

Sari P.Y, Ruly I.D: *Cultural Hybridity as the Impact of British Colonialism in Achebe's Things Fall Apart*

English Teaching Journal and Research

CULTURAL HYBRIDITY AS THE IMPACT OF BRITISH COLONIALISM IN ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART

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Abstract

This study deals with the novel entitled "Things Fall Apart" which is created by a well-known Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe to see the portrayal of the relationship between British colonialism and cultural hybridity. The entire novel portrays Igbo society with specificity and sympathy and examines the effects of British colonialism from an African perspective. The objectives of this study is to identify the way the author explains the impact of British colonialism in Igbo society and create cultural hybridity phenomena which include religion or belief system, educational system and law or political system among Igbo society.

Keywords: *Things Fall Apart, British colonialism, Cultural hybridity, African*

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INTRODUCTION

In this increasingly modern era of globalization, various things have arisen impact on social life. So, every individual must be able to adapt to changes in the environment and also be able to realize his life goals. One way to deal with it, the challenge of globalization is to foster a sense of love for one's homeland which is often called nationalism. With the attitude of nationalism, it disappears and the identity of nationalism as a result of globalization can be avoided.

The identity of nationalism is reinforced by Berezin (in Anshoriy, 2008) which suggests that nationalism has the potential to offset the impact of increasingly modern technology and create a lot of convenience that occurs in the lives of the younger generation. According to Berezin, Nationalism needs to be revitalized so society is ready to participate facing globalization and all its impacts. The explanation about nationalism shows the importance of a sense of nationalism. One of ways that can be done to foster a sense of nationalism is by understanding the past, including colonialism. Understanding regarding colonialism is needed to foster a sense of nationalism in society in facing the challenges of the current era of globalization. Colony can be interpreted as an area of occupation, conquest or control, colonial means the party of that colony. The process of colonial conquest of a colony is called colonization. From these terms emerged colonialism (Bhabha, 1994).

Understanding a country's control over a region or country with the intention of expanding the country is the concept of colonialism. Colonialism can be understood as the conquest or control of a nation or region to another nation or region to form a new settlement. Postcolonial theory is defined as a critical theory that tries to reveal the negative consequences of colonialism Postcolonial criticism is built from the colonial experiences of colonized people who engaged in liberation struggles around the world, particularly in the colonized countries of Africa, South and South East Asia and Latin America. It is born out of the colonized peoples' frustrations, their direct and personal

cultural clashes with the conquering culture, and their fears, hopes, and dreams about the future and their own identities (Bressler, 1999).

There are many social phenomena and dynamics in the postcolonial period summarized in literary texts. Postcolonial literature is literature with a time context during the colonial period. Literature work postcolonial uses the theme of colonial life with perspective postcolonial. Reading postcolonial literature can be understood as postcolonial reading. Postcolonial is loosely understood as a study of how literature reveals traces of colonialism in the confrontation of races, nations and cultures within the scope of unequal power relations (Foulcher, 2006).

Novel is a fictional composition that falls into one genre of literature. The definition of fiction in this case is a fictional or imaginary story. This matter is strengthened by the opinion of Altenberd and Lewis (in Nurgiyantoro, 2010) which suggests that fiction can be defined as narrative prose imaginative, but usually makes sense and contains some truth that dramatizes human relationships. Novels also become one of the genres in literary works that successfully applies phenomena and dynamics in the postcolonial period. Novels have intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements which can be appreciated by both because the novel is a work of art which provides many benefits. Many novels have themes postcolonial, the author's anxiety and curiosity regarding views writers on the problem of colonization are increasing. Novels regarding Postcolonialism succeeded in disrupting the writer's current thinking and assuming that colonial history is just history. Turns out, period Colonialism had a long-lasting domino effect on several countries.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* novel depicts the combination of different cultures after British colonialism in the Igbo community. The combination of cultures that creates changes to traditions and values that have lasted for hundreds of years creates cultural tensions and conflicts, reflecting the complex dynamics of social and cultural changes that occur. Before British colonialism, the Igbo society had values,

norms, and traditions that had been in place for hundreds of years, they had a system of traditions that included spiritual belief systems, hereditary systems and other social practices. Their daily lives were filled with rituals, myths and norms that became the integrity of their culture and life. But after the Europeans arrived, colonialism brought major changes that threatened and transformed this traditional culture.

