



TRAUMATIC PORTRAYAL OF NATIVITY AND POST-COLONIAL CULTURAL HEGEMONY IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART*



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ABSTRACT

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This study makes a traumatic portrayal of the ideology of cultural hegemony, being a part of post-colonial literature studies. Chinua Achebe recounts the state of African clans by the British imperial and colonial powers, exploiting the native Africans for materialistic gain, annihilating their culture, religion and customs in the name of humanitarian agenda of the whites. A situation arises in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in which things fall apart because the protagonist fails at the end to regain the culture all people shared once. The "whites" have destroyed the fabric of African society, and subjugated an "inferior" native culture under a "superior" western one. Chinua Achebe witnessed abysmal dismissal of the African nativity being replaced by a foreign culture; a new religion, new traditions and new values. This paper examines how the white colonizers wove a cultural hegemony around the natives with the aim of establishing their colonial domination over them. The white man does this all, not by using military force, but by luring the tribesmen and the colonized clans to drift away from their native faith and values. The invaders use the clan's own traditions against the clan in order to procure a permanent establishment for them in the village. The findings of this study reveal a binary cultural hegemony showing both consent and resistance for white man's dominance.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes to the post-colonial literature studies by presenting a traumatic portrayal of the nativity in the context of cultural hegemony. It discusses how Chinua Achebe claims the abysmal dismissal of African nativity by the western culture and religion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chinua Achebe is widely known for his criticism of colonialism and the western ideology that distorted the African image, misrepresented and wrongly depicted Africa and its natives (Abd-Rabbo, 2019; Adeyemi, 2018; Akwanya, 2019; Franklin, 2008). Achebe unexceptionally dealt with colonialism that led to most traumatic experience to original inhabitants. The 'white colonizers' gave it the name of 'refining' the inhabitants which actually was rather debarring the inhabitants of their traditions and practices (Grant, 2009). A cultural hegemony was thus seen when members of the ruling class exerted domination not by force or persuasion, but by making an inclusive and a subtle influence over their education, media, religion and culture.

Hegemony is deemed to be a purely western creation, often to mean domination of a nation (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007; Ramirez, 2015) in all aspects of life such as culture, politics, education and economy. Hegemony also

meant domination by consent, in which the ruling class convinced the natives that the whites had come to work for their interests. Gradually, they dominated not by making use of political or military force, but by a morally subtle and inclusive power over their minds. They also went beyond the political dominance of power; hegemony is also understood as a domination of a nation through its own cultural values and beliefs. This can be coined as cultural hegemony, a dominating rule achieved through ideological and cultural measures. The members affected by cultural hegemony behave differently from the rest of the members of the society; however remain co-inhabitants and a constituent of the society.

Edward Said termed 'cultural hegemony' as the cultural 'other' of Europe in his *Orientalism* (Said, 1994). Said was extending the Fanon's notion of binarism which negated the 'other' and prioritizes the 'self'. Philosophically, the 'Other' is antagonistic to 'Self' and hence Said (1994) presented his orientalism as a "counter discourse strategy" to prevent the Western Imperial forces to dominate the East. In cultural hegemony, the imperial power not only dominated the social institutions, but also strongly influenced its cultural values, norms and ideas. At the social level, cultural hegemony penetrated into complex stratified social structures, affecting each social and economic class of the people, depriving them of their nativity.

The concept of nativism in most post-colonial writings including those of the diaspora and expatriates has been associated with emotional sufferings of the natives. In a diasporic situation, individuals who suffer traumatic experiences often feel the urge to return to their native land, culture and tradition. Nativism is generally defined as an attachment to a place, identity or a nation and to one's soil. It is also a practice that favors and preserves the interests of natives over those of more recent settlers. It is often contrasted with xenophobia or fear of foreigners who may be outsiders and are different from the natives on grounds of race, ethnicity, religion and national origin (Fernandez, 2013). However, in a hegemonic situation, nativism is also seen contrasted with modernity.

