the variety of culture of the Igbo life and that the British regardless to their colonial rules and practices, the past of the Igbo tradition is not able to be destroyed but to be

retrieved and recaptured. Thus, Achebe's works deploy as a defensive process against the false claims of the westerners, he further asserts the original culture of Nigerian and more especially the Igbo culture. He states that his own society was an independent and having valuable culture, and his people are well nurtured with principles and self-esteem "*African peoples did not hear of civilization for the first time from Europeans*". (Ojaide p150)

One can simply notice that Achebe barely rejects the threatened shifting that almost touch every aspects in the Igbo, from religion traditional gender role and family relations and even the individuality of persons . Achebe rejects his Christian name Albert for his indigenous one Chinua. He further announces that how much his village named Odigi means to him he clearly states "*I can't really explain it. But for me this place, this village, is significant. It is where I formed my identity*" (A long Way From Home, *The Guardian Newspaper*) Here Achebe believably asserts that he is strongly tied to his cultural origins .as a result Achebe sadly denounces the legacy of white missionaries' colonial rule that subjugates Igbo society culture, further it leads to social divisions and oppression between individuals and their society. Achebe is able to deliver to his audience what lies in the Igbo society, and thus his readers plenty learn about the Igbo's myths and proverbs.

Achebe, in his seminal essay "The Novelist as Teacher" stated, "*I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them*" (42-45). This passage indicates that the main point of Achebe behind the usage of English language in his writing seems a hope to get in touch with western audience in order to

rectify the Europeans' faults image toward Africa, moreover to claim that the colonialism is the real cause for disseminating the stereotype in the African societies.

According to Diana Akers Rhoads, in her essay "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*",

One of Achebe's aims is to present the peculiarities of the Igbo culture, especially the beauties and wisdom of its art and institutions, though...Achebe also presents its weaknesses which require change and which aid in its destruction. A further aim, however, is the presentation of a common humanity which transcends the European and the African, which belongs to both but is peculiar to neither (Akers Rhoads, 62)

Achebe obviously some of his readers that can deduce that his main purpose is to assert that he is fully satiated with his cultural heritage, the oral tradition, social life, rituals, and family.

Achebe as he lives between two sides of cultures or at the cross road of cultures, gave him a unique shape of quality, whether in one way hear singing of the hymn and reading of bible or on the other way seeing relatives offer food to idols , Achebe shares two world of living but he is much captivated by the traditional rituals of his people , nevertheless Achebe use the English language in his writing as a tool that the British colonial gave to him in order to depict his own social traditional culture in which to him is seen as a weapon to face the western culture , for him he claims that the English language itself is "non-national" but Achebe tries to show the language in a sort that is definitely and exceptionally African. Achebe in his essay "Colonial Criticism" writes:

Most African writers write out of an African experience and of commitment to an African destiny. For them, the destiny does not include a future European identity for which the present is but an apprenticeship. And let no

one be fooled by the fact that we may write in English,  
for we intend to do unheard of things with it (Achebe,  
74).

According to “The Function of Custom and Tradition in Establishing Cultural Identity in Chinua Achebe’s Fiction” by Jeffrey M. Easto, Achebe regards English language as something very supportive that colonialism left behind, that is to say he takes over English as a servant for the formation of the African society. It’s important to mention that Achebe initially recognizes the significance of writing in English instead of native language is that he attempts to capture audience beyond the boundaries of Africa continent and to write in Ibo would decrease his works to audience across the globe (14).

Achebe points out that the British take control over the social and political life of the Nigerian, in which the education system of the British makes a large number of Nigerian society value the western social and practices more than their own traditional values which lasts for centuries by inculcating in young Nigerian generation that these indigenous values are inherently uncivilized and barbarian. This degrades the spiritual native land of the Igbo, thus Achebe tries to back up the spirit that was distorted but not wholly taken away from existence (18).

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE POLITICS OF BELONGING IN *GIRLS AT WAR AND OTHER STORIES***

It is clear that culture can shape identity and make a fixed identity or hybrid identity. This corpus will examine the formation of Hybridity and cultural identity in Achebe's selected short stories ;taking into consideration the character analysis of each story based on the theories of HomiK. Bhabha. The result of the clashes between two cultures is the inward struggle to achieve fixed identity; therefore, a new identity is created. According to Bhabha, this new unfixed identity is a hybrid identity.

### **1. Hybrid Identities in *Girls at War and Other Stories***

Bhabha argues that the “third space of Enunciation” is a space of “in-betweenness” in which a new form of identity is recreated (37). So Bhabha criticizes the binary opposition which is created by European writers for describing Europeans and non-Europeans. He argues that binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized (civilized and savage) creates images of the colonizer and the colonized; therefore, they reshape the identities of both.

Hybridity is to mix between two different cultures. Different ways of living .hybridity occupied a significant place Achebe' s short stories starting with the first short story “Dead Men's Path” a short story that describes the postcolonial experience and the cultural conflict between the Igbo people and the westerns. So,it is on the subject of a man named Michael Obi who is the new, enthusiastic and ambition headmaster of a disadvantaged and underprivileged school. This story explores the effects of European customs and beliefs on traditional African culture. Michael Obi is the new headmaster of Ndume Central School. The Mission authorities selected him

for the job because they were searching for a “*young and energetic man*” to administer it. Michael obi wants to modernize the African school and he wants to close the path that run through the school compound because obi thinks that the path threatens the new modern life thus leading to a clash between the villagers and the mission authorities.

Hybridity is expressed in “Dead Men’s Path” when Obi concerns about the beauty of the path instead of the villagers. He is an African but the effect of westerns was marked on him. This mixture of cultures can be noticed in Obi’s character; he has two names Michael and obi. Therefore, Achebe stresses on the idea that obi has a hybrid identity that he gets attached with the Europeans culture. When Obi informs the priest that the purpose of the school is to eradicate such beliefs and to “*teach our children to laugh at such ideas*”(64). He tells the Priest that the whole idea of “Dead Men’s Path” is exactly what he is teaching the children not to believe in. Michael believes that the full idea of a dead man's footpath is completely imaginary and unbelievable. Here Achebe confirms that Michael obi is a character that represents the colonial charge, a man who wants to rectify the villagers’ view over the path “*We shall do our best,*” she replied. “*We shall have such beautiful gardens and everything will be just modern and delightful...*” (62) 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*”(GWOS, 62 ).

