Review

Postcolonial adaptation and appropriation in Chinua Achebe

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Post colonialism is generally taken to be a term of repression and resistance. But post colonialism need not necessarily connote a violent reaction of the dominating and the dominated against each other. In fact more than repression and regression, cultural and political adaptation and appropriation seem to have been at work in this process. Several postcolonial theorists have condoned the view that colonialism and post colonialism are a process of cultural interchange and intermixture. There is a certain amount of glorification and mutual desire involved in this process. The dialectics of desire has been dealt with at length by postcolonial theorists like Fanon who have pinned it onto a sense of shortcoming within the colonized. Several nationalist leaders and thinkers like Mohandas Karamch and Gandhi and Chinua Achebe have proved with their lives the necessity of adaptation before one could develop one's own resistance. Chinua Achebe broadly marked as a resistant writer has however not been unaware of the working of cultural exchange through adaptation which he has subtly indicated in his novels, and this paper attempts to study such an angle of postcolonial theory in Achebe's novels.

Key words: Post colonialism, domination, culture, colonized.

INTRODUCTION

To understand the misuse of the term postcolonialism, one may look at Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth (1961) and Black Skin, White Masks (1952) where he exploded against racial discrimination saying that it was not modernization but colonialism that dislocated and distorted the psyche of the oppressed. Colonialism eroded the very being of the black man, objectified the black man and made him sick. On the other hand Octavio Mannoni in Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization argues that colonization has been possible because of certain people who suffer from a 'dependence complex' and need to be ruled (Loomba, 2005;1977). The term postcolonialism had been maimed. Said says in Orientalism (1978) that 'Rather than the manufactured clash of civilizations, we need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow’ (Antonio, 2004). To take the example of Mohandas Karamch and Gandhi who writes in The Story of My experiments With Truth how he adopted fully Western lifestyle, food habit, clothing, English learning, only to develop resistance against it to the level of becoming the political leader of the Indian National Movement. It seems complete appropriation and adaptation is a necessary conjunction of resistance.
Therefore, orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the "Oriental" world. It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political... (Gandhi, 2012). Said means to say that colonization is a process of understanding geo-political differences and overcome such difference through mutual interchange of culture. Colonization therefore seems to have been made possible not simply by force but by adaptation of the ways and methods of the 'superior' culture by the dominated culture.

Said condones the concept of consent in hegemonisation through the working of coercion in tandem with consent. This is something that the Italian Marxist reformist conjectures upon in his Prison Notebooks on the formation of intellectuals. He says: The relationship between the intellectuals and the world of production is not as direct as it is with the fundamental social groups but is. In varying degrees, "mediated" by the Whole fabric of society and by the complex of superstructures, of which the intellectuals are precisely, the "functionaries". These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the State or 'juridical' government (Gramsci, 1999). Gramsci goes on to say: The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group: this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. I would like to align Gramsci's concept of intellectual domination to the process of colonization where a group of people are allowing control of power through 'consent'. It appears from these contentions that post colonialism is a process of cultural exchange which involves to some extent willingness on the part of the colonized to be colonized. In other words 'consent' is an integral part of domination. As Albert Memmi points out in The Dominated Man that the colonizer and colonized are chained in an implacable condition of dependence. There is a reciprocal 'gazer' and 'gazed' relationship between the two forces. The colonized looks up to the colonizer with as much desire as the latter. Bhaba has talked about 'inbetweenness' or 'interstices' between two communities. It would be appropriate to look at Fanon here.