Massey (2005) in relation to colonial power equates modernity with the establishment of power dynamics in a particular geographical area calling it a "power-geometry of intersecting trajectories" (2005) (quoted in Krishnan (2018). The natives gear up a resistance and do not allow the white man's modernity to efface their nativity. The aboriginal values and culture are also romanticized to make a foiled attempt to preserve the national identity. Chinua Achebe's legacy is a perfect example of white man's dominance over the powerless, innocent natives taking away their cultural heritage, their religion, language and customs.

One major motif in Achebe's writings is to rebut colonizers who have distorted the African image by fabricating stories about Africa's long-practiced traditions and cultures (Achebe, 1990; Achebe., 1994). A critical opinion is often held that Chinua Achebe wanted to rectify history in *his Trilogy*, to efface out the misrepresentations and wrong depiction of his country and natives in western narratives (Abd-Rabbo, 2019; Adeyemi, 2018; Akwanya, 2019; Franklin, 2008). Before the publication of Achebe's novels, most of the novels about Africa had been written by Europeans which portrayed Africans as savage who needed the enlightenment by Europeans. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), for instance, is one of the most read novels around the time of its publication in which Conrad described Africa as a "wild, 'dark' and uncivilized continent." Therefore, Achebe was determined to describe Africa and its culture more realistically than what Conrad and his followers had done.

The current research focuses on its first novel, *Things Fall Apart* in order to explore the traumatic effects of colonialism. Achebe does not portray the colonial past in romantic terms but gave it a 'realistic' form in order to rebuild the stereotypical portraiture of Africans in the novels of western writers like Joseph Conrad, Graham Greene and John Cary. Thus Achebe revisits the history not only to show the truth about the African tribes but also to show how they 'fell apart.'

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to analyze the post-colonial impact of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, in order to discover the hegemonic effects on Igbo society and culture and also to investigate the extent to which cultural hegemony

affected the imperial powers reciprocally. It investigates how colonizers establish their superiority over natives in their settlements; and what compels the natives to accept the white man's dominion and allow him to supersede over their beliefs, cultures and religion. The study will also attempt to identify the consequences of cultural hegemony over the natives and their society, for which Achebe is still remembered today (Adichie, 2014; Chukwuma, 2014). Till date, there does not exist any studies related to hegemonic colonial influence on the native culture, which makes this study more relevant.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Post Colonialism

Loomba (2005) in *Colonialism/Post colonialism* defines post-colonialism as a vague concept with no crystallized definition. The term however, can be applied to all people whose beliefs, culture and religion are affected by the imperial processes from the day colonialism started until the present day. A post-colonial theory also analyses and criticizes literature and discourse dealing with colonialism and its aftermath. McLeod (2011) in his treatise *Beginning Post Colonialism*, opines that "the term 'post- colonialism' is not the same as 'after colonization;'" rather, it is an attempt to break away from colonial discourse, from the "challenge of knowing the colonial ways." Post-Colonialism can be termed as a reaction to uphold the identity of the colonized as equal entities and as "human beings" like those living in the West, It can be seen as a resistance to the task of 'revisiting', or 'remembering', and interrogating the colonial and the pre-colonial past. It is also sometimes accompanied by a desire to forget the colonial past, encouraging the rise of anti-colonial and 'independent' nation states to mark an end of colonialism. It also sometimes attempts to disown the burdens of the colonial inheritance and force a repression of colonial memories.

In literature, post-colonialism is although modeled upon modernism but should not be termed as system that falls chronologically after colonialism (Mullaney, 2010). Post-colonial studies is the domain that includes studies about both colonialism and imperialism; tales of pain, suffering and exploitation of the colonized natives in Asia, Africa and a few parts of Europe in the 18th and the 19th centuries. A few critics also define post-colonialism as an attempt to develop a better understanding of the colonial socio-economic and cultural life among the colonized people. The nations affected by the practice of imperialism and colonialism included areas of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean Island, also known as "Third World Nations" (Abrams, 1999; King, 2009). Hence, the question arises as where should a postcolonial writer locate the past? Is it to be found in pre-colonial, colonial or post-colonial period? What are the common characteristics in all these areas affected by colonialism and imperialism? Can a post-colonial writer forge any national identity after colonialism? Achebe seems to have answered all these questions by writing the African trilogy.