It is worth noting that Michael obi is representative of hybrid identity and cannot claim to be a pure African. He has completely seen the African identity through modernity instead of all cultural heritage and traditions of the Africans.

“Dead Men’s Path” is an example of the instability of identity. According to Bhabha, this instability of identity is the necessary result of colonialism which is defined as hybridity. As shown earlier, hybridity applies to both the colonizers and the colonized in Achebe's short story. Achebe describes the path as a cultural identity to the villagers that cannot be closed .in addition he illustrates the impact of colonialism on Michael obi.

Another short story where hybridity can be found is “Marriage Is a Private Affair” a story that describes the conflict between the traditional values and the new values presented by the colonizer. It is a story about a father named Okeke who is trying to find his son a wife who will suit him. The son Nnaemeka wants to marry someone else, whom his father does not approve of. This leads to cultural conflict whether to keep the traditional marriage or embrace the new culture in marriage so the story goes deeper how seemingly important is in some cultures, and most religions and the cultural and religious differences between Nene, and Nnaemeka’s families. Therefore, the main theme of the text is the clash between two cultures. The text is also dealing with other subthemes such as, love, arranged marriage, father and son relationship (Nnaemeka’s respect for his father) and of course family. The title of the story says a lot, because it pretty much sums up the message of the story about the importance of marriage.

Without a doubt, Chinua Achebe’s short story, “Marriage Is a Private Affair” is a powerful example of the clash between traditional African culture and modern western values. Through Nnameka character analysis, Bhabha’s concept of hybridity is expressed. “Marriage Is a Private Affair” portrays hybridity in terms of identity and religion and society. In addition Achebe points out the effect of westerns customs and

values on the traditional Igbo society one of these westerns customs in “marriage is a private affair “is that parents arrange marriages for their children. Nnameka is an example of a hybrid identity; he is an Igbo but Nene was from a different part of the country. They fall in love and Nnameke proposed. Then Nnaemeke gets a letter from his father telling him about an arranged marriage that is being planned. Very disappointed, Nnaemeke comes home and tells his father that he will not get married to anybody, except Nene. Nnaemeke is kicked out from his father’s house and is not wanted there anymore. Happily married, Nnaemeke and Nene, has two sons.

Through Bhabha’s concept, it is worth noting that Nnameka is a combination of two cultures. He respects his traditions and Igbo origins but with the coming of the Westerners. Nnameka has seen a different vision of life. He thinks that modernity can make him better even it costs his Igbo culture, “*am engaged to marry another girl who has all of Ugoye’s good qualities...*” “*She is a good Christian,*” “*You will change your mind, Father, when you know Nene*”. (20)

This quote shows that the new African generations think that marriage should follow the westerns values .here Achebe emphasizes on the mixture of cultures therefore Nnameka’s character depicts how African identity is seen after being exposed to the Westerners’ culture.

Additionally, Nnameka disagrees with his father about the right girl. His father believes in the Igbo tradition and considers it as a part of his identity so his vision on marriage that he is the one that chose the woman for his son.

The effect of colonialism and the westerns customs are undoubtedly clear in “Marriage Is a Private Affair” and the mixture of culture and hybridization through Nnameka’s character. Achebe relates all these concepts in his short story.

He stresses the idea that imitation the colonizer has gone deeper than speaks their languages. It affects the cultural and religious values of the Africans.

Furthermore, Achebe focuses on the impact of the westerns customs on the igbo culture and this cross culture between the Africans and the Europeans. “The Sacrificial Egg” is another story by Achebe that focuses on the clash that arises between two cultures. Hence the theme of the story is the cultural conflict that opposed the African and western communities. Chinua Achebe presents the conflict between an African civilization known as Igbo and Westernization that was brought about by the Europeans. The setting of the story is in a very small village called Umuru in the mid-1900. Julius Obi, although not a native in Umuru gets himself embracing his own culture, beliefs and the western culture alike. Achebe writing focuses on the coexistence of Julius in two worlds, the past, and the modern contemporary African setting. Julius is described as a man who works as a clerk but education made him to be placed above the superstitious stuff. Achebe has used different cultures to describe the conflict it has on the lives of young men, thus westernization is indicated to take place in the story because the small African village, Umuru has been taken over by the western culture.

Julius obi is an example of a hybrid identity. He has fallen between two cultures; Julius has tried to run away from his traditional beliefs, but eventually returned back to them. Thus Achebe uses Ma as a character in his book to make a contrast between two worlds. Ma is described as a Christian, goes to church and accepted the idea that Julius should marry her daughter. Her character has been used to describe how old beliefs and traditions,

It was said that she appeared in the form of an old woman in the centre of the market just before cock-crow

and waved her magic fan in the four directions of the earth-in front of her, behind her, to the right and to the left- to draw to market men and women from distant places (38).

This quote demonstrates how these traditions and beliefs were once born in this village. It also shows that these traditions go far back to ancient myths, *“The market, though still called Nkwo, had long spilled over into Eke, Oye and Afo with the coming of civilization and the growth of the town into a big palm oil port.”* (37) This quote in particular shows that even if this market has been westernized, people who live there still believe in their traditions.

Achebe presents the story by influencing the reader’s perception on the cultural conflicts that occurs between different cultures with the perception that the egg is the protector of a life and presenting Julius Obi a person who was between two cultures whether to keep believing in his traditions and myths or to adapting the westerners’ religion and culture.

Another short story that shows the mixture of cultures and cultural hybridity is *“Chike’s School Days”* it is a story of a Nigerian boy who is taught by white colonists to shun his heritage. The story is less about Chike’s academic education than it is about the westernization of African culture due to British’s colonization of Nigeria. As Chike is raised as a Christian in the ways of the white missionaries and in white schools, he loses an important part of his family’s heritage. His family is from *Osu*. Which is considered as inferior to other Nigerians in his neighbourhood? Hybridity is expressed when his mother Sara is being from an *Osu* tribe but after the advent of colonialism. She has been exposed to the westerners’ culture. She ignores her African identity and religion and converted to Christianity with Chike’s father. It is noticeable that Achebe presents Chike’s school days as a story of cultural clash between

modernity and tradition, and the impact of Westerners' customs on the Nigerians' identity and religion.

