Postcolonial Power Dynamics: Establishing Control and Negotiating Agency

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that-

1. The thesis submitted is my original work while completing a degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material that has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Approval

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Postcolonial Power Dynamics: Establishing Control and Negotiating Agency

Abstract

The paper's purpose is to analyse postcolonial relationships as depicted in literature. To establish a balanced examination of the above-mentioned postcolonial dynamics, this study focuses on two novels written by European writers and two novels by writers from the postcolonial world. These are *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe, *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad, *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe, and *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie. Colonialism imposes hegemonic control and creates hierarchical binaries, such as the self and the other. Using the theoretical framework provided by Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha, this study examines how colonialism not only imposes control but also influences how colonised subjects resist and negotiate their agency.

Keywords: Key Words: Identity, Hybridity, Resistance, Agency, Self and the Other.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Postcolonialism is the period or state of affairs after the historical period of Western colonialism. The term is also used by various definitions to include the effort that continuously seeks to reclaim, redefine, or reinterpret people's history and agencies that have been marginalised by various forms of imperialism. The term postcolonial began to appear in the 1970s. It was part of discussions about a certain time and a power structure. This involved the national states that emerged in newly independent countries in Africa and Asia (Mills and Misoczky 1-2). Another meaning of postcolonial is linked to critical studies. It focuses on colonialism and colonial literature. This area is shaped by postmodern and poststructuralist views. It brings together different theories and issues. It includes talks about various experiences. These experiences involve migration, slavery, and suppression. They also cover resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, and place. Additionally, it addresses responses to important Eurocentric ideas. Postcolonialism is occasionally employed to denote the struggles faced by indigenous populations in various regions globally during the early 21st century. However, considering the interpretation of self-determination and self-government principles in the international system and the minority status and vulnerability of these peoples even in decolonised states, the term may be less appropriate. During that period, indigenous peoples were excluded from the limited advancements offered by the United Nations and the international state system to the decolonised territories in the 1970s. The history of imperialism is intricate. European imperialism in the Americas, the West Indies, Australasia, and Southeast Asia from the 16th to the 18th centuries differed significantly from that of the 19th and 20th

centuries (Ivison 3). One of the central themes in postcolonial research is the enduring presence of empire and the corresponding resistance throughout human history.

Postcolonial literature is derived from the former colonies of Britain and can be found in the Caribbean, Africa, and India. Most of the post-colonial authors write in English, using shared themes like pursuing independence, immigration, national identity, allegiance, and childhood. Postcolonial theory is one of the manners of studying literature; it focuses on works from countries that were once colonies. It does this by looking at how the histories of colonisation bear effects on such writing. The theory may also focus on literature that is written in or by people from colonising countries, speaking about the colonies or their people. It deals with otherness and resistance. Postcolonial theory emerged in the 1970s. Many in the field consider Edward Said's book, *Orientalism*, to be the foundational work regarding postcolonial theory ("An Introduction to Post-Colonialism"). Proponents of the theory look at how writers from colonised countries express their cultural identities. They celebrate these identities. They also work to reclaim them from the colonisers. They look at how the literature of colonial powers justifies colonialism. It does this by showing the colonised as inferior. Attempts to define postcolonial theory have been controversial. Some writers have critiqued it strongly.

The four selected works include *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe*, Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad*, Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe*,* and *Midnight's Children by* Salman Rushdie, each set in distinct historical and geographical contexts, illustrating the dynamics and impacts of colonisation from the perspectives of both the colonisers and the colonised. This study has concentrated on colonialism and its impact on cultural, social, and individual aspects.

1.1 Background Information

Robinson Crusoe was published as a novel in 1719 at the beginning of European colonialism. During this time, cultures from Europe were generally thought to be superior to cultures of non-Europe. These thoughts further influenced how the authors approached the relationship between two men of different cultural backgrounds during the novel. A perfect example is the relationship between Crusoe, who is a European colonist, and Friday, who happens to be a native man. The narrator, Defoe in this case, presents England as a desired land which is tied in his imagination to the new slave trade in Africa. He settles into an English identity through his mother's English lineage and the common linguistic changes adopted in England. The novel *Robinson Crusoe* was an inspiration by the experiences of Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor, with Daniel Defoe. Alexander Selkirk had been stationed on a desert island for over four years and four months from an expedition given whale hunting. He was later rescued in 1709 and was returned to the United Kingdom. Defoe got encouragement from his meeting with Selkirk at one of his friend's parties. The Legend of Selkirk inspired Defoe and placed his years of experience at sea in creating characters, using his broad imagination to process the literature that made Robinson a little and medium asset. Revealing a strong bourgeois entrepreneurial mentality, he revealed an enlightenment consciousness, too. Besides, it represents the colour of colonialism at the same time. Robinson's development and reign over desolate islands are just the same as the colonisation of islands by the colonists. Robison correctly portrayed the colonisation of rituals across borders by colonists and their occupation of other countries' areas. This paper discusses colonialism in its cultural, and social sphere, and as an individual sphere. The relationship between Crusoe and Friday from a colonial discourse perspective will be discussed in this paper. It deals with many issues that range from survival

instincts and ingenuity of Crusoe as a colonist, propagation of Christianity and European culture, to underplaying his colonial activities. The concept of "self and the other" has been engaged in this thesis investigation of the colonial relations in the text.

Heart of Darkness is a novella, written by the Polish-British novelist Joseph Conrad. In the book, the narrator describes a voyage up the Congo River into the so-called Congo Free State. The narrator of this story, Marlow, tells his tale to friends on a boat trip along the Thames River in London, England. This backdrop makes up the setting of this novel, in which Marlow narrates his tale of fixation with the ivory trader Kurtz, while Conrad uses it as an equator of London and Africa as territories of darkness. It initially appeared in 1899 in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Then, in 1902, it was included in the collection “Youth: and Two Other Stories” compiled by Conrad. Joseph Conrad is primarily regarded as a writer of sea tales in the modern era. He was raised by Polish parents. When he was sixteen, he moved to France so he could pursue his lifelong dream of being an explorer. He managed to get the rank of "captain" for a "Congo River steamer" in 1890 even though he had been away ill for six months during his stay in Africa. The debacle urged him to work on his most important work entitled *Heart of Darkness*. The phrase "Heart of Darkness" symbolises the attitude of the English people who consistently make it impossible for the African people to be independent and stand on their own feet. This title encompasses the theme of African civilisation. Conrad elaborates on imperialism and issues that people experienced during the colonisation era in America in *Heart of Darkness*. There is a high level of interconnection between colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism. A dominant nation exerts its influence and control over the land, traditions, and language of other nations by military, political, and economic forces. In 1899, when this novella was being written, a large amount of Africa was under the rule of the British Empire. The Congo was one of the parts of

Africa that was under European invasion. The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century have been characterised as a period of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution. During that time, Britain had overwhelming influence over the Suez Canal, the Nile River, and the East Coast of Africa. Britain established control over the Suez Canal, the Nile River, and the East Coast of Africa. The Nellie can be termed as a significant symbol of economic power in the Europeans in *Heart of Darkness*. The Nellie is employed as a symbol by Conrad in the novel *Heart of Darkness* to show economic strengths among the Europeans. Additionally, the author aims to deliberate on the brutality perpetrated by men from England.