**Relationship between the colonizer and the colonized**

Frantz Fanon was a Martinique born psychiatrist who tries to delve into the psychological reason behind the process of colonization and decolonization. Fanon himself a victim of discrimination revolts upon the discrepancies of colonization. The colonizer teaches the colonized his own ways of living and thought, introduces such words as 'Brother' 'sister' 'comrade' which in practicality are proved to be false. The colonized intellectual witnesses the destruction of all his ideals, his Western education, his intellectual capacities, the crumbling of his capabilities, non-recognition of his merit simply on the basis of colour. In reply he revolts. This revolt may take the form of national revolt through the process of organization of village assemblies, power of the people's commission, formation of collective interests. But when decolonization occurs it comes forth that the colonizer's imprint has not left the colonized: 'here are the same smart alecks, the sly, shrewd intellectuals whose behavior and ways of thinking, picked up from their rubbing shoulders with the colonialist bourgeoisie, have remained intact.' ...'He turns into a kind of mimic man who nods his assent to every word by the people, transformed by him into an arbiter of truth' (Fanon, 2004). Anger leads to rebellion. But this anger is also an expression of the hidden desire of the colonized to be like and equal to the colonizer. As Bhaba explains in his Foreword to the book that Fanon comments on the exploitation, torture, raids, racism that a colonized has to go through. In the process he develops a 'guilt complex' for not being equal to the dominator and all his struggles, liberation movements are to devastate that 'guilt complex'. The colonized subject is always on his guard: confused by the myriad signs of the colonial world he never knows whether he is out of line. The colonized subject does not accept his guilt, but rather considers it a kind of curse,... deep down the colonized subject knows no authority. He is dominated but not domesticated. He is made to feel inferior, but by no means convinced of his inferiority. He patiently waits for the colonist to let down his guard and then jumps on him. The muscles of the colonized are always tensed... This impulse to take the colonist's place maintains a constant muscular tonus (Fanon p-19-95). 'This is how desire for the colonizer and
to be on equal grounds with the colonizer, is internalized in the colonized.

Colonization in Indian context

This desire of the colonized for the colonizer is quite manifest in the Indian condition. In India elite intellectual class themselves invited western education for themselves. Thomas Babington Macaulay’s *Minutes on Education* in 1835 was expressly meant to create a class of intellectuals, Indian in blood and colour, but Western in thought. A strange instance of adaptation of English culture in India was adopting the meat eating practice. Gandhi narrates what a friend of his had told him in his *Story of My Experiments With Truth* ‘A wave of reform was sweeping over Rajkot at the time when I came across this friend. He informed me that many of our teachers were secretly taking meat and wine. He also named many well-known people of Rajkot as belonging to the same company’ (Gandhi, 2012). Macaulay by the promotion of English learning in India did not mean simply the revival of Arabic and Persian literature but ‘the poetry of Milton, the metaphysics of Locke, the physics of Newton.’ This he says is ‘reviving literature in India’ for the introduction and promotion of the knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories and this cause he considered sufficient for all changes. The fact that the Indian intellectuals took to it, accounts for the dialectics of desire between colonizer and colonized. Macaulay further added that English was the language of the ruling class, the language of commerce throughout the seas and language of two great communities rising one in Africa and one in Australia. Therefore English was to be the language of the native Indians (Sharp, 1965). It is pertinent to note here that control through the means of religion or education seems to have been a policy of the colonizing power to gain a stronghold over the colonized. This in fact has proved to be a far more effective method than use of force.

Bhaba in *Signs Taken for Wonders* writes how Anund Meshe one of the earliest Indian catechists made a journey to Meerut and found a congregation of natives listening to an elderly man. He went up to the elderly man and accosted him and the following conversation passed: The elderly man was reading the Bible to a congregation of Indians and the Bible was written in Hindostani. The man was trying to explain that this was the Book of God and in turn he had become an angel to the congregation. He was trying to teach the congregation that Jesus was the true God. ‘These books,’ said Anund, ‘teach the religion of the European Sahibs. It is THEIR book; and they printed it in our language, for our use’ (Bhaba, 1994).