From the writer's perspective, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe's is a classical novel which not only tells a deep way about the effect after colonialism of Igbo society in Nigeria, but also explores critically cultural changes and identity of the society. Achebe carefully depicts the conflict between tradition and modernity and touches on universal aspects of Postcolonialism. By choosing *Things Fall Apart* as the focus and object in this research, the writer hoped that this research can provide deep insight into the dynamics of cultural and social changes and cultivation of nationalism after colonialism.

RESEARCH METHOD

The object of this study was western colonization in Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. Related to the topic of the study, the writer took the characters, conflicts, settings, and analyzed the result with the concept of colonialism. Otherwise, colonialism itself impact to culture and society which will explained in this research.

This study belonged to qualitative research. According to Huberman and Miles (in Juwita, 2013), qualitative data is usually words rather than numbers. The qualitative data were the sources of well-grounded, rich description and explanations of processes in identifiable context of words, sentences, utterances, and dialogues. In addition, characteristic of this research is focusing on the process and significance of the subject. The analysis was supported by a library research method which was based on the data taken from the novel, books, autobiography of authors, journals, articles, essays, and other sources that could be accessed via internet. Library research is a research

conducted to find supporting materials related to the study (Lazuardini, 2013:22). By using library research method, the writer found the previous studies related to the novel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Cultural hybridity on Beliefs and Religion

British colonialism in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* significantly impacts the beliefs and religion of the Igbo society. The novel portrays the arrival of European missionaries and their influence on traditional Igbo culture, highlighting the challenges faced by the Igbo people in maintaining their cultural identity in the face of colonialism. The missionary's preaching and the people who practice the new religion are depicted as pacifistic and gentle, contrasting with religion which is a system of beliefs and behaviors that deals with the relationship between humans and sacred supernatural (Stein, 2021). The belief system in Igbo society which their own indigenous religion focuses on their ancestors and their priest called *Agbala*.

The oracle was called Agbala. People come from near and far to consult (Achebe, 1995, p.12).

As Bhabha stated, hybridity explores the complex interplay between colonized and colonizer culture. In the quotation above, the word *Agbala*, which is represented by the *Oracle* of the hills and cave, is central of Igbo society on religious practices. *Agbala* is also regarded as a sacred place that offers access to spiritual knowledge and advice from the supernatural world, which is considered essential to the life balance and social life of the Igbo people. Thus, the visits to *Agbala* are not only a reflection of their belief in supernatural powers, but also a strategy to face life's challenges. The *Oracle* of the hills and caves, exemplifies the deep cultural and spiritual values of the Igbo society. The cultural and spiritual values are part of animism which feature a variety of spirits and are connected to natural elements and ancestors (Onuoha, 2020).

Umuofia as the strongest clan in Igbo society has their power on magic which is very useful for a war, the magic is also the part of practitioners believe.

“Umuofia was feared by all its neighbors. It was powerful in war and its magic”. (Achebe,1995, p.7).

Umuofia as the strongest clan in the Igbo community, has its own traditions, culture and religious observance. Okiche (2022) states that every tribe in any region of the world has its own culture and religion which is a representation of the reflection of their respective world perceptions. Achebe shows the reader in *Things Fall Apart* that the Igbo people are very firm in their beliefs and became a very religious society even before the arrival of missionaries from British. The religious life of the Igbo people both individually and in groups is closely related to daily activities and can be seen with activities that begin with prayers intended for the spirits of their ancestors.

As he broke the kola, Unoka prayed to their ancestors for life and health, and for protection against their enemies (Achebe,1995, p. 3)

The religious activity of Igbo society has crucial part which is offerings to Ani. In the Igbo social and religious context, offerings to Ani are not just a religious ritual, but also reflect the depth of their relationship with nature and belief in spiritual power (Ekwunife, 2019). This tradition not only influences daily life, but also provides the foundation for the moral and social values of Igbo people. Through offerings to Ani, the Igbo honor and acknowledge their dependence on nature and the harmony within their community. The offerings reflect the importance of culture and spirituality in shaping identity and how Igbo society view the relationship between humans, nature and the spirit world. Ani as the goddess of the soil who is considered the protector and giver of good luck to their land. Every agricultural activity, such as planting and harvesting, is preceded by an offering ceremony to Ani. The offering is done to ask for blessings and soil fertility for a bountiful harvest. In addition, Ani is also considered the guardian of tradition and social justice in Igbo society. When there is a violation of

customary rules or a crime, offerings to Ani are used as a way to restore social and spiritual balance, in the hope of getting justice and peace back.