Things Fall Apart is praised by critics widely for being a postcolonial story. The Igbo cultural complexity has emerged from the writings of Chinua Achebe as a concept that opens up a historical narrative of the conflict between two civilisations. *Things Fall Apart* is a literary work written in English by Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe. It was first published in 1958 by William Heinemann Ltd in the United Kingdom. It is regarded as the quintessential contemporary African novel written in English, among the earliest to gain worldwide recognition from critics. This book is considered essential in African schools and is extensively read and analysed in English-speaking nations worldwide. The novel's title is derived from the poem "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats. The life of Okonkwo, a leader and local wrestling champion in Umuofia, which is one of nine fictitious villages in Nigeria that are inhabited by the Igbo people (in the novel by the same name, "Ibo"), is depicted in the story. It discusses his family and personal history, the traditions and culture of the Igbo people, and the impact that British colonisation and Christian missionaries had on the Igbo community throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. A new culture brought by the white missionaries preaching the

gospels of Christianity threatens Okonkwo, a highly well-known public figure in his town. The first collision after Christian culture's entrance is the split at the individual and societal levels. There is chaos and misunderstandings in the community when several Igbo people—including Okonkwo's son, change their religion. The Europeans do not comprehend the firmly established way of life of the Igbo people. They thereby disrespect the Igbo people's cultural customs. Achebe clarifies in the book that Africans are not barbarians, and their civilisations are not dumb. Things fall apart when Okonkwo cannot restore his people to the culture they once shared. *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe shows how well the pre-colonial Igbo community in Nigeria understood the profound changes brought about by British imperialism. Achebe uses Okonkwo, a symbolic figure of traditional values and opposition to change, to powerfully show the tension between indigenous cultural traditions and the propagation of colonial ideas.

Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*, published in 1981, remains one of the most important examples of magic realism in fiction, where Saleem Sinai, its protagonist, merges personal life with politics. Born on the very eve of India's independence, this euphoric night of August 15, 1947. The novel opens with Saleem recounting his life story urgently, emphasising the events of history that link him to it and his ironic struggle with "too much history" as it risks devouring him. Rushdie has used a lot of magical material in commenting upon the ideas of identity and memory, along with the implications of colonialism. Saleem, having the facility of telepathy, hence linking him with other children born at the time of midnight, therefore symbolises the fragmentation of post-colonial India. All these "Midnight's Children" possess some special powers, which symbolise the different aspects of Indian society along with its struggle. It proceeds through a non-linear narration of a successively awakening insight that lets

Rushdie interlace his personal experiences with the greater socio-political statement, thus challenging very notions of national identity. Events like the Indo-Pakistani War and the Emergency that was declared by Indira Gandhi form part of a very involved plot in this novel. This forms the background upon which Saleem's trials and tribulations are played out. In a world replete with chaos and uncertainty, Saleem's journey mirrors the search of India for self-definition amidst external pressures and internal divisions. In this way, *Midnight's Children* goes beyond mere narration to become a deep introspection about the interaction between personal lives and collective history. *Midnight's Children* represents not only the milestone of his work but also an important contribution to the exploration of post-colonial identity. Blending magical realism and historical narrative, the text calls upon readers to consider nationhood in all its intricate aspects and as an ongoing practice of colonialism.

1.2 Thesis Statement

This paper illustrates how these literary texts indicate the tension between the indigenous traditions and colonial impositions, power and identity dynamics, cultural interactions, and the dehumanising consequences of imperialism. The thesis further explores complex representations of postcolonial relationships in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, therefore underlining cultural, social, and individual effects of colonisation.

1.3 Research Methodology

This study primarily examines postcolonialism vis-à-vis the dichotomy between self and the other, cultural conflicts and ambivalence in the coloniser-colonised relationship. Focusing on four literary texts: *Robinson Crusoe*, *Heart of Darkness, Things Fall Apart,* and *Midnight's Children.* This thesis will analyse Said's concepts of the "Self and the Other" in *Robinson Crusoe* and use Edward Said's theory of Orientalism through the relationship between Crusoe and Xury; Crusoe and Friday. Said's book *Culture and Imperialism* can be applied to Joseph *Conrad's Heart of Darkness* to uncover how economic motives and greedy capitalist exploitation motivate European imperialism. It presents the exploitation of African resources and people as a result of European greed and economic imperialism. In *Things Fall Apart*, this study will apply Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity to analyse characters through the complex interplay of resistance and acceptance towards colonial influences. The ambivalence is shown by the characters' concurrent resistance and acceptance of colonial influences, reflecting the complex negotiations of cultural identity under colonial rule.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A literature review is an overview and study of current research on a given subject. It summarises the present knowledge, points out the areas of uncertainty, and creates the framework for the following studies. This paper will research two literary works by European writers and two literary works from postcolonial writers. The review will cover some specific concepts of postcolonialism, such as self and the other, racism, hybridity, and the impacts of colonialism**.**

2.1 *Robinson Crusoe*

In "Identity, Power, and Otherness: A Postcolonial-Oriental Reading of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*," Nforbin Gerald Niba revisits the beloved book from a postcolonial perspective. Niba contends that the storyline captures the prevailing colonial mindset of the day, with Friday standing in for the "other", who is seen as less than human and in need of "civilisation", and Robinson Crusoe for European supremacy. This study shows a higher level of significance beyond the conventional survival story by exposing the underlying racism and colonial expansion in the text through the power dynamics between Crusoe and Friday (Nforbin and Niba 1-20). In "The Response to Individualism in Robinson Crusoe," Ahmed A. Mohammad, Rebin A. Azeez, and Hawara N. Kareem probably examine readers' responses to Robinson Crusoe's strong individualism. The study may explore the admiration for Crusoe's inventiveness and fortitude in the face of adversity and the possible drawbacks of his conceit and propensity to see others, like Friday, as less than. Studying the effect of Crusoe's narrative style, in which his viewpoint predominates, could help readers consider the limits of his individualistic worldview (A. Mohammad et al. 124-130).

2.2 *Heart of Darkness*

In "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," Chinua Achebe criticises Joseph Conrad's portrayal of Africa and Africans for their colonial connotations. Achebe claims that Conrad's portrayal reduces Africa to a "foil to Europe," demeaning the continent as a site of irrationality and darkness to contrast with the alleged civilisation of Europe (Achebe 252). Achebe contends that this negative image clarifies the fundamental exploitation and subjection of colonialism and empire. By showing Africans as only "props" in the narrative devoid of agency and compassion, Conrad's works support and promote the colonialist viewpoint that regards African people as inferior and disposable (Achebe 255). This literary dehumanisation is also connected to the larger historical realities of slavery and colonialism, according to Achebe. By showing Africans in a way that supports their slavery and exploitation, he emphasises how literature has sometimes been involved in justifying these repressive institutions (Achebe 257). Western myths have hidden the rich civilisations and histories of African communities by depriving Africans of their humanity and lowering them to clichés. Achebe's article demands a critical review of how such works support colonial and imperial ideas as well as a reassessment of them. His study emphasises the need to realise and contest these negative representations to promote a more respectful and realistic knowledge of Africa and its people.

2.3 *Things Fall Apart*

In Gikandi's book *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction,* Gikandi says *Things Fall Apart* is a trailblazing book since it shows the cultural hybridity defining postcolonial nations. Set in a transitional era when traditional Igbo society is under British colonial control, Achebe's book challenges Gikandi, who says Achebe brilliantly captures the

conflicts and compromises between these two societies. Okonkwo, the protagonist, sees this battle to uphold his cultural values against the rising colonial impact. Gikandi points out particular scenes in the text where Achebe shows the mixing and conflict of civilisations. One major issue is, for instance, the arrival of Christianity and its challenge to Igbo religious traditions. Achebe shows Igbo culture's adaptive and robust character by presenting this cultural encounter as a complicated and nuanced interaction rather than a straightforward contradiction. Gikandi's study focuses on Achebe's use of language to assert Igbo identity while interacting with the English language forced by colonial control. Gikandi points out that Achebe uses a dual narrative technique: although the book is written in English, it is firmly inflected with Igbo language forms, proverbs, and idioms. This produces a distinct narrative voice that fits the patterns and senses of Igbo speaking (Gikandi 24). In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha's groundbreaking theory of cultural hybridity illuminates Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart's* cultural intersections. Bhabha's idea of the "third space" offers a framework for comprehending how Achebe's characters negotiate the transitional area between conventional Igbo culture and the invading effects of British colonialism. According to Bhabha, the interaction between colonising and colonised cultures produces a "third space" where fresh cultural forms develop from their hybridity. This hybridity is apparent in *Things Fall Apart* as the protagonists negotiate dual cultural identities and combine English and Igbo languages. Bhabha argues that cultural hybridity questions colonial power by erasing the clear-cut difference between self and other. The book shows this duality through the protagonist Okonkwo's fight to uphold traditional Igbo values against colonial intrusion (Bhabha 55). In *The Truthful Lie: Essays in a Sociology of African Drama*, Biodun Jeyifo offers a perceptive study of the ambivalent issue in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. As Achebe negotiates the forces of colonialism, Jeyifo looks at how