3.2. Imperialism and Colonialism

The two terms Imperialism and Colonialism are often shown interrelated: the former represents the dominant attitude of a sovereign power over a territory in a distant region by military force (King, 2009); the latter is seen as the consequence of the former "implanting settlements in the distant territory" (Said, 1994). Likewise, Boehmer (2005) relates the terms colonialism with such settlements or occupied territories whose resources the imperialist power exploits and also attempt to govern its habitants. Thus, a colonial nation comes to be seen as an imperialist power as well with political and cultural dominance as its agenda, achieved through economic, political, and cultural control (King, 2009).

Soja (2011) in "Foreword" to *Postcolonial Spaces: The Politics of Place in Contemporary Culture* refers to two realities: one that gives more importance to setting in terms of location and landscape in post-colonial works and considers them ideal for literary and textual analysis; second, that discusses real purpose of "politics and oppression." (2011: x) (quoted in Krishnan, 2018 in the Introduction to a special issue of *Journal of Postcolonial*

Writing). In literary contexts, colonialism deals both with the texts “produced by writers from countries with a history of colonialism” as well as with the texts “produced during colonialism” (McLeod, 2011). It is further observed,

“Colonialism is perpetuated in part by justifying to those in the colonizing nation the idea that it is right and proper to rule over other peoples and by getting colonized people to accept their lower ranking in the colonial order of things – a process we can tell ‘colonizing the mind’” (McLeod, 2011).

Therefore, in the colonial context, the interests of the ‘colonizer’ and the ‘civilized’ are held higher than those of the ‘colonized’ and the ‘primitive’ or the ‘uncivilized.’ The interests of the ‘colonizer’ and the ‘civilized’ are promoted and prioritized over those of the natives. The local culture, beliefs and religion are ignored, undervalued, denigrated and suppressed to favor the culture, beliefs and religion of the colonizer, allegedly in the interest of ‘everyone.’ Overall, it is understood as “the capacity to influence the thoughts of the colonized by far most sustained and potent operation of imperial power” (Ashcroft et al., 2007).

The big issue here is that the colonizing nations exercise their superiority over the colonized nations who are persuaded to look at their own native, ‘uncivilized’ beliefs, customs and traditions. They however succeed in their persuasion tactics, making the colonized subjects believe in their own inferiority. These subjects are often so vulnerable that they have no other choice except to recognize their native and indigenous values and beliefs as peripheral and those of the imperial power as central and more authoritative. The acceptance of the imperial beliefs and values looks so natural and valuable to the indigenous society that the colonized subject never resists and gives rise to a kind of hegemony.

3.3. Hegemony

Hegemony means “domination by consent” (Ashcroft et al., 2007). Such consent is consequent of a kind of moral, social and cultural subjugation of the colonized subject by the imperial power, ensuring that the subjugation or subordination of the subjects should not be seen as a forced acceptance but with a grateful acknowledgement. In other words, hegemony comes to be recognized as a weapon to make the colonized natives accept the colonizers’ domination. Pragmatically, the term hegemony denotes leadership and rule through a sort of indirect imperial dominance, not by direct military force, invasion, occupation, and annexation but by the threat of intervention into their culture, religion and beliefs.

Ashcroft et al. (2007) also observes that hegemony becomes a vehicle of persuasion in which the ruling class convinces rhetorically that the interest of the masses is also the interest of the members of the ruling minority. In this way, hegemony assists the ruling minority to influence the thoughts of the colonized masses and sustain its imperialistic activities in the colonized regions. Since the subjects lack education and access to other resources due to their primitivism, they readily accept the ruling minority along with its social and economic structures. These structures soon get legitimized into a socio-political and legal system posed as designed for the benefit of the masses, however, in real terms, it is for the benefit of the ruling class. In such transactions, the ruling minority keeps itself distinct from its subjects in terms of its culture and beliefs. It succeeds in achieving the consent and acceptance of the indigenous masses for its socio-cultural norms as well as willingness to be governed by its rules of law. It is thus said to have taken the form of a kind of cultural hegemony blended with a wide worldview that the ruling minority represents.