## **2. The African's Response to European Colonial Schemes**

The Igbo people are traditionally living in such a harmonic society that peace dominated the public life; their society was spontaneously democratic and well organized due to having shared a common believes and customs. The Igbo people were linked by blood or marriages ties and were profoundly involved in one's personal lives. The value that sustains the solidarity of society is found through collective responsibility, the responsibility of such group for the lives of people and the well-being of the members besides. Any individual seeks to distort the life of his people has to be distanced or set him right. Therefore, believes and customs are highly estimated and well preserved by the Igbo people.

However, the turning point that leads to the alteration is when the Igbo people meet with western culture which the latter causes serious changes both at the level of social relations and at the level of Africans' way of thinking. For example, the character Okeke, in marriage is private affair, as Nnaemeka's father who lives in a promote Igbo village where traditions have extremely important role in their lives, for the Igbo land marriage is legitimate when two conditions are convinced ,either it must be arranged by parents or the bride must belong to the same tribe. Nnaemeka who lives and works outside his village tends to get married with Nene who is working as a school teacher in Lagos.

During their conversation, Nnaemekasays *"they are the most unhappy if the engagement is not arranged by them .in our case it's worse – you are not even an*

*Igbo.*”(18) Nnaemeka does not only break the rules to his marriage with Nene, but further his wife is an outsider. The son fears his father disapproval because the norms of their traditional institution are not obeyed. For Nene, the person who is not able to make his own choice to whom he married can be seen as something of a joke as she is dweller of a city, *“In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city it had always seemed to her something of a joke that a person’s tribe could determine whom he married”*(18). Nene therefore wonders that Nnaemeka’s father would refuse his son’s marriage to her as a result of that plain reasons, she said *“you don’t really mean that he will object to your marrying me simply on that account?” I had always thought you Ibos were kindly disposed to other people”* (18) However, Nnaemeka, for his villager’s traditional life concerning marriage is not that simple, for them marriage is something so quite serious. He says, *“so we are but when it comes to marriage, well, it’s not quite simple and this,” he added, “is not peculiar to the Ibos. If your father were alive and lived in the heart of the Ibibio-land he would be exactly like my father”*(18)

The Last point in the above passage that Nnaemeka mentioned is that each tribe has its own cultural characteristics, that is to say that Okeke as the father only follows his Igbo land traditional values as far as marriage is concerned, and that Nene’s father would act as the same if he was not dead. It is important to notice that the repletion of fathers indicates that the parents are such encyclopaedias of their ancestors’ customs and believes in which marriage alongside its features differs from one single tribe to another.

*Nnaemika* believes that if he sends a letter to his father about his engagement with Nene surly will get him disappointed because he is quietly sure that his letter will be refused. So, that he decides to take a leave, and travel to his father’s home. He states

*“it would not be wise to break the news to him by writing. A letter will bring him with a shock. I am quite sure about that”*(18) Okeke already sent a letter to his son which carries that he has chosen a neighbour’s girl.

“I have found a girl who will suit you admirably- UgoyeNweke, the eldest daughter of our neighbor, Jacob Neweke. She has a proper Christian upbringing. When she stopped schooling some years ago her father (a man of sound judgment) sent her to live in the house of a pastor where she has received all the training a wife could need. Her Sunday teacher has told me that she reads her bible very fluently. I hope we shall begin negotiations when you come home in December.” (19)

The above passage asserts that, parents have the upper hand to decide the suitable woman whom their son is to marry. Moreover, for *Okeke*, women are traditionally meant to stay at home watch over their children besides, have a good wife training and Christian upbringing.

However, the son who is an inhabitant in the modern city (Lagos) in which he is greatly influenced by modern ways, comes to realize that marriage is private affair. *Nneamika* says *“marriage to day is different...”* (19) For *Nneamika*, marriage is an affair that concerns him and his wife only which implies that his father has to have no say in their engagement. So that he rejects to marry the Igbo girl, Ugoye Nweke, his father has proposed for him. He says *“I can’t – we must –I mean it is impossible for me to marry nweke’s daughter”* (19). Trying to convince his father that he does not love her, he says *“impossible? Why?”* Asked his father, he replies *“I don’t love her”*. But his father *Okeke* responds that in his people’s insight regarding to marriage love is not required.

As *Nneamika* decides to walk against the old ways by marrying a girl from another tribe, *Nneamika* and Nene have to face the consequences, people from the

Igbo land as well as those who live in Lagos, particularly women, through their behaviour, show their enmity and their dissatisfaction towards the couple. It is obvious that both of them try to challenge the whole community, in which causes serious predicaments as described below:

The prejudice against Nnaemeka's marriage was not confined to his little Village. In Lagos, especially among his people who worked there, it showed itself in a different way. Their women, when they met at their village meeting, were not hostile to Nene. Rather, they paid her such excessive deference as to make her feel she was not one of them (GWOS, 22).

Indeed, among the Igbo, the wishes of individual cannot get the better of society. The community offers the Africans an ultimate psychological security and provides its members with physical and ideological identity. The African mentality believes that community as an entity lingers however, individuals as persons come and go. Moreover in the research paper titled, "The African Cultural Values", the individual in African community is in "clan vital" protected. His individual identity cannot be acknowledged at the cost of his community identity, so that individualism in the African society is discouraged (Emeakaroha, 3). In the following words, Steve Biko writes, "... Hence in all we do we always place man first and hence all our action is usually joint community oriented action rather than the individualism..." (Biko, 42).

According to this customary law, David Cook writes the following, "*In a village there are very few places where an essentially private existence can be pursued. Contribution to the life and welfare of the community is the greatest good; and hence individualism is seen as negative*" (Cook,4). These words point out that the sense of community offers much prosperity to the society and that the individual is not be able to participate for the common good of the community, the welfare of a single person

cannot establish a wellbeing society, but the welfare of a community can deliver in such individual a sense of happiness.

