LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
LJLLR
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

TRAUMATIC CONFLICT OF A HYBRID AFRICAN: CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF CHINUA ACHEBE'S NO LONGER AT EASE

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.23832918

Keywords
Hybrid, Migration, Catherine Belsey, Close Textual Analysis

Article History
Received: *25 June 2026*
Accepted: *16 September 2026*
Published: *02 October 2026*

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Abstract

The present research paper entitled "Traumatic Conflict of A Hybrid African : Cross cultural Study of Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease" is written to probe the criticism a hybrid man faces in his native country as well as in the country in which he dwells, follows its customs, values, culture and language but still feels alienated. Migration for the purpose of living and education causes hybridity and arises the need to promote positivism regarding hybridity. In this paper the researcher has tried to show the impacts of culture of any other country are so obvious that no one can deny that.The researcher has chosen Lisa Lowe's theory "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences" to study the differences between cultures of Africa and England to demonstrate that either the effects are constructive or destructive in Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease. Close textual Analysis by Catherine Belsey is opted to analyze data to answer the research questions. The focus of this study is the protagonist, Obi Okonkwo, with relation to other characters and transformations he underwent in England.The research is qualitative with analytic approach where the data is collected randomly.

INTRODUCTION

Trauma and hybridity are related with post colonial people who face aftermaths of colonialism in various forms. Trauma is a mental condition that is the result of various sufferings a person confronts at different places including bullying at school, outcasted from a community, to live in minority with majority but being marginalized. Such traumas leave the affected into everlasting blaze and they see it impossible to feel at home at such places and resultantly they alienate themselves from others or try to follow customs, traditions,dresses, lifestyle and even eating and drinking manners to become one of them but they can never be accepted by the both cultures. In the title 'a hybrid African' is referring to the protagonist of Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease (1960) whose internal and external conflicts will be analyzed and probed thoroughly to show that to what extent a person should be hybrid or avoid hybridity. Whatever the case might be it is understood that you can move some person out of his place but you can never move that place out of the person. On account of cultural differences mutual relations should not be exploited or spoilt but identity of every person should remain intact and unique because all these differences and varieties of cultures make this earth or any country beautiful, secure,safe and worth watching. Bashir

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et.al.(2022) in their article said, "Complex Trauma that is the result of several or multiple kind of events even interpersonal in nature."(p.1).By analyzing the traumatic conflicts of a hybrid African man the researcher would be able to highlight the issue in the present research in relation to the previous research done in this field.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Since the beginning of life in this world, man has been learning from his environment and fellow beings through various sources.He needs to move from on place to another in search of knowledge, earning, exploring the unknown and mysterious places, study cultures of other nations or a place to live to lead life peacefully. As a result of migration, man undergoes many changes that are liked by people but can be disliked too. This sort of exposure to other cultures and nations makes man hybrid that is most common in post colonial literature because colonials reigned over many countries and forced their own laws of religion, education and culture with usage of English language. This study has tried to highlight the paradoxical nature of colonized man where of the approval or disapproval of colonial practices by African man where the individual or entire society loathes colonial practices, but still thinks it an honour or privilege to be educated in UK and get job there. It has also exposed the false moral standards set by majority of the people but then are negated by themselves. The writer of the novel, Chinua Achebe, is also renowned as a person who himself was educated from Europe but he always talked about his culture, religion and values that are not less privileged as that of Colonial territories. He, in his novels, gives a message to those countries that they have their own culture, entire civilization and language by using their language.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze how dominance of native culture makes protagonist suffer in United Kingdom in Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease
2. To find out the reasons that made the members of Union to give up the case of Obi in Chinua Achebe's No Longer At Ease
3. To find out the instances of cultural clash between White people and Africans in Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How did dominance of native culture make protagonist suffer in United Kingdom Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease?
2. What reasons made the members of Union give up the case of Obi in Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease?
3. Which instances highlight the cultural clash between White people and Africans in Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease?

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is to analyze how a person becomes hybrid and the consequences he faces as a result of doing something wrong that highlights the dilemma of cross culturalism. This research has probed into the fact that a hybrid man faces alienation and is estranged by both the natives and foreigners. This study has explored how people of two different cultures live together but the breach between them can never be