deftly she depicts the fundamental conflicts and complexity inside Igbo society. Through characters like Okonkwo, who fiercely opposes the new system and works to preserve old values, he emphasises how Achebe's story catches the dualities experienced by the society and shows a strong sense of resistance to colonial intrusion. Jeyifo observes that Achebe also shows society accepting colonial changes, reflecting its complex and frequently contradictory responses. Characters like Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, embrace Christianity and oppose his father's strict loyalty to tradition, symbolising the lure of fresh religious and societal possibilities. Jeyifo contends that this ambivalence is a literary device and an authentic portrayal of the historical and cultural conflicts African societies endured during the colonial era. Beyond a binary opposition between coloniser and colonised, Achebe's description presents a more complicated picture whereby traditional values and colonial influences coexist, clash, and mix. According to Jeyifo, this complex story helps us better grasp the complex nature of cultural and social change under colonialism by exposing both the acceptance and opposition to colonial developments inside Igbo society (Jeyifo 47).

2.4 *Midnight's Children*

One of the most distinctive features of *Midnight's Children* is its narrative style, which manages to combine both history and mythology, realism, and imagination in a tidy package. As Timothy Brennan argues, "magical realism in his novel is a metaphor for the unreliability of history itself"(Brennan 64). In bringing together fact and fiction, Rushdie challenges the accepted narratives of history. He suggests that history is not a line of unbiased truth, but it is a series of interpretations which are connected to power relations and subjective experiences. A method like this accords with the postcolonial critiques that emphasise the fictional nature of the colonial

histories and recoveries of suppressed histories by the colonial power. Authority as well as control over narration is interrogated in *Midnight's Children*. Saleem's psychic connectedness with the other "midnight's children" born with India's independence symbolises the many voices and tales composing a nation. As Aijaz Ahmad says, "The narrative practice democratises storytelling by lending voice to those who have hitherto been denied speech" (Ahmad 45). Its existence in postcolonial India is essentially polyphonic, marked by the cultures, languages, and faiths that it represents. The novel's multi-voiced structure, with shifts between various voices and eras, carries with staggering accuracy the fragmented and disputed character of the postcolonial condition. Another major feature of *Midnight's Children* engages with the question of partition and its far-reaching impact on the Indian subcontinent. The novel is set against the backdrop of the partitioning of India in 1947, which is presented as a traumatic event that shook the very core consciousness of the nation's psyche. As Priyamvada Gopal elaborates, "Rushdie narrates partition not as a merely political and geographic cleavage but as a fundamental psychosomatic rent" (Gopal 132). The storytelling is fragmented here, and so are the persons, reflecting, as it were, the violence and dislocation caused by partition as a way of underlining the fact that colonialism is continued and postcolonial communities have been divided.

2.5 Research Gap

A deeper examination of the relationship between Crusoe and Xury in *Robinson Crusoe* is necessary. Furthermore, this research is going to investigate the effects of Crusoe's self-sufficiency on the Indigenous population of the island, providing a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

The insufficient research on the portrayal of Africa and Africans contributes to the propagation of colonialist ideology in the novella *Heart of Darkness* needs to be explored. While much attention is paid to the negative portrayal of Africans, there is a pressing need to delve deeper into how these characters might also exhibit resilience and complexity, which would challenge the dominant colonial narrative. This gap in research is significant and requires immediate attention to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the novella and its implications.

The specific research gap on the concept of cultural hybridity in *Things Fall Apart* underscores the necessity of investigating how Achebe's portrayal of the interaction between Igbo culture and colonial influences emphasises conflict and resistance and the emergence of new cultural identities and moments of collaboration. Existing studies concentrate on the ambivalence in the portrayal of the use of language by the writer. This research is relevant and crucial in understanding the complex dynamics of cultural hybridity in a postcolonial context.

The discussion of *Midnight's Children* given an identity crisis in the postcolonial context depicts deep insights into such a scope. Some fragmented discussion points out fragmentation

and multiplicity in the existing literature, but there remains not enough examination of how Rushdie's peculiar use of magical realism and non-linear narrative configuration affects the characters' identity struggles. So, the study is going to fill this gap in further discussion.

This paper is going to fill the gap by investigating the power relationships between colonised and colonisers, emphasising the ability of colonised people to resist and challenge colonial authority, the impact of colonisation and fragmented identity in these literary texts.

Chapter 3: Crusoe, Xury and Friday in Colonial Context

Since its publication in 1719, *Robinson Crusoe* has been widely regarded as an outstanding adventure narrative. The novel and its protagonist, Robinson Crusoe, have gained popularity among almost everyone, particularly children. At first glance, this book appears to be nothing more than an adventure story. It demonstrates that imperialism is technically conveyed beneath the tale, where concerns such as power, identity formation, and “self and the other” are presented from a colonial point of view.

The dynamic between the "self" and the "Other," a concept frequently discussed in postcolonial theory, particularly in Edward Said's Orientalism, can be critically analysed regarding the relationship between Crusoe and Xury in *Robinson Crusoe*. Said contends that the West establishes European dominance by portraying the "Orient" as exotic, dangerous, or inferior (Said 6).

In this framework, the "self" is the coloniser “Crusoe”, representing European authority, civilisation, and superiority. The term "Other" represents the colonised “Xury”, an exotic, subordinate, non-European figure whose identity is viewed through the lens of inferiority in this research. Crusoe represents the European "self"—rational, autonomous, and powerful. Upon his release from captivity in North Africa, Crusoe adopts a position of leadership and control and meets Xury, a young moor. Xury first seems to Crusoe as a subservient character but also as valuable. When Crusoe tests his loyalty, Xury's subordination is explicit, "I bade Xury go to the top of the hill and look for any more boats coming, and if he spied any, to halloo to me" (Defoe

36). This moment represents the colonial idea that Crusoe, as a European, is naturally in charge while Xury, a non-European, is assigned a lesser position. Crusoe perceives Xury as an inferior being to be utilised for his survival rather than as an equal. This dynamic is further emphasised when Crusoe ultimately sells Xury to the commander of a Portuguese ship, stating, "I was loath to sell the poor boy's liberty, who had assisted me so faithfully in procuring my own" (Defoe 41). Here, Crusoe's betrayal of Xury is indicative of the more general colonial practices in which the "self" (Crusoe) perceives itself as entitled to control, commodity, and exploit the "Other" (Xury).

On the contrary, Xury is the "Other" in this relationship, a figure that is defined by his subordination and distinction. A young Moorish child named Xury is devoted to Crusoe and assists him in his survival following their escape. Nonetheless, Xury is not regarded as an equal companion but rather as an individual who can be employed to Crusoe's advantage. Crusoe's portrayal of Xury is filled with colonial resonances. According to him, Xury is respectful, loyal, and obedient qualities frequently associated with the colonised in colonial literature. For instance, when Crusoe instructs Xury to be alert for danger, Xury obeys without hesitation, "Xury stated that he would accompany me if I would accompany him" (Defoe 36). This unwavering loyalty solidifies Xury's status as the "Other," a figure primarily dedicated to catering to the European "self." His actions are defined by their utility to Crusoe rather than by his objectives or agency.