Achebe as well defends this point, he articulates in his proverb that “*no man however great was greater than his people; that no one ever won judgment against his clan*” (Ernest Emenyonu. P 214) Thus, the Igbo tribes as a large group of families pursue to maintain their inherited traditional values.

Likewise, another story that sheds light on the way the process of marriage is held which is illustrated throughout “*Chike’s School Days*” ,*Chike’s* father, Amos tends to marry an *Osu* woman, due to this act, he is automatically going to be an *Osu* as well. His dare to make this decision will leave him and his children to come as an *Osu* forever. As it was mentioned in the first chapter, the Igbo man is not allowed to get married to an *Osu* woman according to the traditional institution that governs society, in other words, the marriage is called off when it is unveiled that one family has an *Osu* blood. In the Igboland, an *Osu* person is seen as a curse, untouchable, and outcast that is to say will not be considered as a part of society and by no means has nothing to do with “*free born*”(GWOS, 32), no man can touch him thereafter. Amos decides to fulfil his plan by marrying the woman, so that, his people and his mother start to think of him as a mad man.

“It was unheard of for a man to make himself *Osu* in that way, with his eyes wide open. But then, Amos was nothing if not mad. The new religion had gone to his head. It was like palm-wine. Some people drank it and remained sensible. Others lost every sense in their stomach” (32).

That’s why his mother who early converted to Christianity returns to her people religion “*old Elizabeth renounced her new religion and returned to the faith of her people*” (33).

As the diviner says during a conversation with Amos's mother "*your son has joined the white man's religion*". *And you too in your old age when you should know better. And you do wonder that he is stricken with insanity?*" (33). He suspects that the reason that leads Amos to get insane and break his traditional rules is because of the white man's religion. That is why his mother who early converted to Christianity returns to her people's religion "*old Elizabeth renounced her new religion and returned to the faith of her people*"(GWOS, 33).She is afraid to loss her traditional principles so that to remain faithful to her people's values.

In "*Dead Men's Path*", Achebe's tenth story in *Girls at War and Other Stories*, the protagonist Obi, who is as the same as *Nnaemika* having grown up in the Western ways, is certainly appointed to serve as the headmaster of *Ndume* Central unprogressive School, Michael Obi, who is known as energetic person and passionate for modern methods. Obi and his wife Nancy keenly take this opportunity in order to modern and beautify the school by planting gardens around and promoting the quality of teaching in which are the main aims for obi in running the school "*a high standard of teaching was insisted upon, and the school compound was to be turned into a place of beauty*" (63). One evening Obi makes out an old women walking through the hedges and flowers of the school compound, "*an almost disused path from the village across the school compound to the bush on the other side*"(63). Obi wonders why the villagers are using this foot path, so that his colleague tells him that this path is something very important and dear for them. "*The path said the teacher apologetically, "appears to be very important to them. Although it is hardly used, it connects the village shrine with their place of burial*" (63).

Interestingly, the path is an imaginary line between the villagers burial ground and their worship area which is an essential sacred path for transmitting the souls of members, the dead, and the ancestors of the village.

Absorbed by what the Government Education Officer think of the path when he visits the school, and above all because he is frightened by the idea that the villagers might “*decide to use the schoolroom for a pagan ritual during the inspection*” (63). Obi’s concern is the beauty of the path instead of the traditions of the villagers. He consequently orders to make the path closed, few days later, he has been visited by the priest, a traditional religious leader of the village, who humbly requests Obi to reopen the path; to which he says no, informs him that the purpose of the school is to totally get the educators rid of such beliefs and “*to teach our children to laugh at such ideas*” and that dead men do not need a footpath. He says, “*The whole purpose of our school ... is to eradicate just such beliefs as that. Dead men do not require footpaths. The whole idea is just fantastic. Our duty is to teach your children to laugh at such ideas*” (GWOS, 64).

One can simply notice that Obi as a modern person, fed with westernized ideology established by European colonialism, shows his ruddiness and ignorance towards the villagers’ traditional path. During his conversation with the teacher, Obi calls his colleague and the villagers “you people”, which highlights the disdain Obi feels towards the villagers and their beliefs. Moreover, the language obi speaks indicates the deep gap between traditional Nigerian cultures.

The priest concedes to such words obi says throughout their discussion, but he still carries the vision that what the villagers do is simply following the practice of their ancestries’ beliefs and customs. The priest raises his argument to show that this

path is deeply rooted in the villagers' souls, says that "*this path was here before you were born and before your father was born. The whole life of this village depends on it*"(64). That is why he recapitulates why the path should be unblocked besides, to avoid falling in any trouble between the dwellers and the school. As it is displayed in their following discussion: "*What you say may be true ... but we follow the practices of our fathers. If you re-open the path we shall have nothing to quarrel about. What I always say is: let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch*" (64). The priest last words suggest a compromise that is to tolerate the villager's religion but obi ridicules and mocks the elder's suggesting and suggests that "*... the ancestors wouldn't find the detour burdensome*" (GWOS, 64). By not accepting to reopen the ancestral path in which the locals will go on practicing their fathers' rituals.

Obi's stubbornness, and being unconcerned to consider other's ideas, reasonably paves the way toward violence in which the inhabitants ruin the school compound because they think that the death in childbirth of a young woman, which happened two days later, was due to the fact that "*the path of children coming in to be born had been closed by the school headmaster* (64). Obi disrespects his original cultural identity as modernization is much important than history.

Obi's stubbornness of applying his individual thoughts and not being considerate to any concerns of the whole villagers' requirements, leads him eventually to the downfall. In fact, Men's wives have such a crucial role in the Igbo traditional society, as well as children are greatly valued more than any other earthly possessions, and regarded as direct blessings from God.