It was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. (Achebe, 1995, p.29)

As Mufuzi's definition of witchcraft is implicated in the suggestion that witchcraft is a theory of power and authority and practitioners believe that it possesses energies that could protect them against any kind of harm from their perceived enemies, and that it had the power to protect whatever wealth had been accumulated from destruction by supposed enemies who in general were either their close friend. The Igbo society uses witchcraft as the power even the way to get power and authority in them believe system is not easy. Although the path is difficult, these visits are an integral part of their efforts to understand their fate and manage the uncertainties in life which can be seen in the quotation below.

The way into the shine was around hole at the side of hill, just a little bigger than the round opening into a henhouse, people crawled on their belly through the hole in the dark. (Achebe, 1995, p.12)

Despite the physical hardship of reaching the *Oracle* by crawling through a narrow cave, Igbo people continue the practice which demonstrates their unwavering devotion and the central role of *Agbala* in their society. The journey symbolizes the profound respect and fear Igbo hold for deity, reflecting the intricate relationship between physical trials and spiritual faith in traditional practices (Unuoha, 2020). The physical hardship also symbolizes the seriousness with which they regard as spiritual obligations, embedding *Agbala* deeply into the fabric of Igbo society norms and values. Not only *Agbala*, Igbo society also put their respect on their ancestors, their God and Goddess with ceremony and offering for every harvest season. The ceremony is describing of indigenous religion through the lens of animism, in which human beings have reciprocal relationships with their spirits or their ancestors by doing rituals,

offerings, and ceremonies. The ceremonies or rituals in Igbo society already represented by Okonkwo and his family.

Near the barn was a small house, the "medicine house" or shrine where Okonkwo kept the wooden symbol of his personal God and of his ancestral spirits. He worshipped them with sacrifices of kola nut, food and palm-wine, and offered prayers to them on behalf of himself, his three wives and eight children (Achebe, 1995 ,p.10)

Igbo society with their indigenous religion contrast with missionaries which bring Christianity. The novel shows how colonialism creates divisions within the Igbo society, with some individuals resisting the changes brought by the missionaries while others adopt the new beliefs. The Igbo religion is polytheistic, with a focus on nature and the ancestors, emphasizing the importance of family and the land. In contrast, Christianity is monotheistic, with a single all-powerful God.

The missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. That was a source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan (Achebe, 1995, p. 120)

The introduction of Christianity in Achebe's Things Fall Apart has a profound impact on the Igbo society, Christianity brings about a sense of unity and acceptance among the Igbo people from any social status. The church provides them with a sense of dignity and belonging. The difference in religious beliefs and practices creates tension and conflict between the Igbo and the Christian missionaries. Christianity introduced the concept of equality before God and universal values that do not differentiate between people based on social status. the concept of equality before god contradicts the traditional Igbo social structure that establishes a strict caste or hierarchy, where a person's status in society is determined by their family, clan, and achievements in Igbo culture. The acceptance of Christianity by some members of Igbo society, especially those who are marginalized or considered as outcasts in their own

tradition, is often based on the promise of spiritual equality offered by this new religion. For the person who marginalized or considered as outcast, Christianity offered the hope of social and spiritual change that would liberate them from their previous social labels.

“before God, there is no slave or free. We are all children of God and we must receive these our brothers” (Achebe,1995, p.131)

The concept of Christianity attracts attention of Okonkwo's son. Nwoye's decision to embrace Christianity reflected the larger rift within Ibo society caused by colonialism and outside influences. Nwoye's personalization feel that new religion was not only a spiritual matter but also an act of liberation from the domination of his harsh and authoritarian father. Nwoye's conversion to Christianity reflects a search for a new identity and liberation from values no longer believes in. It is symbolic of the generational and cultural shifts that took place amidst colonial oppression, where the younger generation sought new meaning amidst rapid social change (Jahan, 2021). From the beginning, Nwoye was uncomfortable with the harsh customs and traditions of the Igbo tribe, especially because of the violence and injustice Nwoye saw. The sacrifice of the adopted son Ikemefuna, to whom he was very close, by the hands of his own tribe, made Nwoye even more dissatisfied with the traditional beliefs and practices. When Christian missionaries arrived in the village, Nwoye was drawn to their more peaceful and inclusive teachings. Christianity gave him an escape from tyranny and hope for a better and more meaningful life.