Xury is important in Crusoe's journey from captivity, as he acts as his loyal companion and assists him in their daring escape. Crusoe and Xury hijack a small boat and embark on a journey to the sea after they escape from their Moorish captor. Throughout this voyage, Xury demonstrates both resourcefulness and courage, proving dedicated. Xury's dedication is affirmed

when Crusoe tests his loyalty by asking if he would betray him. Xury responds that he would rather die than do so. Crusoe orders Xury to search the shore for hostile forces, and Xury complies when confronting potential dangers. Xury assists in navigating the boat. His obedience, loyalty, and willingness to comply with Crusoe's directives are vital in their successful escape, given that Xury is significant in assuring their survival in unfamiliar waterways.

Crusoe betrays Xury by selling him into slavery after the young man had faithfully assisted him in escaping captivity. Crusoe perceives an opportunity to trade Xury for his own advantage when he encounters a Portuguese commander who offers assistance despite Xury's loyalty and willingness to serve Crusoe. Crusoe rationalises this betrayal by noting that the captain promised to release Xury in ten years if he converted to Christianity. However, the reality remains that Crusoe commodifies Xury's freedom for personal necessity. Crusoe's colonial worldview is made clear by this betrayal, which conceives of non-European lives as worthless. The relationship is characterised by a significant power imbalance, with Crusoe viewing Xury as a tool rather than an equal human being.

Crusoe's relationship with Friday in Robinson Crusoe shows the dynamics of self and others, serving as a critical analysis through the framework of Edward Said's Orientalism. Crusoe represents the 'self'—the European, coloniser, and master—whereas Friday represents the 'other'—the non-European, colonised, and servant. This dichotomy influences their interactions and exposes dominant imperialistic and Eurocentric ideas in the colonial era. Robinson transformed the island's indigenous population into "others" and positioned himself as "self". Initially, he created the "self" by bringing the advanced civilisation of Europe to the indigenous inhabitants on the island using his everyday lifestyle. On the island, he established the standard

time by applying European time. Shortly after landing, he set up a cross where he landed for the first time, carved the date of his landing, and cut his everyday pitch such that "he has a calendar to calculate the sun and moon" (Defoe 50). Secondly, he dominated again and confirmed his superiority when he discovered the indigenous inhabitants on the island were living in the same manner. First, Crusoe rescued Friday from cannibals on the island and named him "Friday". The act of naming Friday by Crusoe symbolises ownership and authority. Friday is treated as dominated and subdued by Crusoe. Crusoe instructs Friday to call him "Master," and Friday dutifully agrees with that; in the novel, Defoe mentions, "He spoke to me and called me 'Master' as if he had fulfilled all expectations" (Defoe 165). This indicates their power dynamic, with Crusoe representing the superior European "self" and Friday representing the submissive "Other." Using language is another way to reinforce this power dynamic. To strengthen his character as the enlightened European who gives information to the "savage" native, Crusoe teaches Friday English. Crusoe proudly recounts how he "taught him to say 'Yes' and 'No' and to know the meaning of them" (Defoe 328). Language becomes a weapon of control since it represents Crusoe's power over Friday. Teaching language is a symbol of how colonists forced their culture, language, and values on the colonised to establish supremacy and remove the native identity. He not only subdued "Friday" with force but also changed his perspective. He assigned him to dress, consume cooked meals, drink goat's milk, and get rid of his tendency to eat people. Crusoe made him see that the previous beliefs were wrong. Ultimately, he followed him and lost his own initiative. Friday turned into a silent “other”

Friday is initially depicted as a barbarian who requires rescue from cannibals when Crusoe first encounters him. Crusoe's initial response is one of ownership rather than a partnership; he refers to him as "Friday" in honour of the day they first met, thereby asserting his authority over

his identification. This action resonates with Said's concept of Orientalism, in which the coloniser defines and diminishes the colonised. Crusoe asserts, "I had saved his life; I had made him my servant" (Defoe 234), thus demonstrating the power dynamics in the relationship between them. Crusoe's relationship with Friday is founded on paternalism. Crusoe not only teaches Friday to language but also converts him to Christianity. This conversion is a representation of the colonial mission to civilise the "non-believer" by imposing European religious and cultural values. Crusoe recounts how he "explained to him, as well as I could, the history of our Savior, and told him of man's redemption" (Defoe 171). Crusoe further asserts his power by converting Friday, portraying his rule as a benevolent endeavour to save Friday's soul. This paternalistic perspective, in which Crusoe perceives himself as a parental figure directing the innocent and naive "Other," symbolises the colonial endeavour.

Defoe presents a single picture of an individual, therefore reflecting the history of the establishment of the British Empire through Crusoe. Defoe presents Crusoe as a capable, intellectual human who can develop his coloniser identity. He controls the whole island and finally gains the position of a complete ruler by using the ship's store of goods. Crusoe turns the island into a colony through dominance and intelligence, claiming ownership of everything and everyone.

Robinson found a lot of new experiences on this lonely island. He discovered that it was entirely distinct from his European upbringing. The "Desert Island" is currently characterised by the concept of "other. He is solely dependent on his own capacity to survive. European colonisers had a strong sense of ownership toward this desert island. So, after he defeated the indigenous "Friday," he stated that all of the land on this desert island was his private property. To safeguard

his security, he initiated the construction of residences on arid islands, which he referred to as "home." Subsequently, he discovered that the island could cultivate grains and grapes to safeguard its food supply. Also, domesticating animals on the island. This selfsufficient colonial attitude defines his relationship with the Indigenous people since it holds that the European presence is naturally superior and that the native people are primitive and in need of his control.

Crusoe's ability to control the island and his ensuing interactions with the Indigenous population are based on the belief that he has the right to dominate both the land and its populations. Upon encountering the Indigenous inhabitants, whom he describes as "savages," Crusoe immediately asserts his superiority, asserting that his self-sufficient lifestyle validates his authority to establish order on the island. He observes them from a distance with suspicion and fear, proclaiming, "I was exceedingly surprised by the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen on the sand" (Defoe 140). This discovery disrupts Crusoe's isolated sovereignty; however, rather than interpreting the Indigenous presence as an opportunity for mutual understanding or living together, he responds with a sense of threat, indicative of the colonial conviction that non-European peoples are uncivilised and potentially dangerous.

The way Crusoe interacts with Friday, the native guy he saves and then enslaves, shows most clearly how his self-sufficiency affects the Indigenous people. Friday is part of Crusoe's domain, another aspect of the island he needs to bring under control. He teaches Friday to call him "Master," European customs, language, and Christianity, so pushing his self-sufficient way of life on Friday as if it were the only decent and civilised choice. "I began really to love the creature; and on his side, I believe he loved me more than it was possible for him ever to love anything before," Crusoe reflects on his authority over Friday (Defoe 174). This paternalistic

attitude captures the colonial perspective that rationalises the subjection of Indigenous people as a kind deed of civilisation.

As a result, Crusoe's self-sufficiency has a profound and destructive effect on the Indigenous population, as it promotes the colonial ideology that Europeans have the right to claim land and control native peoples. His treatment of the island and its people was similar to what European immigrants did to Indigenous peoples throughout colonial times. They believed they were better than the native people and had a mission to make them more like Europeans.

Chapter 4: Control and Resistance in *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart*

The novella *Heart of Darkness* depicts the colonial experience in Africa. Joseph Conrad's representation of Africa and its people in *Heart of Darkness* received much attention from postcolonial critics. It is frequently criticised because of its negative image of portrayal the Africa and Africans. This portrayal can be considered as a vehicle for the advocacy of the colonialist ideology. While many studies have concentrated on simplistic and negative portrayals, it is important to look at how certain sections of the text also depict African characters as complex and strong. This would contest the dominant colonial perspectives. This chapter aims to explore the intricate ways in which African individuals and the African landscape assert their resistance to total domination, providing a deeper understanding of the novella.