"*Uncle Ben's Choice*" quietly manifests the value of having wives and children .the protagonist, known simply as jolly Ben, works as a clerk in a trade company in

*Umuru*, where he faces plenty of temptations such as women and alcohol. However, his choice determines whether to sustain well-mannered, responsible and pretty careful person, and to live according to the given traditional wisdom. In fact, one night, on his way home from the African club on one new year's Eve, too tired to look for the lamp, Ben finds a woman on his bed who was "one hundred percent naked", he has been alarmed by the texture of her extraordinary hair "soft like the hair of a European"(GWOS, 70). That is why he jumps out of the bed then, he starts asking her questions about her identity, but she does not reply, consequently doubt overwhelms his thoughts, he strikes a match; figures out that she is not an ordinary woman. So he runs away seeking help from his neighbour, who enables him to discover that "he was visited by Mami wota the lady of the river Niger" (71).

In the book titled, *Mami Wata Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diaspora*, for the Igbo, *Mami Wota* is a kind of spirit that usually intervenes in money matters, in which she is seen "to have been brought by the white man, whom people believe to have endless supplies of paper money and coins" (Drewal, 16)

Despite of the fact that Mami wota could offer great riches, she could wreak damage as well due to her impulse, for instance, the young man Ben at his meeting with *Mami Wota* who would have offered him wealth and denied him of having wives and children (GWOS, 17).

Throughout conversations between Ben and his neighbour *Obi*, who points out that once a man meets with *Mami wota* he likely has the fate of being wealthy. However, if he rejects and stands against her desires then he affirms that he is true and well raising son entrenched with dignity of his father's ways. *Obi* confidently explains that: "It depends what you want in life. If it is wealth you want then you

made a great mistake today, but if you are a true son of your father then take my hand.’ We shook hands and he said: ‘Our fathers never told us that a man should prefer wealth instead of wives and children’ (*GWOS*, 71-72).

In the above extract, obi through his words shows that the wealth is nothing compared to wives and children, demonstrating that the Igbo traditions never support men to choose the material goods at the expense of the family unit. Hence the Igbo people certainly believe that the human beings are the best riches, that is to say that the family is the ultimate primacy which the following words shed light on this virtue of the Igbo represented in the novel *No Longer at Ease*, “*He who has people is richer than he who has money*”(Achebe 72). One can notice that the Igbo culture is based on the people centeredness as compared as to the western culture which is based on materialism and acquisition which the passage that was mentioned above as clarifies that *Mamiwota* is a white men bringing. In article titled “Oral Tradition And Modern Storytelling: Revisiting Chinua Achebe’s Short Stories”, claims that: “*The logic here is that Igbo (African) culture is people-centered and places primacy upon the value of children, as opposed to modern European culture, which is materialistic and acquisitive*”(Ode Odege, Volume 28, Numbers 1 and 2 (2001)

Although Ben has been offered the temptation to sleep with *Mami Wota* for being riche, he chooses not to accept that, because his morale conviction seems to suggest that his words resonating sounds of the past’s wisdom. In other words, Ben refuses to break his traditional wisdom as being taken the choice advocated by the traditional Igbo society, unlike the case of Dr J. M. Stuart-Young, who is depicted as “a crazy white man”, who chooses wealth instead of children which seems unreasonable as it is illustrated in the story:

For where is the man who will choose wealth instead of children? Except a crazy white man like Dr J. M. Stuart-Young. Oh, I didn't tell you. The same night that I drove Mami Wota out she went to Dr J. M. Stuart-Young, a white merchant and became his lover. You have heard of him? ... Oh yes, he became the richest man in the whole country. But she did not allow him to marry. When he died, what happened? All his wealth went to outsiders. Is that good wealth? I ask you. God forbid(GWOS, 72).

In the passage above, Dr J. M. Stuart-Young is portrayed as a man who excitedly makes the choice of wealth. In other words, he rushes towards for materialism which provides an insight of the modern African society.

Readers may notice that wealth that comes illegally may never profits, therefore what is most important is not money but rather family which is wife and children. In fact, since Ben makes the choice of getting married and prefers to have children than wealth and fame, one can deduce that Africans' morals and convictions eventually triumph over greedy and other temptations of the city that came along with the establishment of European colonial powers in Africa.

In his book entitled *Achievement as Value in the Igbo/African Identity: The Ethics*, Vernantius Emeka Ndukaihe claims, in the Igbo society children are living under the control of not only of their fathers but further under the civil government as to be as the same level as the state of fatherhood in which is considered as the most effective of all relations. father is not responsible just of his own single family however he looks over his region's people. Thus, children are the duty of the whole community (118). In "Chike's School Days", Sarah, Amos's wife and *chike's* mother, after she is converted to Christianity, prevents her son to accept the food of their neighbours which is regarded as "Heathen Food". This indicates that Chike's mother disobeyed her cultural norms, which the new religion she adopts causes to reject her

traditions. In fact, she *“set herself against the age-old custom which regarded children as the common responsibility of all so that, no matter what the relationship between parents, their children played together and shared their food”*(GWOS, 32). Owing to this, one can notice that children education is not only the business of parents alone but society has to have. Indeed, the arrival of Christianity paves the way to the loss of the Igbo values, as it is said in the following words *“The white man had indeed accomplished many things”* (32). However Achebe longingly seeks to refurbish those values relying on more characteristics that privileged the life of the Igbo society.

According to some Igbo people, it is believed that such deity or spirit can get angry when a person tries to defy its will, that angriness can take the form of incurable infected disease. The victims may take their lives in order to cease the tragedy from affecting other souls. In *“Sacrificial Egg”*, *Umura* had used to be a little village , and always had been cleaned and swept by its villagers , however now it becomes so crowded, busy and dirty river port , this illness and kind of ignorance led to the appearance of such evil deity named *Kitipka* that is a smallpox decease. *Kitipka’s* function is to punish for the god of soil that is offended due to the bad state of the village particularly the dirty market that is in need to be cleaned, *Kitipka* is the most fearful decease that every Igbo ever face *“Such was the state of the town when Kitipka came to see it and to demand the sacrifice the inhabitants Owed the gods of the soil. He came in confident knowledge of the terror he held over the people he was an evil deity, and boasted it”* (GWOS, 44).This dreadful disease leaves its victim not mourned but rather offended, it even comes to the point of preventing any coming and going between neighbours and villagers, they said *“Kitipka is in that village and immediately it was cut off by its neighbours”*. The evil deity kills those who are failed

in cleaning *Nkuwe* market, as they become obsessed with business and making money. One can notice why this kind of deity swept into the village, the reason is that *Nkuwe* market has seen a progression and transformed into a commercial of no man's land which leads to harmful circumstances caused by the sons of the soil because they distance from their traditional prayers, it is narrated that:

When Umuru was a little village, there was an age-grade who swept its market square every Nkwo day. But progress had turned it into a busy, sprawling crowded and dirty river port, a no man's-land where strangers outnumbered by far the sons of the soil, who could do nothing about it except shake their heads at this gross perversion of their prayer (*GWOS*, 43-44).