Although Nwoye had been attracted to the new faith from the very first day, he kept it secret. He dared not go too near the missionaries for fear of his father. But whenever they came to preach in the open marketplace or the village playground, Nwoye was there. (Achebe,1995, p.126)

Christianity leads to division and conflict within the Igbo society. The novel shows how the arrival of the missionaries and the spread of Christianity create tension and conflict between the Igbo and the Christians. The Igbo people are forced to adapt

to new beliefs and practices, which can lead to a sense of disconnection from their traditional culture and identity. The novel also highlights the negative impact of Christianity on the Igbo culture, as it challenges the traditional beliefs and practices of the Igbo people. The missionaries' message of a single, all-powerful God is seen as a threat to the Igbo polytheistic beliefs, and the introduction of Christianity leads to the destruction of the clan and the erosion of traditional Igbo values.

The conflict between Igbo society and Missionary become serious after killing sacred python. killing of sacred pythons is a serious violation of deeply rooted customary norms and beliefs. The sacred python is considered an embodiment of a deity and its killing is seen as a profound act of blasphemy. The event sparked major conflict among community members, highlighting tensions between tradition-keepers and Igbo people who attracted to the new influence of Christianity. The killing tested the boundaries of religious and cultural tolerance, and revealed the underlying unease of a society at the crossroads between maintaining tradition and embracing change. The conflict reflects the shifting forces and social changes faced by Igbo society with the arrival of colonialism and Christian missionaries. Traditional leaders faced challenges to their authority when their values and beliefs were questioned by newcomers who brought different teachings. In this context, the act of killing the sacred python became a symbol of resistance to traditional domination and an attempt to redefine the community's identity in the midst of rapid change. The conflict also demonstrates how different views and beliefs can divide previously homogeneous communities, exposing the complexity of assimilation processes and cultural resistance in the face of external change (Chen, 2023).

It was in fact one of them who in his zeal brought the church into serious conflict with the clan a year later by killing the sacred python, the emanation of the god of water. (Achebe, 1995, p. 133).

The Igbo conversion to Christianity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* reflects the search for meaning and justice in their lives. Some Igbo people think that the more inclusive and compassionate teachings of Christianity offer an attractive alternative to the harsh and violent customary practices. Many are attracted to Christian values that provide a new sense of security and hope, especially those who feel dissatisfied with the injustices of the traditional system.

The Christians had grown in number and were now a small community of men, women and children, self-assured and confident. (Achebe,1995, p. 134)

Not only exiles who started converting to Christianity, but also people with high Igbo titles like Ogunna. Ogunna's decision to abandon his high social status shows the profound impact of Christianity's presence in a traditional society. As someone of high title, Ogunna had many responsibilities and was respected within strict customary structures. His move to convert to Christianity reflects a deep dissatisfaction with traditional values and practices, as well as a desire to seek new meaning and justice more in line with his personal beliefs. Christianity, which offers equality and compassion, provided a solution to the sense of injustice and oppression he felt in his traditional role.

Not only the low-born and the outcast but sometimes a worthy man had joined it. Such a man was Ogbuefi Ugonna, who had taken two titles, and who like a madman had cut the anklet of his titles and cast it away to join the Christians. The white missionary was very proud of him and he was one of the first men in Umuofia to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, or Holy Feast as it was called in Ibo. (Achebe,1995, p. 145)

Ogunna shows how Christianity could be a tool to respond to social change and colonial oppression. When someone of high status like Ogunna converted, it was not only a personal spiritual change but also a powerful message about the legitimacy and appeal of this new religion. Ogunna's conversion highlights how Christianity can

disrupt and transform traditional power structures, offering new opportunities for individuals who feel constrained by customary systems. It shows that Christian conversion is not just a mass phenomenon but is also influenced by influential figures in society, whose decisions can drive wider social change.