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bridged as they both think ill of each other. It will help to study different other works through this dimension.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to the novel, No Longer at Ease by Chinua Achebe and the theory Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity:Marking Asian American Differences by Lisa Lowe. Although there are many issues highlighted by the researcher during reading the text but the researcher has confined his research to hybridity and hypocritic relation of British and Africans.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study is an effort to bridge the gap among different cultures and nations that's inevitable but it is merely an effort to highlight the ideas and thoughts of people about other cultures and the difficulties they face by living in foreign country no matter on what account. This study is to highlight the journey of a Umuofia's man from his childhood to his taking bribery that led him to jail and the case was proceeded by his fellow men who later gave up his case.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter brings to light the previous research work done in relation to the present study. Bashir.M.,et.al.(2022) in their article, Traumatic Elements of Oppressed Black American: Micro-Aggression in Colson Whitehead's The Nickel Boys,worked to highlight the sufferings of black they confronted in American school and left unforgettable mark son their memory who then told to the whole world what they faced in their childhood. They unveiled the social, moral and institutional corruption of west and how it contaminates the innocent people who get indulged in it and these "social evils cause traumatic situation for the black American and deprived them of their rights of living"(p.3). They have brought to home different levels of trauma that confine a person to himself and showed that how these estranged people cope with that culture. Sana.(2022) in her article,The Issue of Hybridity in the Reluctant Fundamentalist, stated that people from Middle East and South migrate towards North or Europe in search of better living, education and other opportunities where the culture and customs are changed. She quoted Bhabha who defined hybridity as " cultural blending of the West and the East" and discussed the character of Chengez who was a hybrid, Pakistani and an American, finally left America to come back to Pakistan.

Bashir.M.,et.al.(2022) in their article, Traumatic Elements of Oppressed Black American: Micro-Aggression in Colson Whitehead's The Nickel Boys, worked to highlight the sufferings of black they confronted in American school and left unforgettable mark on their memory who then told to the whole world what they faced in their childhood. They unveiled the social, moral and institutional corruption of west and how it contaminates the innocent people who get indulged in it and these "social evils cause traumatic situation for the black American and deprived them of their rights of living"(p.3). They have brought to home different levels of trauma that confine a person to himself and showed that how these estranged people cope with that culture. To be one of them while others reject to do so and strive to stay stuck to their own culture while another category of people just hate foreign culture.

Sokar (2020) in his article,Hybridity and Loss of Identity in Inheritance of Loss:A Postcolonial Reading, in his research paper states that hybridity was used by Homi K.Bhaba in his work "Signs Taken for Wonders" and discussed the reason of hybridity that is resulted from colonization where the colonized were bound to follow the traditions, religion and language. It also leads to dilemma of loss of identity that is "the western identity of freedom, passion, and hopes; and the Eastern identity of the mother land". He further said that

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all the cultures and civilizations of colonized nations are not less than that of civilizations of colonizers. The retied judge thinks this world of contradictory cultures as "linked together with the tools of colonialism and globalization".

Popescu et.al.(2014) in their article, "Cultural diversity and differences in cross-cultural project Teams", investigated the differences in project teams of different cultures as in this global village intercultural tasks are inevitable in different projects where they all have to put their best to achieve a common goal whereas the projects might be affected by the different views and approaches of individuals from different cultures. On the other hand people with different natural tendencies and aptitudes may positively affect the project to make it more effective tool for study. They also state, "Culture should not act as a barrier; it has to show different options for the team actions, process development and problem solving"(p.526) so that the team work be productive, affective and appealing. Their research concluded that most of the people working together from different ethnic backgrounds had cultural empathy and open mindedness for other individuals and mutual team work.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

The researcher has chosen Lisa Lowe's theory, Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity:Marking Asian American Differences (1991), to discuss and analyze the selected text of No Longer at Ease by Chinua Achebe. She discusses that how subjects from American and Asian cultures confront each other, work together, praise and hate each other. She states vividly that both cultures are having their own worth and no culture is less than the other as each culture is transmitted from one generation to another. Moreover she discusses the stories or novels written by different writers who through their works demonstrated that the values that are taught to the generations are not taught in Western countries but they behave towards others the way they are taught there. American -Asian discussions end up in disruption and loss of shame and regret as some Asian people go to America but hide their identity ashamed of non American while some stay upright holding their identity and culture dear to them but she states as "the building of "Asian American culture" is crucial, for it articulates and empowers our multicultural, multilingual Asian origin community"(p.6).

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative as the researcher has commented upon everything she has written with subjective point of view and is analytic in nature as the whole text was read carefully to unfold the meaning of textual quotations with supportive arguments from Lisa Lowe's theory. The samples taken from text and theory were random that were elaborated in data analysis. The researcher has divided the articles in five chapters with sub headings and to write literature review articles were downloaded from different sites published in journals while primary source was text taken for the article.

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter answers the questions of this research with textual references and to support the arguments some references are drawn from Lowe's theory. The protagonist, Obi, is an Ibo boy who went to Lagos to proceed his studies there funded by Umoufia Progressive Union. He, from Umoufia, gets ready to leave to get Bachelor degree for four years and receives any prayers from his family and people who pray "When he is going to the White Man's Country. Leave him not behind Jesus" but it all resulted such that he almost forgot everything from his native country,in Lagos' materialism, pomp and show, that he needed

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to

remember that is elaborated by Lowe as "the disruption and distortion of traditional cultural practices" is there when a person goes to any other country after many sacrifices of his parents and family to live there with a changed culture, family values and classification of that society. Obi was a young and energetic man who tried to stay forward and steadfast abhorring the corrupt white men in Lagos who were holding high positions in civil services. He observed that people came up by bribing but there were people who could bribe but they preferred not to bribe because they wanted to stay virtuous. Lisa comments upon loss of ancestral roots and values in "terms of regret and shame" as it has befallen on Obi who under certain circumstances fell prey to bribery where he betrayed his family, society, and union that paid him a good sum to study and settle well.