3.4. Cultural Hegemony

Cultural hegemony is often defined as dominance of a culturally diverse society by a ruling minority who takes the opportunity to manipulate this diversity in its own favor. But such dominance is achieved not by force or through persuasive rhetoric but through a subtle and gradual overpowering of the media, culture, economy, politics and education of that society. The masses in this society remain unaware that a hegemonic pattern is weaving

around them which they will never be able to escape from. Several studies (Ashcroft et al., 2007; Boehmer, 2005; Loomba, 2005) have condemned the idea of cultural hegemony and proposed a rebuttal as well as rejection of the liberty that the ruling class takes over the masses by subjugating and belittling their cultural norms of their native society. These studies vehemently argue that cultural hegemony must not be imposed in such a manner nor should it be perceived as a natural and inevitable occurrence.

Studies like (Adeyemi, 2018; Alam, 2014) find the so-called cultural hegemony as an instrument of social dominations and insisted that its tenets must be recognized as artificial social constructs. Though there is an absence of force or any military aggression but it is an illegitimate and undemocratic attack on the ideology and culture of the native people. Other studies (Ashcroft et al., 2007; Boehmer, 2005; Retd & Maut, 2014) reveal weaknesses and shortcomings in the cultural hegemony. First, the cultural hegemony which is controlled and supervised by a small group, a minority, may fail to influence every man and woman in the society. Secondly, such men and women live in different circumstances and have diversity in their perception about the norms, beliefs and the entire socialization process. This may lead to issues of segregating groups according to their beliefs and perceptions. It may also not be able to influence every member of the society at the personal level.

Studies like (Akwanya, 2019; Ekwe-Ekwe, 2001; Ramirez, 2015) however have argued in favor of cultural hegemony. According to these critics, several social institutions in such hegemonic societies volunteer to educate people to deliver them out of primitivism, dark ignorance and backwardness. They attempt to socialize these primitive natives by making them accept the norms, values and beliefs of the dominant ruling power which controls all those institutions and supervise the socialization process.

A review of literature thus in general indicates that natives in a hegemonic situation fail to understand the real objective of the ruling minority when it offers liberal and generous assistance and contribution to elevate their socio economic standards. Consequently when the ruling minority succeeds in making an influence on the society, it is realized by one and all that a social hegemony has been woven around them. So far each member of the society has lived a separate and isolated life in his and her own confined way of living and shared nothing with other members of the society. But when being a part of the cultural hegemony, they look themselves as individual members of a larger social group, and also see discrete social classes appearing around them. Each social class or group now makes a contribution to the greater social hegemony.

Achebe has shown this social hegemony in *Things Fall Apart* through characters, events who live in social diversity and economic variety without political freedom—and are not aware of the hegemonic patterns weaving around them (Retd & Maut, 2014).

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* was analyzed by using qualitative and descriptive methods. The researcher applied close reading technique and a post-colonial approach. The close reading technique gave the opportunity to understand how Chinua Achebe used the colonizer's tool in inscribing the indigenous values of the past and the traumatic encounter between Africa and Europe.

The study was designed to investigate how the post-colonial approach in a text can help the author to investigate the clash of cultures of both the colonized and of the colonizers. The motif was also to investigate the interactions between the two cultures and how the actions of the British colonizers exhibited hegemony throughout the action of the novel. The study also wanted to examine how the nativism of the Igbo clan was subjected to annihilation and humiliation to the extent that a few of the clan members revolted while others silently converted to the new faith sacrificing their nativity.

The study also used the explorative design method to decipher what methods Achebe used for re-education and regeneration in order to re-inscribe and rebuild culture by reinvestigating the past, and provide a true picture of the indigenous Africa.