A lot of the critique of *Heart of Darkness* has rightly centred around how Conrad's text perpetuates the divide between "civilised" Europeans and "savage" Africans. Africans come off as mysterious, speechless creatures and are either portrayed as helpless victims of colonial rule or even as icons of the inhospitable jungle which the Europeans wish to conquer. This reinforces a colonialist ideology by upholding notions of European superiority and African inferiority, thereby normalising imperial domination. Chinua Achebe, in his renowned essay “An Image of Africa”, offers a strong critique of Conrad, calling him a "bloody racist" for his dehumanisation of Africans and his neglect of providing them with individuality or voice (Achebe 782). This viewpoint has significantly influenced the critical discourse surrounding the novella, highlighting its function in reinforcing colonial stereotypes.

The depiction of Africans in *Heart of Darkness* significantly reinforces colonialist ideology by representing them as anonymous, voiceless entities, lacking in individuality or

autonomy. An early and notable instance of this is when Marlow comes across the enslaved Africans near the Central Station in the novella. Marlow characterises them as "nothing black shadows of disease and starvation" (Conrad 20). Reducing individuals to abstract shapes, neglecting their individual stories, thoughts, and emotions. This description underscores the notion that Africans are perceived solely as European colonisers, functioning as an extension of the exotic wilderness they occupy. Conrad depicts colonised individuals as voiceless, shadowy figures, reflecting the colonial tendency to erase their identity and agency, thereby constructing a narrative that legitimises their exploitation.

Dehumanisation is at the core of this type of construction, one that Edward Said talks about in Orientalism as the creation of the "Other." This concept refers to a process through which colonised peoples are portrayed as irrational, uncivilised, and inferior, thereby justifying imperial domination. Africans within *Heart of Darkness* are depicted in a manner that perpetuates this "Othering." Their language, when it appears, is unintelligible to the European characters, and they often describe them as part of the environment from the wilderness itself. For example, as Marlow contemplates the Africans he views along the river, he writes, "They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanityliked yours- the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly" (Conrad 39). Here, Marlow's momentary recognition of shared humanity is at once overshadowed by his grotesque horror of their appearance, reifying the distance between European "self" and African "other."

These images serve as indispensable vehicles for the propagation of the colonial ideology by rendering Africans as just symbolic of primitivism and savagery. This, according to Said's theory, is the reduction that enables the West to rationalise the imperialist effort as a benevolent

gesture to spread civilisation in backward lands taken over by barbarism. There are no African voices in the text; it is their bodies, not minds, that are of focus. They come across as some form of hindrance to the self-discovery journey of the Europeans. This fits the imperialist view that colonised people are passive and dependent.

Despite such minimal representations, at some points in *Heart of Darkness*, depth and resilience among the African characters subtly resist the dominant colonial narrative. Here, the representational politics of Kurtz's African mistress are indeed objectified but managed to reveal emotional depth and agency. Thus, she is described as a "savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent black-velvet apparition of a woman" (Conrad 57), which exotifies her through Marlow's colonial gaze. Yet her sorrow at Kurtz's departure shows a personal investment and emotional complication well beyond the stereotype of the silent, submissive native. Thus, standing by the riverbank, "she put out her arms as if after a retreating figure" (Conrad 57), with an almost profound effect showing her sense of loss and attachment. This makes her very different from the constrained and almost apathetic attitude of the fiancée that awaits Kurtz in Europe. Her emotional expression thus is different and possibly more honest about Kurtz's true nature than that of the European woman who stays away and idealises.

This moment shows the conflict found in colonial discussions, as seen through Edward Said’s perspective on postcolonialism. The African woman is often seen as an object, but her emotional strength challenges the colonial story that overlooks the humanity of Africans. Said points out that imperialist texts are not just passive objects; they are influenced by and also influence the historical and social dynamics of imperialism (Said 209). In this situation, the sorrow of the African woman acts as a way to push back against the dehumanisation imposed by colonialism. Her role in the story, seen through Marlow’s perspective, makes the distinction

between the “civilised” European and the “savage” African more complex by showing that Africans can form strong emotional bonds and have their own choices.

A nuanced expression of defiance is evident in the quietude of the Africans throughout the novella. Although often seen as a sign of their dehumanisation, the silence of the African characters may also be interpreted as an act of resistance. Marlow notes that one of the enslaved Africans close to the Central Station offers him a “glance of complete knowledge” (Conrad 20), indicating an awareness and understanding that eludes Marlow, as a European. Said's theory of Orientalism posits that colonised subjects frequently lack a voice in imperialist narratives, yet this does not inherently mean they lack agency. In this context, silence serves as a form of defiance against the language imposed by colonisers, a language that has long been wielded as an instrument of control. The refusal of Africans to engage within the confines of European discourse serves as a powerful declaration of their independence and a dismissal of the colonial impulse to categorise and dominate them.

The representation of the African landscape in *Heart of Darkness* therefore becomes symbolic of the resilience of Africa and her people. The description of the jungle is often thick and vast, impenetrable by the inroads of the European travellers aiming to subjugate her. Often, Marlow describes the wilderness as "overpowering" and "mysterious," observing that it "seemed to look back at [him] with a vengeful aspect" (Conrad 35). This portrayal epitomises the fear that European powers had of the unseen and, simultaneously, discloses the African landscape to be an astonishing force that actively resists the efforts of its colonisation by Europe. The jungle is thus personified through a depiction of an African resistance landscape quite unpenetrated and mysterious. It describes the strength and determination of the people and cultures of Africa and their failings, time and again, of ever being truly conquered or comprehended by colonialists.

Said writes in *Culture and Imperialism* that imperialism was never simply about the issue of the land but equally about the control of ideas and beliefs in all their forms (Said 219). In this process of Europe trying to usurp Africa, both physically and ideologically, the resistance comes not only from the native people themselves but from the very continent. The setting in *Heart of Darkness* shows a form of natural pushback against imperial rule, reflecting Africa's strength in dealing with colonialism. Such environmental resistance, used in concert with the strength exhibited by the African characters, comes to serve as an indicator that African people, culture, and land are entirely overcome by European imperialism.

The cannibals travelling with Marlow are described in a way that meets colonial expectations of them, yet their actions deny these expectations. Their hunger and physical strength are immense, yet they do not attack the Europeans. Marlow is astonished by their "savage courtesy" and bewildered by their self-control: "It was unearthly, and the men were—No, they were not inhuman" (Conrad 39). For Said, this scene epitomises the contradictions within the imperialist discourse, too: Marlow's description displays a colonial urge to classify and dominate while he is obliged to acknowledge that the Africans maintain moral and social codes in complete opposition to the idea of their supposed savagery. Said states that "imperialism. Always worked through a dichotomy of 'us' and 'them'", yet the cannibals' behaviour does not fall prey to such a simple binary. Their restraint is thus a moral resistance, testifying to the Africans not being the "savages" the Europeans imagine but human beings with their values and systems of honour. This compels Marlow and the reader to question assumptions integral to the colonial mentality.

An analysis of the complexities and resilience depicted in *Heart of Darkness* reveals that the representation of Africans and the African landscape is more intricate than what

conventional colonialist interpretations imply. Utilising Said's theoretical framework allows for a deeper understanding of the African characters, who, despite being marginalised and silenced, exhibit agency and resistance in nuanced manners, such as through emotional depth, silent glances, moral restraint, or the persistent influence of the land itself. The elements presented contest the prevailing colonial narrative, offering a more nuanced comprehension of the novella's interaction with imperialism.

In addition, this chapter will focus on the postcolonial study of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity through Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. This novel depicts the hybridity arising from African and European cultures and its effects. Interestingly, European discourse operates through the medium of the binaries to sustain the dichotomies of self/other, and coloniser/colonised. Bhabha, being a post-colonial thinker, shatters the cultures' purity and the supremacy of one over the other to emphasise cultural hybridity and cultural difference. The main discussion in this chapter is how the European missionaries, by imposing their culture, language, and religion over the Africans, tried to marginalise and destroy the indigenous people's traditions. Also, Achebe's writing style in the novel will be discussed.