2. Cultural Hybridity on Educational System

The introduction of Western education in Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" significantly impacts the Igbo society's view of traditional knowledge. The novel portrays the arrival of European missionaries and their attempts to convert the Igbo to Christianity, highlighting the challenges faced by the Igbo in maintaining their traditional beliefs and practices including how Okonkwo educate the children. Okonkwo rules his household with an iron fist and a harsh approach, reflecting his fear of weakness and his strong desire to move away from the shadow of his father who is perceived as weak and irresponsible. Okonkwo believed that authority and assertiveness were key to maintaining control and respect in his household. He often used physical and verbal violence against his wives and children to enforce discipline and demonstrate his power (Nduka, 2019). This approach was seen when he beat his second wife during holy week, even though the act violated traditional norms. Okonkwo's violent actions reflect his fear of failure and his inability to cope with deep-seated insecurities. Okonkwo's abusive domestic arrangements also reflect traditional and patriarchal views in Igbo society, where male power and authority are considered indisputable. Okonkwo internalized these norms and felt that showing tenderness or affection would be seen as a sign of weakness. As a result, his household was fraught with fear and tension, where his wives and children lived in the shadow of harsh authority (Nduka, 2019). This approach not only negatively impacted his family relationships but also demonstrates how cultural pressures and social expectations can shape one's behavior in destructive ways.

“Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand” (Achebe,1995, p. 9)

Igbo society use fairytale as media to educate the young generation. When Okonkwo tells fairytales, it serves as an educational medium that not only entertains but also internalizes Igbo cultural values and traditions to the next generation (Ihejirika, 2023). These stories are often laden with symbolism and moral lessons that reinforce social norms and gender roles. Although Okonkwo uses this opportunity to emphasize the values of masculinity and courage, folktales also serve as a bridge between generations, keeping the cultural heritage alive and relevant. Thus, through these stories, Okonkwo not only educates his children about the values he upholds but also reinforces their cultural identity in the context of a society that is facing great change. The folktales told by the Okonkwo also serve as a tool to strengthen cultural identity and pride amidst the external challenges facing the Igbo community. Through these stories, the Okonkwo can instill a sense of pride in their cultural heritage and prepare her children to face the future with a strong knowledge of their origins. Folktales serve as a bridge that connects the past with the present, allowing children to learn from the wisdom of their ancestors while maintaining relevance in their daily lives (Ihejirika, 2023). Thus, although Okonkwo's approach to parenting is often harsh, the moments when he tells fairytales reflect his efforts to ensure that Igbo values and traditions are kept alive and cherished by the next generation.

So Okonkwo encouraged the boys to sit with him in his obi, and he told them stories of the land-- masculine stories of violence and bloodshed. Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell. (Achebe,1995, p. 44)

The education system including teach the young generations to communicate by use figurative words in front of the younger in Igbo society is crucial part. The use of figurative words is an integral part of everyday communication. Figurative words, or proverbs, serve as a tool to convey wisdom, social norms, and cultural values in a

subtle yet profound manner (Tabari, 2019). The use of proverbs in everyday conversation enriches language with complex layers of meaning, allowing people to express abstract ideas and emotions in a more beautiful and effective way. In addition, figurative words help to maintain and pass on oral traditions from generation to generation, strengthening the cultural and collective identity of the Igbo people. Examples of this use of figures of speech can be seen when Okonkwo and other characters communicate, often using proverbs to emphasize points or give advice.

"I sometimes think he is too sharp," said Obierika, somewhat indulgently. "He hardly ever walks. He is always in a hurry. If you are sending him on an errand he flies a way before he had heard half of the message."

"You were very much like that yourself," said his eldest brother. "As our people say, 'When mother cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth.' Maduka has been watching your mouth." (Achebe, 1995, p. 58)

The missionaries who came to Umuofia were instrumental in introducing formal education to the local community by establishing schools. These schools offered basic instruction in reading, writing, and math, as well as an introduction to the English language. The establishment of these schools opened up access for Umuofia residents, especially the younger generation, to new knowledge that was previously unavailable in their traditional education system. The education provided not only focuses on practical skills but also includes Christian religious teachings, which is part of their mission to spread the new religion.

He went back to the church and told Mr. Kiaga that he had decided to go to Umuofia where the white missionary had set up a school to teach young Christians to read and write. (Achebe, 1995. p.128)

The school which founded by missionaries, became a place for Umuofia children and youth to get an education that could open up new opportunities in their lives. This formal education gives them the ability to communicate in English, which is increasingly important in the context of a growing colonial administration (Salman, 2023). With these new skills, missionary school graduates had the opportunity to get better jobs and improve their standard of living. The establishment of schools by missionaries in Umuofia demonstrates their efforts to influence and change society through education, which is seen as an important tool to achieve social and spiritual transformation.