5. TRAUMATIC ENCOUNTERS

Chinua Achebe is one of the most widely recognized and praised writers of Africa who laid the foundation of the African literature. His novels are a devastating depiction of clashes between traditional tribal values and the impact of colonial rule. His novels deal with the traditional Nigerian Igbo society of the colonial era, exhibiting instances of traumatic encounters during colonial dominance. Achebe depicts how the colonists overpower the natives, their religion and their language and what problems and tragedies occur due to such irrational use of power leading them to their doom. Achebe's legacy represents the collective victimization of the natives who silently accept and give their consent to a foreign power to take over their beliefs, traditions and religions practices, and a kind of cultural hegemony entering into their life (Alam, 2014; Basu, 2014).

The '*African Trilogy*' recounts traumatic encounters through the history of Nigerian colonization starting from the very beginning of colonial missions to the wake of independence. Achebe not only revisits the history but tries to educate his folks what the real story was and how they '*fell apart*'. Achebe's novels describe historically how the culture and traditions of the Igbo society were different from those of the missionaries who though had arrived for humanitarian purposes, but soon dominated the natives through a cultural and political imperialism. The natives were subjected to a forced convergence of cultures, which resulted in societal clashes in their traumatic encounters with the white man and in their courageous attempts to preserve their culture from the colonial ambitions of the missionaries. Thus Achebe's novels reveal the way in which the natives fight back the white man's dominion. The characters of his Trilogy, *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrows of God* and *No longer at ease*, for instance, show strength and dignity when they confront with the colonial powers.

Achebe's novels are abound with hegemonic images making readers infer that the British colonists could rule Africa for years not by using military force or gun, but by exhibiting their superiority over native culture, beliefs, religion, politics and economy. They used systematic and planned process of establishing colonialism (Rashid, 2018; Sharif & Mirkhan, 2019). They made the colonized subjects feel peripheral to imperial values and willingly accept their dominance. They emphasized the idea of a barrier of understanding cultures and lured the tribesmen away from their native culture to establish their hegemony over natives' culture, belief, religion, economy and politics. They tempted the native men away from their faith and then used the clan's own beliefs and traditions against the clan itself in order to procure a permanent establishment in the village. *Things Fall Apart* reveals all these aspects of imperial cultural hegemony (Abd-Rabbo, 2019; Akwanya, 2019).

6. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Although Achebe's every novel depicts the cultural confrontation between the traditional Nigerian Igbo society and the colonial powers through its characters, but it is more dominant in *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe dexterously shows how hegemony develops and works in the Igbo society, a Nigerian clan and how the British colonizer establishes his superiority over the natives. It is a sort of a battle between traditional values of the Igbo society and the modernization of the missionaries. The resistance is against the stripping off the tribal identities and a forced acceptance of the new teaching. The novel depicts how the Igbo clan created history by building a post-colonial identity for themselves.

Achebe cites the classic example of the "hearts and minds" theory of conquest in this novel. He does this to prove the superiority of the colonizer over native culture, belief and religion. The novel is set in the outskirts of Nigeria in a small fictional village, Umuofia, the heart of Igbo land, just before the arrival of white missionaries into their land. The missionaries move away from the frontal assault and plan to establish their cultural hegemony over the culture of the natives. They use the very fabric of the existing society in order to rebuild their own, so they work from within and study the culture and belief of the inhabitants before coming to *Mbanta*. They know that by merely establishing their cultural hegemony over the culture of the natives will give them a way to establish their rule over the natives.

The missionaries take the first step when they request the Mbanta ruler to grant a land for their church. They have been preaching by day and sleeping in the marketplace by night. Achebe seems to be sympathetic towards these missionaries. Uchendu, one of the elders of the village, after discussing amongst the elders, is seen talking to his peers, *"Let us give them a portion of the Evil Forest"* (53). The elders agree to give them a land to build their church in a part of "Evil Forest", which, according to the natives nobody in his right senses would accept. The *"evil forest"* is the burial place for all the people of the Igbo tribe who die of evil diseases. It is a place where, according to the natives, sinister forces and power of darkness are alive. Achebe explains how the Igbo people view "Evil Forest":

Every clan and village had its "evil forest." In it were buried all those who died of the really evil diseases, like leprosy and small pox. It was also the dumping ground for the potent fetishes of great medicine-men when they died. An "evil forest", was, therefore, alive with sinister forces and power of Darkness. (105)