Achebe's novel presents Igbo society confronted with the forces of colonisation, not just an act of imposing Western culture on Igbo people but a very elaborate process that creates conflict and resistance simultaneously. The Igbo culture is deeply tradition-based, with well-defined social, political, and religious structures that are seriously threatened by the intrusion of Western colonialism. In all such change processes, the protagonist Okonkwo reflects a grim determination to hold on to the Igbo traditions. His rigid adherence to the conventions of masculinity, values, and customs makes him an obstinate representation of resistance. As Achebe says, "Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. He was a man of action, a man of

war" (Achebe 3). The opposition shown by Okonkwo toward the missionaries and colonial authorities was fundamentally a reflection of the clash between the two cultures; he saw the introduction of Christianity and Western governance as an abiding threat to his way of life. This paper argues the concept of "Third Space" given by Homi Bhabha the most insightful framework through which the conflicts can be analysed. Bhabha says, "Colonial interactions do not result in a definitive list of winners or losers but, rather, a "Third Space" where identities and meaning are constantly being bargained for and thus fluid" (Bhabha 55). In *Things Fall Apart*, the transactions between the Igbo and the colonisers were not exactly concerning the erasing of one culture for another but rather forging new tensions and possibilities within this "Third Space." Okonkwo's struggle is therefore a case of trying to hold on to his cultural identity within this transitional space, where undermining his traditional beliefs and power had become so easily achieved by the promising colonial reality.

Necessary for the enhancement of the investigation into the concept of cultural hybridity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a consideration of how Achebe articulates Igbo society and its responses to colonialism in highly variable and complex ways. Indeed, Achebe draws attention not merely to conflict between cultures but also to processes of blending, tension, and adaptation at work within the novel, showing how the phenomenon of cultural hybridity inheres to the core of the colonial experience. By depending on the theory of hybridity by Homi Bhabha, the one pointing out that colonial encounters generate a "Third Space" for the emergence of new meanings and identities (Bhabha 56), such an examination will be made to illustrate exactly how the interaction of Igbo tradition with Western colonial influence in *Things Fall Apart* elicits both resistance and collaboration toward the formation of a hybrid identity.

While the novel *Things Fall Apart* distinctly foregrounds the conflict and resistance that surround the advent of colonial forces, Achebe equally foregrounds their interaction with Igbo culture as promoting the creation of hybrid cultural identities. Not as staunchly opposed to change in whatever form as Okonkwo, for instance, some other characters in the novel reveal varying degrees of openness toward the new cultural influences ushered in by the colonisers. For example, Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, becomes a hybrid as he takes on Christianity, a missionary religion, as a means of finding meaning and fitting into the world in which his father is inflexibly traditionalist. Indeed, as Achebe himself says, "Something seemed to give way inside him, like the snapping of a tightened bow" (Achebe 61). The conversion of Nwoye, in a way, was an outstanding example of how colonised people accept and interiorise colonial influences, creating new hybrid identities that exist in "Third Space".

Bhabha's concept of hybridity questions cultural purity and suggests that the colonial encounter creates a new, hybrid identity rather than one culture replacing another (Bhabha 56). Nwoye's transformation is indicative of the process of hybridity in the way he had to balance the traditional Igbo values instilled in him by his father with the new beliefs brought about by missionaries. While Nwoye's conversion was a mode of resistance to his father's oppressive traditional masculinity, at the same time it was in collaboration with the colonisers. The duality here reflects Bhabha's idea of hybridity as resistance and complicity in which the colonised subject negotiates between cultural systems and finds agency.

Nwoye's character acts out a compelling case of cultural hybridity; his trajectory in the novel signals the construction of a hybrid identity that forms from both Igbo and colonial cultures. Nwoye's disquiet with his father's unyielding dedication to Igbo traditions and the violence in the Okonkwo brand of masculinity finds him recourse in Christianity. His turning to

Christianity is not, however, a naive negation of his native culture but rather an attempt at a balance of the forces in opposition inside him. Achebe writes, "He [Nwoye] felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. The words of the hymn were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry palate of the panting earth" (Achebe 56). Nwoye was more emotionally and spiritually attracted to Christianity, however, because it was an escape from the strong bondage of Igbo tradition, particularly his father's expectations.

Nwoye's transformation also reflects Igbo society, in which there is a generational gap where the young generation is more accepting of the potential of change, while the older generation clings dearly to the old ways through Okonkwo. Achebe portrays the hybrid identity of Nwoye both as a result of and at the same time challenging colonialism. In providing this new belief system, the missionaries create the avenue for hybrid identities among the colonised; the identities, however, do not emanate top-down. Rather, individuals like Nwoye actively create those identities through choices which reflect the resistance and accommodation of changes brought about by colonialism.

While *Things Fall Apart* is a novel about the conflict between Igbo and colonial cultures, it also contains moments of collaboration and coexistence, in which elements from both cultures coexist in the same place. For example, the development of Western education becomes a place in which the most traditional and the most colonial elements merge. Characters such as Obierika, Okonkwo's friend, reveal a more pragmatic perspective toward the colonial presence. Obierika questions the rigid structures of both Igbo tradition and colonialism, he realises that both have flaws. He does not completely reject the new system devised by the colonisers, and he says, "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no

longer act like one" (Achebe 124). Obierika's reflective stance asserts ways in which the colonised can critically consider both their traditions and colonial structures, representing a kind of cultural hybridity where elements coexist in tension from both cultures.

Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space" is helpful again here, as it allows us to see how the two elements at work in the novel- namely, traditional Igbo values and colonial influence come together in new spaces of negotiation. The mission schools, for instance, offer education opportunities that many in the village eagerly embrace, even as they resist other aspects of colonial rule. But this confrontation of cultures does not seriously suggest the effacement of Igbo culture; instead, it changes into something which in itself explains Bhabha's statement that hybrid identities are the product of conflict and collaboration, right between the two histories (Bhabha 60). The hybrid space transports both colonial and traditional elements within itself, which turns into the site of resistance against the acceptance of change.

One of the key elements of cultural hybridity in *Things Fall Apart* is the representation of resistance, best personified in Okonkwo, whose dogged adherence to Igbo tradition articulates the struggle of the colonial encounter. Okonkwo's character is moulded by his fear of coming off as fragile or womanlike, which he traces to his father's inability to live up to Igbo's masculine cultural standards. Achebe writes, "He had no patience with unsuccessful men. He had had no patience with his father"(Achebe 4). Okonkwo's code of masculinity was inextricably linked to his devotion to Igbo custom, and it is through this perspective that he views the coming of the missionaries and colonial administrators.

When Christianity begins to gain momentum in Umuofia, Okonkwo is one of the more vocal critics of the encroaching forces which are destined to destroy the conventional religious, social, and political structures of the Igbo. His hostile reaction to the establishment of a church by the

missionaries in Mbanta typifies the tension between the two cultures. The fact that people like Nwoye and other villagers had become Christians he viewed as a defiling of Igbo values, an undermining of the foundation upon which his community was built. One can almost sense the depth of Okonkwo's exasperation and outrage as Achebe writes through him, "The white man is very clever. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (Achebe 124). Okonkwo's respect for tradition and refuting of colonial influences are fierce resistances to cultural hybridity and reflect the fear of losing one's cultural identity in front of foreign domination.

Ambivalence most often characterises Chinua Achebe's use of language in *Things Fall Apart*, especially the writing of it in English, a language belonging to the colonisers, while at the same time embedding Igbo proverbs, idioms, and oral traditions within the text. Such ambivalence reflects the challenges of postcolonial identity and two-edged pressures African writers experience: the desire to communicate with a wider audience and to preserve the integrity of indigenous cultural expressions. Achebe does not stop at mere submission to the colonial linguistic order, since he fills the language of the coloniser with the spirit of Igbo culture. According to Simon Gikandi, Achebe's mixture of English with Igbo linguistic patterns allows him to depict an African worldview in forms accessible to the larger, international audience within reach (Gikandi 104). In this way, Achebe does not forget to make *Things Fall Apart* not only a critique of colonialism but also a testament to the Igbo cultural traditions that, though separated from the present, stand in an unbroken continuum with it.