That progress and prosperity are accidentally taken in a bad manner in which leaving the market dirty to strangers by the inhabitants thereby, causes *Kitipka* to kill everyone who has self-interest, and not for the common good of the entire community.

In fact, the power of this superstition emphasized when the protagonist Julius Obi young man having satiated with western ways, acts carelessly towards the plight that the village faces. In which he thinks that his inseparable attachment to Christianity and his convection to his education would fortify him from this traditional taboos, however he ends up as a victim of evil forces. This can be manifested soon after he breaks the "*Sacrificial Egg*", "*In his hurry he stepped on something that broke with a slight liquid explosion... Someone oppressed by misfortune had brought the offering to the crossroads in the dusk*" (*GWOS*, 41). Respectively his girlfriend and his mother got affected by the smallpox disease, "*On the other Ma and Janet, whom the dread artist decorated*" (42).

One can comment that the broken egg is an indication of the power of the townspeople's superstition. In so doing, it's clear that the advent of Christianity alongside to western educational system fail to change the fate of Igbos traditional believes.

### **3. Achebe's Appropriation of the English Language**

Achebe's mission throughout his writing tries to reinvent a language that would face the Western colonial practices in the Igboland. He finds out that the language of the colonizer would be the best weapon in which remarkably has double advantageous function, either fighting back against their colonizer's oppression or regaining their own indigenous culture. In a speech entitled, "The African Writer and the English Language", Achebe states: *"I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings"* (62).

Achebe needs English, in its new shape, through the use of Igbo names pidgin English and most importantly proverbs. In his book, *The Militant Black Writer in Africa and the United States*, Mercer Cook writes that:

taking the white man's language, dislocating his syntax, recharging his words with new strength and sometimes with new meaning before hurling them back in his teeth, while upsetting his self-righteous complacency and cliché, our poets rehabilitate such terms as Africa and blackness, beauty and peace"(Cook, 52).

Indeed, Achebe indigenizes the English language and finds that it is necessary to reproduce the riches of African oral heritage in written text to restore the beauty and

values of African culture. Achebe therefore to write to the European readership; he introduced Igbo words with their English translation.

Chike's school days provides an example of the use of Igbo names whose meaning is translated into English. *Obiajulu* an indigenous name that was given to Chike in his birth and as he is the only son in the family of Amos and Sarah, *Obiajulu* means in English the mind at last is at rest.

The child receives three names at his baptism -- John, *Chike*, *Obiajulu*. The last Name means 'the mind at last is at rest.' Anyone hearing this name knew at once that its owner was either an only child or an only son. Chike was an only son. His parents [Amos and Sarah] had had five daughters before him (*GWOS*, 31).

Chike's birth brings great joy to his family in which discloses the Igbo's huge willing for male children, as an aspect of their cultural values. "*Sarah's last child was a boy, and his birth brought great joy to the house of his father, Amos*" (31).

In fact, using Igbo words in the English text offers unique voice for the western reader also it enables him to be exposure to the cultural heritage of the Igbo society. "*Marriage Is a Private Affair*" offers an example of indigenous words such as Amalile a medicine suggested by *Nnaemeka's* people tribe, in which *Nnaemeka* is required to take as being suspected of losing his mind due to his engagement with Nene. "...*the boy's mind is diseased and only a good herbalist can bring him back to his right senses. The medicine he requires is Amalile, the same that women apply with success to capture their husbands' straying affection*" (21). Equally to this, sacrificial egg provides another Igbo words which is *Kiptika*, for the Igbo, is an evil deity (smallpox disease), its main function is to clean the land from those who offended it. "*He was an evil deity, and boasted it. Lest he be offended, those he killed were not killed but decorated...*"(*GWOS*, 40).

Enriching the reader with these Igbo words indeed offer an insight of such cultural experiences within African society. Bill Ashcroft Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, in their book, *The Empire Writes Back Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature* assert that

untranslated words do have an important function in inscribing difference. They signify a certain cultural experience which they cannot hope to reproduce but whose difference is validated by the new situation. (52)

It is worthy to note that these untranslated words enable the western reader to be meeting with the cultural diversity of the Igbo.

Furthermore, to Africanize the English language, Achebe deploys the indigenous expression in his short stories. In “*Chike’s School Day*”, Amos’s mother, whom her son joins a white man religion, counsels the diviner in order to find a cure to prevent her son from marrying an *Osu* girl, Sarah. The writer uses an Igbo expression to describe the divider’s action as the mother Elizabeth visits him, has “*nwifulu*”, talking *calabash*. The latter words elucidate of being a part of meeting “*He cast his cowries a number of times and wrote with a finger on a bowl of sand, and all the while his nwifulu, a talking calabash chatted to itself*”(GWOS, 33).

The use of Igbo expressions adds such a flavour to the language to be viewed strongly indigenous. In te article named ,Promotion OF Igbo Culture IN Chinua Achebe’s *Girls At War AND Other Stories*”, J. V. Rao writes “*The use of idioms lends Achebe’s language and style a native flavour and force, and giving a close and convincing picture of a society in transition. This technique helps his characters sound natural while speaking an alien tongue*”. (Komenan Casimir p 29)

Another significant aspect that the text uses to further Africanize the language as well as escalating the sense of “nativization” of the Igbo culture is throughout intensifying usage of proverbs. Indeed, Achebe borrowed those proverbs from African oral tradition by recording, as they would increase the need to regain the glory of Igbo public speaking. In other words, restoring Igbo proverbs in which the wisdom of the ancestors lies.