The acceptance of the land by missionaries in the Evil Forest for the site of their new church is a calculated move by them to undermine the belief of the clan and consequently to gain power and respect from the natives and establish their hegemony over the natives. The missionaries know the significance of the land in the clan's culture. They know the fact that by merely inhabiting the land they would undercut the power of the native religion which is nothing but a superstition. Achebe demonstrates that similar circumstances would occur at other villages, "conquered" by the missionaries. This manipulation represents the initial usurping of power by the British colonizers, not through coup or invading armies, but through the guise of meekness in the form of missionaries. This might only be one individual example, but it serves as a model for the whole theory of the subjugation of Nigeria. Thus, through the missionaries, the hegemony works, develops and gives way to establish superiority of the church, of the new religion and of the white man over the natives.

Another objective of this study was to find out the reasons for the submissiveness of the natives and their acceptance of white man's superiority over their belief, culture and religion. The study finds that these reasons are hidden in the weaknesses of the natives' own belief, culture and religion. The natives do not immediately recognize any threat posed to their religion and culture by the missionaries when they ask the natives for a piece of land. They treat the intruders with light-hearted buffoonery. Moreover, they know that no person with some intelligence shall live or build a worship place in an Evil Forest. Hence, they think that the missionaries, who no one in the tribe wanted should stay, would leave their village. The elders of Mbanta also want to see whether the missionaries, who hold different religious beliefs, are able to face the evil forces. As Uchendu says, the missionaries *"boast about victory over death. Let us give them a real battlefield on which to show their victory (55)."* The missionaries were delighted to get the land and in jubilation they dance and sing. The Mbanta elders and other villagers are shocked to see such a reaction as they were expecting that the missionaries, would be killed by the evil forces, but to their surprise, they had survived.

The inhabitants of Mbanta expected them all to be dead within four days. The first day passed and the second and third and fourth, and none of them died. Everyone was puzzled. And then it became known that the white man's fetish had unbelievable power. (105-6)

Thus the missionaries' success in the 'Evil Forest' is one of the reasons for the submissiveness of the natives. When none of the missionaries die, the clan understands that their beliefs are nothing but a mere superstitions and the missionary win their first three converts. However, a large majority of villagers hold the opinion that the Igbo gods are testing the missionaries and want to see for how long they would continue to defy them. Their belief is that the gods take their revenge after 28 days. When the 28th day arrived, the villagers eagerly watch and wait for the missionaries to be punished by the gods. The newly converted villagers also even temporarily un-convert themselves but no harm is caused to the missionaries and the church. Instead they enjoy as usual and even win a few more converts, including a pregnant woman named Nneka.

The natives conclude that the white man has the power to see the evil spirits and the ability to communicate with them. The natives realize the helplessness of their gods and start being submissive to the white man's

unbelievable power and the heightened modernity. It not only alienates the natives from their traditional loyalty to the ancestral belief and culture but also makes them leave their earlier faith to adopt a more modern view of life. They readily agree to abort their nativity as they are made to believe in the uselessness and primitivism that they had been following so far in the name of nativism.

The other reason for their submissiveness and an example of the annihilation of their nativism is losing their faith in their traditional gods and religion when the missionary raise questions on the authenticity of their gods. The missionaries begin to question the very basis of tribal beliefs and insist that the gods they worship are “false gods, gods of wood and stone” (131). They preach that, “Before God there is no slave or free. We are all children of God and we must receive them as our brothers” (142-143). They prove their practices as primitive and uncivilized. Mr. Kiaga said,

The heathen say you will die if you do this or that, and you are afraid. They also said I would die if I built my church on this ground. Am I dead? They said I would die if I took care of twins. I am still alive. The heathen speak nothing but falsehood. Only the word of our God is true. (152-153)."

Thus, the missionaries succeed in subjugating an "inferior" native belief to a "superior" western one, by stamping upon the innocent minds of the people of Igbo tribe the belief of monotheism, by building the church and converting them into Christian. Many members of the Umuofia society accept Christianity, the religion of the white men. Since the religion was in harmony with the government, these converts automatically supported the white man's government and as a result the unity of their clan thus falls apart. In Obierika's words, “He [the white man] has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.” The consequences of White man's hegemony over Igbo society can be seen in the voice of Obierika:

"Our own men and our sons have joined the ranks of the stranger. They have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government. (125)."