It shows that the British in India were making inroads not just through trade but through the means of education and religion. In response the Indians were responding to it, learning English, learning literature, reading the Bible in Hindostani. Colonization was thus not just a means of oppressive silencing but gradual yet persuasive approaches made possible by gradual but eager responses on the part of the natives. The African situation was similar. British colonization in Africa was done through an indirect process of political control. Colonel Lugard invented the policy of ‘indirect rule’ by which he invited tribal chiefs to become virtual rulers of their tribes on their behalf. These tribal rulers became ‘puppet chiefs’ in the hands of the British and their duty was to ensure obedience to the British trading companies which held the power of governance. This way it was easier for the ruling company to ensure obedience from tribal Nigerians, for instance, than by direct interaction with the tribals. These tribal chiefs were heavily bribed for being such puppet chiefs and the fact that they accepted such offers shows how Africans allowed themselves to be subjugated. As Said had said that Orientalism was an idea that evolved partly because the Orient allowed itself to be Orientalised. Gramsci’s contention that hegemonisation is possible when coercion works in tandem with consent applies here too.

Faces of post-colonialism in Africa

Ashcroft and Griffiths write in *The Empire Writes Back* that postcolonial texts can be divided into four major models a) national or regional culture b) race based models, such as Black writing models, c) comparative models, d) comprehensive comparative models which account for features as hybridity or syncreticity. Syncretism is a process by which previously distinct linguistic categories merge into a single new form. Here the fourth model is used to illustrate that no postcolonial theory is likely to be appropriate in different cultural circumstances unless there has been a process of ‘appropriation’. Works like Joseph Furfy’s *Such is Life* (1903), Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981), G.V. Desani’s *All About H. Hatterr* (1948) deliberately set out to disrupt European notions of history and the ordering of time. In such novels European history is rewritten in a new background time and space which annihilates the imperial purpose of time and spatiality. The historical difference is annihilated and brought down to a level of oneness (Ashcroft et al., 2002). In Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* for instance, Kim’s mentor Mehbub lays a dress of honour in front of him, ‘There was a gold embroidered Peshawar turban-cap, rising to a cone, and a big turban-cloth ending in a broad fringe of gold. There was a Delhi embroidered waistcoat to slip over a milky white shirt, fastening to the right, ample and flowing…’ (Rudyard, 1993). All this was taking Kim’s delighted breath away. Kim, a representative of colonial superiority, expresses the colonial desire for the ‘other’. Works like Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938) or Reid’s *New Day* (1949) change the perspective of looking at colonial history from the perspective of the colonizer to that of the colonized or
the ‘other’. According to the novelist Wilson Harris culture must be liberated from the dialectics of history and this is possible through a reworking of cultural exchange. Harris argues that although on the surface postcolonial texts may deal with divisions of race and culture, each text contains the seed of ‘community’ that overlaps such divisions and germinates in the mind of the reader by cracking apart the accepted dialectics of history. Much eighteenth century writing in English is also post colonial says Ashcroft, the colonial metropoles being Greece and Rome. These writings were resistant in the political sense and they employed two tactics, appropriation and abrogation. They underline Ashcroft and Griffith’s fourth model of synchronicity to show that colonialism is not a single way process but a process of understanding and acceptance. One may be reminded of Annie Besant or Bethune in India who understood the Indian problems and worked accordingly in consonance with Indian benefactors like Raja Rammohun Roy.