On the other hand, Achebe's use of the English tongue is also rendered as "linguistic mimicry," the phrase coined by Homi Bhabha for the ambivalence of colonial discourse in general, where the colonised subject assumes the speech of the coloniser, but changes its

articulation in ways that defy domination (Bhabha 86). Achebe's use of Igbo proverbs within an English narrative is typical of this mimicry way in which the hegemony of the English language can be resisted by demonstrating the weaknesses inherent in any language when it attempts to articulate another culture. For example, the frequent use of proverbs in Achebe's work is indicative of the Igbo oral tradition; thus, "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" (Achebe 7). It points both to the centrality of oral tradition in Igbo society and acts against homogenisation, brought about by colonial language. Thus, Achebe's ambivalence toward the English language was either to use it as a tool of accessibility or as a site of resistance, one of the wider implications entailed by the complexities of postcolonial hybridity in African literature. Moreover, Cultural hybridity in *Things Fall Apart* shows the perennial conflicting nuances between Igbo and colonial cultures. It poses questions regarding conflict, resistance, collaboration, and emergent hybrid identities, revealing a complex web of cultural dynamics in a post-colonial setting. It is brought out through the analysis using Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity that Okonkwo, Nwoye, and Obierika act differently in response to the challenges of colonialism as a function of diverse responses to cultural change. By so doing, a balance is created in which one realises that *Things Fall Apart* is not a tale of pure colonial domination and indigenous resistance but provides an avenue with which to understand the complex manner that which traditional values and colonial elements coexist and interact with each other in the construction of new cultural forms. Chinua Achebe's use of the English language in *Things Fall Apart* is, however, one of nuanced negotiation through cultural heritage, where he handles the coloniser's language and embeds it with the richness of Igbo traditions expressed in proverbs and idiomatic expressions. The ambivalence here in the use of language indicates a duality of tensions that the postcolonial writer always faces, the need to reach an international audience and

the need to preserve indigenous cultural identities. Achebe's approach is not only to denounce colonialism but also to show the resilience of African culture as he transforms English into a site of resistance. Mixing English with Igbo cultural elements, Achebe portrays anxieties of postcolonial identity and the power of language as both an instrument of domination and empowerment.

Chapter 5: The Politics of Post-colonial Identity in Salman Rushdie

Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* represents a significant account of identity, history, and the socio-political context of post-colonial India interwoven with the personal story of Saleem Sinai into the historical web of Independent India. It epitomises the idea that in a newly independent nation, identity is complex and fracturing.

Saleem Sinai was born on the same day India gained independence, i.e., on August 15, 1947. He maintains and establishes contact with a group of people born during the first hour of India's independence.1001 was born to constitute possession of remarkable magical abilities. Nearer to midnight the child was born, and more majestic and astonishing was his power. By the time Saleem had discovered such a fabulous gift of the 581 midnight's children among 1001, they were all alive, and he was endowed with the talent of telepathy to crawl into people's minds and find their innermost thoughts, emotions, and desires. The gift of telepathy allows Saleem to travel into the minds of other Midnight children. They embody the main features of Indian country; diversity and plurality. Each has a different religious and cultural background. Nevertheless, they all share something in common; the supernatural power they have got.

All these children, born at this special birth time, are collectively known as the 'Midnight's Children Conference.' This conference is a creation of Saleem, and it is a place where all the children can come together telepathically. Shiva, who was born at the same time as Saleem, has been gifted war. He makes his proposal to Saleem, saying that they should be the rulers of this group; however, Saleem refuses and instead wants more for his group. The debates here are not frivolous; they involve serious philosophies and goals like capitalism, science, religion, bravery, cowardice, women's rights declaration, hope, and power fantasies. To this effect, the children

represent a whole nation as all these goals and ideologies mirror the aim of a nation. Saleem was exchanged with Shiva, another child born at midnight, indicating the turning plot of Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*. His protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is born full-term at the instant of India's independence, which makes him closely connected with events that turn up in the history of the country. It later emerges that he was swapped at birth with another baby, Shiva at the same moment of birth. The switch is manipulated by a nurse and dramatically alters their fortunes: Saleem, whose biological parents are poor, grows up in a rich family while Shiva, born into privilege, grows up in poverty. This twist underlines themes of identity, fate, and the arbitrariness of social class in post-colonial India, showing how personal and national destinies are intertwined in the novel.

The nature of identity is complex in *Midnight's Children*. Saleem's identity, defined by his unique situation, consequently serves as a metaphor for the larger issues of class and privilege which have confronted India. As this paper has mentioned, he was switched with Shiva, another child born at midnight. Needham illustrates through her paper how irreversibly changed personal identities are while under colonial control. Saleem serves as a symbol of hope and idealism because he firmly believes in the unity of the midnight children. He looks for a link between separate stories and a collective story and calls himself a "memory keeper" of the nation. His ideal of unity therefore has a hopeful future awaiting it for India. On the other hand, Shiva is associated with realism and scepticism. As a result of his experiences of hardship, he creates an "every man for himself" attitude. His experiences brand Saleem's idealism as idealistic, thereby creating conflict between them at various critical junctures, such as during the Midnight Children Conference. He can connect to the other midnight children due to his telepathic abilities. This sense of power is a manifestation of his role as a medium of collective memory and experience,

linking individual identities to the greater story of India. Shiva is characterised by his phenomenal physical strength, particularly in his knees, which gives him remarkable fighting skills. This strength is a manifestation of his violent nature and survivalist tendencies, which contrast strongly with the more cerebral approach that Saleem takes to leadership. The contrast between Saleem and Shiva continues to build throughout the novel. Their different parentage presents many challenges, particularly in instances when Saleem's idealism clashes with Shiva's realism. Their rivalry stands as a very specific manifestation of the general societal challenges presented by post-colonial India. This division can be seen as representing the dislocated nature of the post-colonial identity, something that Anuradha Dingwaney Needham has effortlessly brought to light in her research paper, discussing how individual identities have been drastically rendered complex by colonial histories (Needham 614-616).

The identity crisis of Saleem can be interpreted as a metaphor for the identity crisis of the nation, demonstrating how interconnected the realms of the personal and political can run. Thus, Saleem's body-as-India is suffering from the results of unstable politics, conflicts, and partitions of the nation (Needham 612-614).

Saleem Sinai's identity crisis is pegged to the argument that national identity is unstable and consistently in states of mobility. National identity refers to a collective belonging that individuals in a nation share, rooted in shared values, history, and culture. This sense of belonging often shifts over time since history, social environments, and sociopolitical backgrounds mould or rephrase it in newer terms. Due to the enormous ethnicities, languages, and religions within India, defining a national identity becomes quite complex. Ongoing discussions of what it means to be Indian are a product of the effects of colonialism and the later struggle for independence. Political shifting in terms of the manner of governance can reform

collective identities and community cohesion. Saleem Sinai represents India's fractured national identity; his birth at the moment of independence describes both the hopes and challenges of a newly independent nation. He thus typifies complexity and isolation, symbolising much larger social issues. Saleem was born at the stroke of midnight when India gained independence; he was, therefore, almost a living metaphor for that country. He further exhibits an interrelation of his identity and that of India through the expression, "My destinies are indissolubly linked to those of my country" (Rushdie 3). The identity crisis of Saleem is underlined by the critical moment in Fragmentation when he learns about his being switched at birth: "I was not whom I thought I was" (Rushdie 98). This knowledge had torn him apart, reflected in the ongoing fight of India with its own torn-apart history. Saleem's feelings of alienation throughout his life are presented in Crisis of Belonging: "I am neither here nor there" (Rushdie 215). This indicates how he struggled and the whole of India struggled to attain unity in diversity. The historic setting of Saleem's story interrelates with the main historical occurrences in India; it shows that individual experiences show more generalised national stories. He remarks, "My life is a history of my country" (Rushdie 190), through which he draws the parallel between national and individual experiences. Rushdie defines this concept of national identity as unstable and fluid, like Saleem's own perception of who he is. Saleem is uncertain about his status in the world, which is just like the doubt India has over establishing a coherent identity for itself since the end of colonial rule.