In “*Dead Men’s Path*”, the headmaster *Obi* is visited by the priest in order to reopen the ancestral blocked path; the priest humbly demands for this for the sake of preventing any crisis “*we follow the practices of our fathers. If you re-open the path we shall have nothing to quarrel*”, then comes the following words “*let the hawk perch and the eagle perch. (64)* Which means live and let live, the proverb encapsulates that the Igbo people believe in the coexistence of two opposed sides as each one must respect the other beliefs as the white man religion, and the and the indigenous/domestic customs and traditions to coexist peacefully. Thus, this proverb intrinsically offers a valuable Insight about the Igbo cultural values.

Similar to this, in “*Chike’s School Days*”, as the diviner is counselled by the mother Elizabeth who seeks a medicine for her son who has joined a white man’s religion. Amos’s mother is worried that due to her son’s new religion, he may desert his traditional ways. The following statement expresses that, “*those who gather ant-infested faggots must be prepared for the visit of lizards*”(GWOS, 33). That is to say that anybody must face serious consequences due to illegal actions. Its counterpart in white man’s language is “*They that sow the wind shall reap the whirl wind.*” (*Farlex Dictionary of Idioms*. 2015) Hence, Achebe Africanized proverbs through utilizing

words borrowed with African environment such as lizards, eagle, hawk, and ant-infested faggots which are animals that can be seen in African rural areas.

In fact, the use of these proverbs as tools are to convince the western reader the authenticity of the African language uniquely distinguished from the European language.

Unquestionably, the proverb among the Igbo people is an art of conversation, “*proverbs are [believed to be] the palm oil with which words are eaten*”. (Achebe TFA 7) Achebe transforms those proverbs by Africanizing the English, and passes on this art of conversation to be engaged between the European and the African. Jacob Morrison in his book, *Chinua Achebe*, mentions an influential American African scholar, Simon Gikandi, who admirably advocates Achebe’s use of Igbo proverbs in which offer his writing such an exceptional touch:

Achebe ... invented African literature, because he was able to show ... that the future of African writing did not lie in simple imitation of European forms but in the fusion of such forms with oral tradition. Achebe is the conscience of African literature because he has consistently insisted on the power of storytellers to appeal to the morality and humanity of their readers and to give their life fuller meaning (GWOS, 31).

Therefore, the Igbo words and proverbs shattered throughout the short stories provide two significant notions firstly, they don’t exist in English, and secondly they assert authentically the inhabitation of African language.

#### 4. The Necessity of Writing Back

This corpus will shed light on the importance of writing back in the Africans' writers focusing heavily on the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe and his work *Girls at War and Other Stories*. It is a fact that the role of African writers is to present the impact of westerns imperialism on the Africans' culture. The Africans writers attempt to portray the real image of Africa through writing. It is a fact that language has been a central part in defending the African identity. Chinua Achebe the Nigerian author sets an object to established one and for all a counter post-colonial discourse aimed to challenge and resist the policy of colonial othering and stereotyping practiced by the colonizers on the African identity. This is largely demonstrated by emphasizing the indigenous Igbo culture. Achebe views himself as a teacher whose novels are employed to teach the Africans, especially the Nigerians, to identify the root of their trouble so that they can reject their European stereotypical image as inferiors. He states that his own society was of an independent and valid culture and that his people were of dignity prior to the arrival of the European colonizers.

“Until the lions produce their own historians, the story of the hunt will glorify only the hunter”. ( Chinua Achebe. p45) . This quote goes to show you that whoever writes the history of “hunt”, will praise the hunter. Till today, this is the same history that African children still learn in schools. Our education is so Europeanised that by the time we finish high school, we know more about Europe than Africa. Achebe decides to write in English, his short stories how Achebe's use of English has enabled him to convey his message to the readers. His manipulation of the Language of the imperialists is noticeable in many aspects of his works such as his selection of the titles, his depiction Ibo linguistic pattern through English, the use of Metaphors, his

skilful handling of Nigerian Pidgin English and his effective English expressions. In the words of H.G. Widdowson:

You are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your own, bend it to your will, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form. It is a familiar experience to find oneself saying things in a foreign language because you can say them rather than because they express what you want to say (384).

It can be understood that Achebe's use of English is a proof of how he has manipulated it to serve his purpose. His words stand not only for his expert handling of the language but also his claim to submit it to his kind of use. From his work *Girls at War and Other Stories*, he asserts the sense of belonging to the Western literary tradition and at the same time points out how the encounter of African culture with western civilization resulted in the desolation of traditional African ways of life.

Moreover, writing back against the colonizer has been a great weapon to rebirth and redesign the African identity. Achebe wants to remove the false image of Africa in the westerners' eye and struggles to keep the Africans' traditions and cultural identity.

His essay "An Image of Africa" is a response to the false image of the Africans representing them as savages in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* through denouncing and addressing the westerners with the English language.

Another idea that claims the necessity of writing back is Achebe's linguistic strategy is again visible in the way he incorporates numerous Ibo terms in his short stories and renders Ibo style of speaking through English. That way he brings the two languages in equal position. Therefore he uses Igbo words and expressions to insist on the importance of the Igbo culture and traditions. The colonizer affects the

Africans by imposing them the English language because language can define anyone's identity.

Thus, the British colonizers propagated cultural hegemony and a Eurocentric ideology through English, as language relates to representation and identity the colonizer held the power of discourse while the colonized was forced to learn English that was imposed in his/her education system and daily life. However, as a world language, English has the power to resist the stereotypical portrayal of an exotic orient and to give voice to the other which will reverse the position of self and other. From these authors' views, Achebe demonstrates the Igbo words and Africans words as a weapon against the imperialists. In «Marriage Is a Private Affair», he uses Igbo names such as Nnaemeka, Okeke to ensure that the African heritage can never disappear. Thus, Chinua Achebe chooses to write in the hybrid forms in which English is intermingled with African languages and oral literary traditions.

The narrative form respects his native traditions as well as recognizes the demands of an international audience. In his essay "The African Writer and the English Language," Achebe discusses how the imposed language brings different ethnic groups together by providing them "*a language with which to talk to one another*" (p 430).