And so he built a school and a little hospital in Umuofia. He went from family to family begging people to send their children to his school. He said that the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women who had learned to read and write. (Achebe, 1995, p. 151)

In Umuofia, schools and churches grew together as part of the process of Christian missionaries coming to the village. When the missionaries arrived, they established churches to spread Christianity. At the same time, they also established schools as a way to attract locals, especially children, to learn to read and write, and to learn Christianity. Schools became an effective tool for the missionaries to integrate their religious teachings into Umuofia society. Through education, they managed to change the views of some villagers, especially the younger generation, towards their traditional beliefs. Thus, the school and the church worked synergistically to strengthen the Christian presence in Umuofia and influence social and cultural change in the village.

Those who stayed longer became teachers, and from Umuofia labourers went forth into the Lord's vineyard. New churches were established in the

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surrounding villages and a few schools with them. From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand. (Achebe,1995, p. 152)

Okonkwo felt deep anger and dissatisfaction when he learned that his son, Nwoye, was being educated by missionaries. This anger was rooted in Okonkwo's fear of change and the loss of the traditional values he considered so important. For Okonkwo, the missionary school was not only a place of learning, but also a symbol of betrayal of their ancestral culture and religion.

As soon as he had learned of Okonkwo's return five months earlier, the missionary had immediately paid him a visit. He had just sent Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, who was now called Isaac, to the new training college for teachers in Umuuru. (Achebe,1995, p. 152)

Okonkwo felt that Nwoye had disregarded the family's heritage and identity by accepting education from missionaries who brought Christianity, which contradicted Okonkwo's deeply held animist beliefs. More so, Okonkwo's anger towards Nwoye's decision to attend the missionary school reflects his inability to accept the changes coming to Umuofia (Jahan, 2021). Okonkwo, who has always sought to demonstrate his strength and resilience, sees Nwoye's decision as weakness and an affront to his authority as head of the family. For Okonkwo, Nwoye's acceptance of missionary education signified a loss of control over his son and, more broadly, a failure to maintain traditional values amidst the tide of colonialism and modernization.

3. Cultural Hybridity on Law or Politic

Igbo society on their regulation has special occasion when Yam festival. The Yam Festival in Umuofia, dedicated to Ani, the goddess of fertility and supreme judge is one of the most important celebrations in Igbo society. The festival not only celebrates a bountiful harvest but also honors Ani as the patroness of soil fertility and

life. Through this celebration, the Igbo people show their gratitude for the crops they received and ask for blessings so that the land remains fertile and the next harvest is plentiful (Enwere, 2020). Rituals and offerings to Ani reflect the close relationship between Umuofia's agrarian society and nature, as well as their belief that agricultural success depends on harmony with spiritual forces. In addition to the fertility aspect, the yam festival also underscores Ani's role as the supreme judge who enforces morality and balance in society. Ani is not only regarded as the giver of fertility but also as the overseer of customary laws and morals. In this festival, community members are examined for their loyalty to the laws and customs they uphold. By making offerings to Ani, the community demonstrates their commitment to living within the right rules and maintaining social harmony (Aghasiyev, 2024). It is also a moment of reflection for individuals and communities to assess and correct their behavior, ensuring that they remain on the right path.

The Feast of the New Yam was approaching and Umuofia was in a festival mood. It was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. Ani played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. (Achebe, 1995, p. 29)

Igbo society also pursues justice by decides cases publicly in a manner of the council of elders and Egwugwu as the judges (Chen, 2023). Ajofia as one of the egwugwu judges in Umuofia, plays a very important role in maintaining justice and order in the community. Egwugwu, believed to be the embodiment of ancestral spirits, act as a link between the human world and the spiritual world. As egwugwu judge, Ajofia not only gives legal rulings but also represents a higher spiritual authority. This role gives Ajofia immense power and honor, as his rulings are considered a manifestation of the will of the ancestors. As such, the Ajofia serves to enforce

customary laws, resolve disputes, and maintain harmony within the community, all with an authority that is deeply respected by the community.