Thus the natives fall submissive and give way to the white man to establish hegemony over the tribal beliefs and set the stage for colonialism. The Igbo tribe is no longer a tribe. It is not only turned away from its traditions and religion but also begins to tear its people from within. Even those who still see the church and the white man as an evil force cannot deny the power of his presence.

Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel, during his exile, learns from his friend, Obierika, that the new religion, Christianity, has made many inroads into the traditional stronghold of Igbo society:

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 (130).

When Okonkwo came back from exile, he is astonished to see the change in the village. Everything is changed as the clans are no more clans. The new religion and culture has astounding effect on the natives.

Okonkwo was deeply grieved [...]. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart, and he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women (21.25).

People have started to come closer to white man's religion and accept it. It moves their heart by showing images of humanity and brotherhood. Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, gets moved by the poetry and becomes a convert. Many people of Umuofia give a positive response to the white man's beliefs as well as help him to uphold his rule in Umuofia. [Abrahams \(1978\)](#) states:

It is Christianity which proves more restrictive in the final analysis. The Christian refuses to accept the essential truth of another religion, and hence, he begins to employ "the sword" of the colonial administration to bring the recalcitrant in line. European civilization, then, which had, from a naive liberal view, set out "to bring civilization to a primitive people", begins to show its greater primitiveness in administering its cruel and hypocritical Christian justice. It is with the pernicious help of Christianity that the soul of a once proud people is destroyed. (1978)

Thus the Igbos are now so much mingled with the white man that it is difficult to separate them from the one time strangers. Those who join the white man are given ranks and prosperity by him. They follow the ways of the white man and use the power given to them against their own clan. The white, though limited in number and easy to be driven out, are protected by the clans who join the white man's religion and upholds their rule as well. He uses the very fabric of the existing society to tear down that society in order to rebuild their own.

7. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is seen that the white man used the concept of hegemony to overpower the native culture, beliefs and religion and establish his superiority over the Igbo society. He used systematic and planned process of establishing colonialism in order to rule Africa. In order to extend his hegemony and dominance, he sends missionaries to Igbo land and sets the ground for a political domination. The white man succeeds in alienating the natives from their traditional loyalties and ancestral beliefs and cultures, making them leave their earlier faith. In the same way, the missionaries raise questions on the authenticity of their gods and the very basis of tribal society. The missionaries convince the natives that the gods they worship are "false gods". Hence the white man attacks their religious beliefs and proves superiority of white man's God over the native gods. Thus, through the guise of meekness of the missionaries, he establishes his superiority which gives way to colonizer to establish his rule.

The research also concludes that the natives feel submissive and accept the white man's superiority when they come to know weaknesses in their own belief, culture and religion. The white man makes the colonized subjects feel peripheral to imperial values, culture and religion and make them believe that their beliefs are nothing but superstitions. They also feel submissive when they realize that they worship false gods, gods of wood and stone as the white man proves superiority of white man's God over the native gods and their religious practice as a primitive and uncivilized one.

This study points out consequences of white man's dominance over native culture, religion and beliefs, visible in the form of their acceptance of British culture, religion and beliefs and is reflected by the Igbo society in their responses and behavior. Many people get converted into Christianity, take British education, become clerk and court messenger in the colonial civil service. The presence of the new religion in the society dominates and changes the Igbo society in belief. The system of traditional religious belief of Igbo society changes from polytheism into monotheism. Thus the actions of the colonizer promote cultural hegemony, intimidating the Igbo clan into 'consenting' to the colonizers' domination. This study also attempted to find out the obvious consequences of hegemony and how these consequences reflected in the promotion of new beliefs and culture of missionaries. It was revealed that the white man was tempting clans away from their nativism and also attempted to annihilate and dismiss it by attacking their religion, language, and faith and used the clan against its own clan in order to procure a permanent establishment of their rule in the village.

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