No matter to what extent a person might be able to copy others' culture and become hybrid he still feels at home with the people of his own country as Obi liked and lived with Joseph who was a good natured and supportive such as We belong together: we speak the same language' (p.20) Similarly Clara,Obi's girlfriend, first impressed him by her looks but he preferred to keep distance but later when he heard Ibo words from her he felt at ease to communicate with her. Many instances are seen where the protagonist showed hatred towards western culture such as while eating meal in Palm Grove tackled by an English woman he said, "I am sick of boilèd poatoes" (p.28) to show that he had been fed up after eating western food and had an anxious desire to eat Umoufian food as he said that he wanted to eat pounded yams and bitter leaf soup as he ate semolina in England but it wasn't same. Lowe in her theory states that one can be removed from one's country but that country can never be removed from one's spirit and blood, similarly Obi went to England for higher studies and later gets a job there but still he did not feel at home due to cultural clash and difference in values. So Lowe puts it as there always remains a desire to keep one's identity intact at the same time the people try to demolish identity of others that is merely hypocrisy.

Lowe states that what makes an individual separate from a different ethnicity is "what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with Stories" as Obi's other used to tell them stories and his sisters told stories to their children but later his father forbade to do so because Christianity did not allow such stories that astray children from right path. So transmission of culture from one generation to other is also done by post colonial subjects. Obi was against treachery and bribery therefore he rejected the offer of a man to reduce his parcel to two pounds to that he replied that he would have handed him over to a policeman if there were any. He was travelling when the bus was challaned for not having papers and the conductor was about to bribe the policeman but they thought Obi to be a police officer so they had to give a plenty of amount to traffic warden. Lowe uses a term "messier" for combination for American and Asian culture but same is the case with Britain and African culture in the given text as Africans are anxious to know about far land and the way they live but at the same time they proudly tell about the bravery and strength of their ancestors that how they coped with them even in worst situations who never gave up but fought till last breadth. When Obi asked an Ibo man about bribery that weather white do it or not he replied, "They eat more than black men nowadays."(p.27) similarly when Mr,Green, a white man and member of British Council who also interviewed Obi with panel, talked about Africa he did not forget to mention "'The African is corrupt through and through.' (p.5) and later said that they all were corrupt in face of Obi but considered himself as an honest and just man who used to speak his heart and mind out.

In an emergency meeting of Umuofia Progressive Union, a member was talking about his Nigeria that had a great past before arrival of white men who "leveled everything down" (p.6). Joseph who was Obi's best friend who always supported him in times of crises asked him about the interview held in Lagos in which Obi did not revered the interviewers as he was supposed to as Joseph put it up while Obi replied, "That's

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what I call colonial mentality." (p.32) protesting against the postcolonial mentality. Obi narrates an incident from his student life where MP was lecturing over the Black and Obi wanted to shout out that they all were "hypocrites". Sam who was holding a good position in Lagos was kind and friendly towards Clare and Obi but he too said about white people, "I respect the white man although we want them to go" (p.51). Obi wanted to marry Clara and bought a ring for her and said to Joseph that he would convince his family and parents especially his mother to what Joseph thought, "Obi's mission-house upbringing and European education had made him a stranger in his country" (p.54). It shows that Britain's dream to educate the colonized nations is actually to drift them apart from their customs and traditional values. The Umuofian felt proud in their great men who knocked the white men down as it was to them as "unmasking an ancestral spirit" and did not want their boys who went abroad to study to marry white women. The respected elder people of Umuofia wanted the white men to go back as it "no be them country"(p.54) that demonstrates the desire of all colonized nations. When a person for a certain reason gets blamed in foreign country they start to blame an individual but entire society or country as Joshua was given a terminating letter because he was asleep during duty so his boss said to him, "You did not leave Umuofia four hundred miles away to come and sleep in Lagos" (p.60).

When Obi took bribery due to certain issues he was confronting those days to meet all his expenses but got arrested at the time which he thought was the last time to take bribery. His family could not stand that all but Umuofia Progressive Union did not leave him alone although some members were against helping him but those who were determined to help said, "a kinsman in trouble had to be saved, not blamed" (p.7) and that the anger against a brother was to be felt in flesh or for a short time but not for so long. Some members said that they already had invested eight hundred pound in his studies, so to follow his case is just a wastage of money as he has been cause of damnation and guilt for whole Umuofia.

CONCLUSION

The research has coped with the issues a hybrid man confronts in the country of his destination where he went to get education and good job but later he falls a prey to a false practice by the officers holding public offices. It also studies that how people of different cultures having different ethnic values and backgrounds work together having grudge against each other which should be avoided to make this world global in real sense.

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