Ajofia was the leading egwugwu of Umuofia. He was the head and spokesman of the nine ancestors who administered justice in the clan. (Achebe,1995, p. 158)

In addition to the legal aspect, Ajofia also plays a crucial role in preserving Umuofia traditions and cultural values. As egwugwu judge, Ajofia ensures that his decisions are aligned with the customs and norms that have been passed down by the ancestors. This provides cultural stability and continuity, as each legal ruling not only resolves the issue at hand but also reinforces the basic principles underpinning social life in Umuofia (Unuoha, 2020). The presence of Ajofia and other egwugwu also reinforces a sense of identity and togetherness within the community, reminding everyone of the importance of respecting traditions and abiding by established rules. This shows how important Ajofia's role is in maintaining the balance between justice, spirituality and culture in Umuofia society.

The Umuofia law that requires Ikemefuna and a girl as compensation in murder cases reflects the retributive justice system adopted by the traditional community. When a community member is killed by another community member, Umuofia customary law requires the victim's family to receive compensation in human form to make up for the life lost. This shows that the value of life is very high and any life lost must be replaced with another life or an equivalent form of compensation (Ganesan, 2021). In this sense, Ikemefuna and the sacrificed girl become symbols of justice and penance, ensuring that harmony and balance in society can be restored. The process also serves as a deterrent to future criminal acts, reminding people of the serious consequences of their actions.

The offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation. (Achebe,1995, p. 8)

In addition to the retributive aspect, the demand for human compensation also underscores the complexity and rigidity of Umuofia customary law. While this law is meant to uphold justice, it also demonstrates the powerlessness of the individual against collective decisions and traditional authority. Ikemefuna, who was innocent and had no involvement in the killings, became a victim of a legal system that recognizes no individual exceptions or mercy. This highlights the tension between the need to maintain community justice and individual rights, and how harsh and inflexible the customary legal system can be. Furthermore, by requiring a girl as part of the compensation, the law also reflects a patriarchal view that considers women as pieces of property that can be transacted to settle disputes. This shows how Umuofia customary law not only upholds justice but also reinforces social structures and values that may seem unjust in a modern context (Jahan, 2022).

The offerings requested to Aní as punishment for Okonkwo reflect the importance of the goddess of fertility and morality in the Umuofia belief and legal system. When Okonkwo accidentally kills a member of the community during a celebration, it is considered a grave offense against the sanctity of the land and the spiritual laws guarded by Aní. This punishment in the form of offerings emphasizes that Okonkwo's actions violated not only human laws but also divine laws that govern balance and harmony in the community (Udeagha, 2019). The offering aims to appease Aní and restore the disturbed balance, showing the seriousness of the offense involving the goddess who maintains the fertility of the land and the well-being of the community. In addition to the spiritual aspect, the punishment of offering to Aní also reflects how the Umuofia legal system serves to enforce social discipline and responsibility. By requiring Okonkwo to make offerings, the community not only punishes his individual actions but also provides a collective lesson on the importance of respecting customary laws and the spiritual forces that oversee them. This punishment reminds all members of the community that no one is above the law, not

even an individual of high status like the Okonkwo. It reinforces the moral and social values guarded by Ani, as well as ensuring that any act that undermines the harmony of the community must be atoned for in an appropriate manner to restore balance and peace.

"The earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall all perish." His tone now changed from anger to command. "You will bring to the shrine of Ani tomorrow one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries." He rose and left the hut. Okonkwo did as the priest said. He also took with him a pot of palm-wine. (Achebe, 1995, p. 24)

The ilo in Umuofia village functions as a center for social and cultural activities, as well as a traditional court. As a large open space, the ilo serves as a gathering place for the community for important events such as festivals, celebrations and public gatherings. One of the most important functions of the ilo is as a place where egwugwu, customary law enforcers who are regarded as embodiments of ancestral spirits, hold court to settle disputes and decide legal cases. In this context, the ilo acts as an arena where justice is served according to customary law passed down from generation to generation. This location was chosen for its open and accessible nature, allowing all members of the community to witness the judicial process and ensuring transparency and community involvement in law enforcement. In addition to its function as a court venue, the ilo also plays a strong symbolic role in maintaining and preserving Umuofia traditions and cultural identity. Each hearing held at the ilo not only aims to resolve conflicts, but also to reinforce the social norms and values upheld by the community. In this judicial process, the principles of justice, truth and morality represented by Egwugwu are reaffirmed, ensuring that each verdict not only delivers justice but also educates and reminds the community of the importance of abiding by customary law. The ilo is therefore not only a center of justice but also a symbol of cultural unity and continuity, linking Umuofia's past, present and future in a harmonious whole.