Through English, Achebe attempts to respond directly to those British colonial writers who have depicted Africans as uninformed and without identity. He wants to overpass the gap between the former colonizer and the colonized through the world.

As a conclusion, Achebe conveys the beauty of the Igbo language in his selected short stories by translating and including Igbo proverbs, folk tales and songs in his English masterpiece. He attempts to show that the future of African writing lies in the

fusion of the English language with oral traditions. With the help of an 'Africanized' English language make a new Africa that will be able to resist the domination of neo - imperialism in the postcolonial era. In addition he stresses on the idea that the Africans' culture and traditions are the heart of any Africans, and their truthful identity.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study has examined the conflict between the Africans' traditions and the Western culture in Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories*. It has reviewed the different perspectives in postcolonial discourse, specifically those of the most notable theorists like Bhabha, Said, and Fanon. Postcolonial theory focused on the importance of African identity and culture from the pre-colonial and postcolonial experiences and applies it to Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories*. The study analyzed the theme of modernity and tradition in the selected short stories.

Achebe has discussed different issues highlighting the conflict that arises when one culture is dominated by another. Therefore, the dissertation relied on Bhabha's postcolonial theory of hybridity and mimicry in order to show the importance of cultural identity for the Africans. Through his concepts, Bhabha depicts the main factors that represent one's culture. He stresses the idea of clash between the African ways and European ways of life.

The Africans have developed their own culture and tradition before the arrival of colonialism and did not hear culture for the first time from the Europeans. Analyzing Achebe's selected of short stories, this dissertation has provided notions about the Igbo culture in Nigeria. Thus, the Igbo culture has been colorfully manifested through the selected short stories. The study showed that the selected stories portrayed the main features of Igbo traditions by emphasizing the importance of marriage, superstitions, diversity of deities, and the *Osu* outcast system. Besides, it highlighted the significance of the Igbo language through names, proverbs, and expressions.

Furthermore, the advent of the colonizer sets a main purpose to change the culture of the colonized people in order to dominate over them. This study exposed the impact of colonialism on the African's identity and culture. Achebe has showed the

outcomes of the imposed superiority on the African individual. After being exposed to the colonizer's culture, the colonized people fail to maintain their culture and values. Thus, the Africans face a dilemma of identity, and find themselves in a crossroads of cultures. In addition, the study has concluded that introducing Christianity and Western education consequently led to the fall of the African religion and language.

It is worth to mention that the Africans 'exposure to Western values and thoughts caused them to have cultural hybridity and identity crisis. So, *Girls at War and Other Stories* reflects the interaction between tradition and modernity, between natives and Westerners. Moreover, the selected short stories describe the hybrid culture that the characters exhibit after their attachment with the European culture. Unquestionably, the work offers examples in which how the African identity and culture have been distorted. In effect, examination of the selected corpus has revealed the imitation of the colonizer by the colonized through language and religion.

Undoubtedly, the Africans did not fully embrace the colonizer's ways of life and culture. Thus, the present study has analyzed the image of modernity under the African eyes, in which they consider western values as a threat to their identity. Through the selected short stories, the Africans react to the colonizer's practices by showing their strong bond to their tradition and stubbornness to keep the African identity. In fact, the Igbo people, their customs, and their values symbolize the authenticity of the African culture.

Language has been a significant element in African postcolonial literature. African writers attempt to express ideas through language. Achebe's *Girls at war and other stories* portrays how he uses language to defend the African identity because he

wants to promote African culture and values by using the African language. The study highlighted the importance of writing against the colonizer. Achebe points out that writing can play as a weapon to depict the Africans' tradition in order to show that the Africans have a cultural heritage by focusing on using Igbo words and proverbs.

The English language has been used by the colonizer to dominate over the African language. Achebe decides to write his works by using the English language and to show the African culture to the West. It can be viewed that Achebe Africanized the English language to make a rebirth of the cultural identity of the Africans.

Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories* has revealed the importance of the Igbo culture and the cultural conflict between Western concepts and the Africans' traditions. Achebe also represented the significance of identity to the Africans, their real identity far away from the Europeans' culture.

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## Résumé

La présente étude décrit le conflit entre les traditions africaines et la culture occidentale a Chinua Achebe « A Filles à la Guerre et D'autres Histoires ». Cette recherche vise a analyser l'effet de la culture et des pratiques occidentales sur la vie traditionnelle des Igbo. De plus, le travail examine la réaction du peuple Igbo contre la modernité pour préserver son patrimoine culturel. Cette étude étudie le contenu et les comportements des personnages de chaque histoire en s'appuyant sur le conception de théorie postcoloniale de Bhabha, Hybridité, and Mimicré. Ainsi, le premier chapitre présente un cadre théorique et un contexte socio-historique du travail. Le deuxième chapitre présente le thème de la modernité et de la tradition dans les nouvelles histoires sélectionnées suivantes: «Le Chemin des Hommes Morts», «Le Mariage, une Affaire Privée», «Les Journées Scolaires de Chike», «Le Choix de l'Oncle Ben» et «L'œuf Sacrificiel».

## الملخص

تناول هذه الدراسة الخلاف بين التقاليد الإفريقية و الثقافة الأوروبية في القصص القصيرة المختارة من مجموعة قصص بنات في الحرب و قصص أخرى من تأليف تشينوا تشيبي. هذا البحث يهدف إلى تحليل أثر الثقافة الأوربية و ممارستها على حياة التقليدية للاغبو. إلى جانب ذلك هذا العمل يدرس ردود فعل شعب الاغبو للحدثات من اجل الحفاظ على تراثهم الثقافي. تحقق الدراسة في محتوى و سلوك الشخصيات في كل قصة اعتمادا على مفاهيم بحبة المتمثلة في التهجين و التقليد من نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار. و بالتالي الفصل الأول يقدم إطارا نظريا و سياقا اجتماعيا تاريخيا للعمل. أما الفصل الثاني يعرض موضوع التقليد و الحدثات في القصص القصيرة المختارة الآتية "طريق الرجال الميت" "الزواج شأن خاص" "أيام تشيكي في المدرسة" "خيار العم بن" "بيضة التضحية".