As Vinay Yadav, a researcher, terms it, "Midnight's Children deals with the fracturing of identity" (Yadav 5). Like India, Saleem experiences a diffused identity, his story is full of a maddening sense of confusion and loss, fragmented memories. Yadav insists, "Saleem's story is not a search for his identity; it is a search for collective identity- which happened between the destiny of an individual and the future of the nation in general" (Yadav 4). Rushdie proclaims,

"I am the sum total of all my experiences" (Rushdie 4), in which through Saleem's identity are brought together various stimuli, much like the multifarious national identity of India.

Rushdie uses magical realism in such a way that reflects the literal effect of historical and political events on identity. The telepathic linkage Saleem experiences with other midnight children demonstrates the interconnectedness of all the people of India. However, his powerlessness to control such linkages represents the difficulty in creating a unified national identity out of its various parts. Saleem's telepathy allows him to hear other children born at the same time, therefore a collective mind. Saleem says, "I began to hear voices, I was not alone" (Rushdie 200). This moment shows how his identity is tied with others, representative of a nation within one creation by their collective experiences. "I was drowning in that cacophony of tongues" (Rushdie 306), which accounts for Saleem's state of mind when he cannot assert control over those voices, though interrelated. This disorder reflects the mess that exists within India as it tries to grapple with its post-colonial identity. In the Midnight Children's Conference, Saleem aspires toward cohesion among the children but is met with defiance because the prejudices and worldviews of adults begin to take over their minds. This exposes how external socioeconomic influences hinder the possibility of one united identity among children as India is unable to achieve "unity in diversity". In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie provides one united national identity argument as expressed through the character arc of Saleem. The magical realism in his narrative underlines the connectivity and fragmentation of identities in India, highlighting the problem people and the nation have in forming a single identity.

Saleem Sinai, a protagonist and narrator personifies India in its entirety because his life story is parallel to the history of the nation. His difficulties with memory and selfhood demonstrate the struggles of India to put together its colonial past and post-colonial present.

Next, Shiva, another symbolic "midnight's child," Shiva is a manifestation of the violent, destructive elements that have defined the history of India. He is an icon of the more aggressive and divisive aspects of the nation's post-colonial struggles and contrasts Saleem through his idealism and hope for unity. Alongside these two protagonists, Aadam Aziz, the grandfather of Saleem, embodies the older generation through which India lived its colonial era. His idealism at first which later turns to dissatisfaction points toward the shift from the hope of independence to the facts of the post-colonial rule. Padma, Saleem's friend and servant, personifies true India, the reality and solidity of that country. She often questions his more fanciful narratives, bringing Saleem's life story down to earth and making a foil for his cracked identity. The novel undermines the concept of national identity by showing its inability for stability and consensus. Both Needham and Yadav emphasise Rushdie's scepticism about the coherent, monolithic identity of Indians. Identity, whether personal or national, is fragmentary and hybrid, and is constantly transformed by the process of living Midnight's Children reveals through its many voices, times, and views that he marshals together to be pondered over by the readers themselves regarding their notion of identity.

Rushdie also disputes the role of history. He rejects the notion of history being objective or even defined solely by integrating fantastic elements into historical events. As Rushdie writes of Saleem's grandfather, who encounters a moment in which "three drops of blood plopped out of his left nostril, hardened instantly in the frost," his writing complicates the divisions between reality and myth (Rushdie 3). This magical happening gives the backdrop to highlight the absurdity and intricacy of Indian historical happenings. As Rushdie says, "The past is a story that we tell ourselves" (Rushdie 19). This clarifies that history is not simply a recording of some actual happenings but is vulnerable to many interpretations and narrations, most of the time at

the discretion of individual and political interests. Rushdie condemns how political authorities do all in their power to distort history to serve their purposes. He says, "history was a matter of narratives and the narration of narratives made them true" (Rushdie 350). This indicates the way history's account can be fudged by people in power and the questionability of its truthfulness. The play of realities in the narration of Saleem is indicative of this very nature of Indian history. He had once said, "There were too many histories here, not one"(Rushdie 290). This statement underlines the fact that there can be several truths running parallel with the ideal of one historical truth. It is here that Rushdie has represented history not as a linear story but as an intercourse of stories and experiences at the personal level and the socio-political ambience. It is also here that the incorporation of imagination into historical events enables him to invite readers to reflect on their notions of personal and national identities.

On the other hand, the novel seems to say that the history account is always at the mercy of the narrator who tells it-a perception no different from Saleem's frequently fallacious narration. This perception is further corroborated by the admission made by Saleem about his less-than-perfect memory, "My memory stubbornly refuses to alter the sequence of events" (Rushdie 290). This is a challenge to the memory and thus inherently presents a puzzle on the nature of objective history based on the fact that individual stories may distort it. Rushdie can be made use of as a case to determine how Saleem distorts events to fit into his story. For instance, he acknowledges errors in narration but claims that "in my India, it happened exactly so" (Rushdie 290). The assumption here is a statement of his desire to make history with personal experiences and not to stick to the string of chronological accuracy.

Moreover, in *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie employs a polychromatic array of characters, disjunctive narrative structures, and magical realism as vehicles to discuss the issues

of postcolonial identity. Within such a diverse and historically complex country as India, this novel sets out to probe into the impediments to forging a coherent identity through Saleem's dichotomous sense of personhood and relatedness to turbulent Indian history. It is a novel that remains valid as a commentary on how collective history interrelates with individual lives, an encouragement for every reader to reflect upon one's identity in a world that keeps changing and disregarding their diversity of voice and perspective.

Conclusion

To conclude, *Robinson Crusoe, Heart of Darkness, Things Fall Apart*, and *Midnight's Children* reveal a chronological evolution of colonial and postcolonial issues revolving around the shifting relations between self and other, imperialism, resistance, cultural hybridity, and identity struggle.

In *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe creates a conflict between self and the other through Crusoe's meetings with Xury and Friday. The way Crusoe treats Xury, whom he sells to slavery, and Friday, whom he converts and keeps subordinate, is indicative of the colonial frame of mind wherein the European self always instituted superiority over the racial and cultural other and thus initiated the ideological basis of European imperialism.

Moving on to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the date being 1899 finds one faced with imperialism and resistance. The novella explores the very brutal realities of European imperialism in Africa, where the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is defined by exploitation, dehumanisation, and violence. Though Africans are often stereotyped and demeaned, Conrad's narrative simultaneously critiques the moral corruption of imperialism, suggesting a more complex interaction of domination and resistance.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) extends this critique to the issues of cultural hybridity and ambivalence of colonised societies. Achebe portrayed the confrontation between Igbo and British colonialism and showed how such a clash can be simultaneously filled with conflict and cultural negotiations. The novel shows how traditional values are disrupted by colonialism, but it also portrays the construction of new hybrid identities reflecting the

ambivalence of cultural interaction in the colonised world. It shows up in the hybridity of Achebe's language, expressed in Igbo proverbs in English, part of this hybridity is understood by the ways colonised people bend and resist such an all-dominating culture.

Finally, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* deals with telepathy, identity crisis, and the postcolonial condition. Against the background of India's independence and partition, the novel follows the titular character, Saleem Sinai, who doubles as a metaphor for the nation, his identity intermingled with the country's turbulent history. The telepathic relationship among the "midnight's children" signifies the identity grid of the postcolonial state; the recurring identity crises of Saleem reflect the fragmentation and instability that accompany a struggle facing the postcolonial societies regarding their colonial pasts and emerging futures.

These writings collectively chart the movement from the early position of colonial domination and objectification of the other to the violence of imperialism, complex resistance, and hybridity of the colonised people before tucking into the identity crises of the postcolonial nations. This historical development brings into view how literature has engaged and reflected on the shifting dynamics of empire for a better understanding of the ongoing impacts of colonialism and the search for postcolonial identity.

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