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Large crowds began to gather on the village ilo as soon as the edge had worn off the sun's heat and it was no longer painful on the body. The titled men and elders sat on their stools waiting for the trials to begin (Achebe, 1995, p. 74)

Umuofia law in dealing with family cases reflects a collective and holistic approach aimed at maintaining social balance and community harmony. In Umuofia society, family matters are not regarded as purely private affairs, but rather as issues that affect the entire community. Therefore, family conflict resolution often involves a neutral third party, such as an egwugwu or council of elders, who represent ancestral wisdom and authority. This process ensures that decisions are made that not only take into account individual interests but also consider the impact on social welfare. As such, customary law serves to resolve conflicts in a fair and expedient manner, reinforcing a sense of community and collective responsibility in maintaining family and community harmony. In addition, Umuofia law in dealing with family cases also shows a strong emphasis on restoration and reconciliation rather than mere punishment. When there is a dispute within the family, the primary aim of customary law is to restore broken relationships and restore the disturbed balance. This often involves mediation and compromise efforts, where the parties involved are encouraged to reach amicable agreements and forgive each other. For example, in cases of infidelity or domestic violence, the first attempt is to find a solution that can reunite the family, such as providing compensation or holding a peace ceremony. This approach reflects the fundamental values of the Umuofia people which emphasize the importance of solidarity, harmony and collective well-being, and demonstrates the flexibility of customary law in the face of complex social dynamics (Onuoha, 2020).

The law of Umuofia is that if a woman runs away from her husband her bride-price is returned. But in this case she ran away to save her life. Her two children belong to Uzowulu. We do not dispute it, but they are too young to leave their mother. If, in the other hand, Uzowulu should recover from his madness and

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come in the proper way to beg his wife to return she will do so on the understanding that if he ever beats her again we shall cut off his genitals for him. (Achebe,1995, p. 78)

The establishment of the court by missionaries in Umuofia marked a significant shift in the legal system and social structure of the community. These courts brought with them Western laws and procedures that differed fundamentally from the customary laws that had long been practiced in Umuofia. The presence of these missionary courts began to replace the role of egwugwu and councils of elders who had been the enforcers of justice and keepers of tradition. By bringing in colonial law, missionaries introduced a more formalized and institutionalized concept of justice, which was often incompatible with local values and practices. This created conflict between local traditions and the new authorities, and generated tensions within communities that had to navigate between two different legal systems.

But stories were already gaining ground that the white man had not only brought a religion but also a government. It was said that they had built a place of judgment in Umuofia to protect the followers of their religion. (Achebe,1995, p. 130)

In addition to changing the legal landscape, the construction of the court by the missionaries also impacted the dynamics of power and social control in Umuofia. With these courts in place, missionaries not only strengthened their authority but also expanded their influence in regulating community life. Missionary courts often delivered verdicts in favor of colonial and Christian interests, thus diminishing the role and influence of traditional leaders. This led to the erosion of customary authority and accelerated the process of cultural assimilation, whereby Western values began to take root in local communities (Sandamali, 2020). The courts also became a tool to consolidate colonial power, forcing communities to submit to alien laws and eroding their independence and cultural identity. Overall, the construction of the courts by

missionaries was part of a broader strategy to integrate the Umuofia people into colonial and Christian structures, which had long-term implications for their social and cultural transformation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the analysis, the portrayal of cultural hybridity as the impact of British colonialism in Achebe's Things Fall Apart happen on cultural fields such as beliefs system and religion, education system, and law and politic system. Each of those cultural fields in Igbo society has become a link so that the writer can portray the hybridity from various fields and the concept of hybridity can be understood. The British colonialism has impact on Igbo society culture, then bring the society and people in that community into conflict.

In the further studies about post colonialism, the research can conduct to explore the resistance of people in Igbo society embody British colonialism. The research includes analyzing the way or the role of Igbo people to resist from British colonialism. For example, the next researcher can examine the resistance of women in Igbo society embody British colonialism.

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