In this context if we look at African literature we find the growth of a secondary culture under the nurturance of a mother culture. Wole Soyinka made this point in his analysis of Negritude as a condition that has laid its cornerstone on a European intellectual tradition, and however bravely it tried to reverse the European context it was a foundling deserving to be drawn into, even considered as a case for European adoption. Post colonial relationship is a transitional relationship. The post colonial writer interprets. The role of the interpreter has been aptly dealt with in Wole Soyinka’s novel Interpreters or Randolph Stow’s Visitants. Through the method of interpretation the writer shows adaptations of the culture he is interpreting. This could be the colonizing mother culture. In Minutes of Glory Ngugi Wa Thiong introduces the character of Wanjiru, a young woman that wants to forget the Story of her country and to escape from the African soil. She wants to adapt the identity of an European. Wanjiru changes her African name choosing to be baptized Beatrice; the fragmentation of Wanjiru/Beatrice and the loss of her cultural identity is recognizable in her eternal seeking for the European centre or sign. She was like a wounded bird in flight wobbling from place to place so that she would variously be found in various places of the world. A similar search for identity is seen in Naipaul’s A House For Mr. Biswas (1961). In all these novels we notice the black having lost his own identity tries to find a replacement by adapting white culture. In Nadine Gordimer’s World of Strangers (1958) we come across the word ‘Afrikaner’ that is someone whose parents are English but who is brought up in Africa. Here the British has adopted the colonized fashion and way of speech. In The World of Strangers Toby Hood, a young Englishman shuns the politics and the causes his liberal parents passionately support. Living in Johannesburg as a representative of his family’s publishing company, Toby moves easily, carelessly between the complacent wealthy white suburbs and the seething vibrantly alive black townships. His friends include a wide variety of people, from mining directors to black journalists and musicians, and Toby’s colonial style weekends are often interspersed with clandestine evenings spent in black shanty towns. This is indeed an instance of cultural intermingling or intermixture which is a part of the colonial process. On his way to Africa in the ship Toby comes across several books on South Africa titled ‘The People of South Africa’, ‘The Problems of South Africa’, ‘Report on South Africa’, ‘Heart of Africa’ (Nadine, 2002). These books are symbolic of the oncoming intimacy of Tony with the world of strangers. In Gordimer’s My Son’s Story Sonny the schoolteacher in Johannesberg belonging to a family of repute is caught off guard by his son with a white woman Hannah Plowman, an illicit relationship again symbolic of intermixture of opposing cultures and desire of the black for the white. The fact that she is a ‘blonde’ accounts for the factor of ‘desire’ of the inferior for the superior the former having been trained to consider themselves as inferior. ‘Blonde’ and ‘white’ are elements of desire in the black world and even a Western educated teacher who is a black gives in to this desire. Sonny’s struggle however was to be free of colonial education system but he had to adapt that system before he could seek freedom from it. “Sonny and his wife did not covet ‘Granada’ or ‘Versailles’; with an understanding of Shakespeare there comes a release from the gullibility that makes you prey to the great shopkeeper who runs the world, and would sell you cheap to illusion (False values-but that was what he was to call them only later.) Yet the couple was not set apart in any outward way from the crowd of their kind who came into the town every Saturday to buy from the white people. With their children by the hand, they passed the town’s two cinemas without particular awareness that they had never entered, could not enter”. Following colonial norms they would drop the waste paper into the municipal trash baskets, unconscious that they had never entered, could not enter”. They could not sit at all the tables of a restaurant, lavatory or cloakroom. This consciousness that they are different comes much later only after unconsciously adapting British colonial ways (Nadine, 1992).

CHINUA ACHEBE’S VIEW OF POST COLONIALISM IN HIS NOVELS

If one looks at Chinua Achebe in this context one would come across a resistant writer who in an essay like ‘An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness’ that it was quite simply the desire or the need in Western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe. Achebe denounced Conrad’s novel Heart of Darkness as a thoroughgoing racist novel which had provided a dehumanized face of Africa. Chinua Achebe for one was deeply aware of the loss of African specially Nigerian independence and the process by which the British took
hold of the native government. Colonel Lugard adopted the policy of appointing the tribal leaders as puppet chiefs who would ensure obedience from the tribals on behalf of the British. This way it was easier for the British to rule indirectly than try to enforce direct obeisance. Achebe deals with this system of governance in Arrow of God.

In Things Fall Apart (1958) Achebe talks about the strong man of the clan OKonkwo. OKonkwo was a man known for his strength, hard work, industry and manliness. OKonkwo was one man who detested inefficacy in men which he noticed in his own father and son and for which he was ashamed. ‘Fortunately, among these people a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father. OKonkwo was clearly cut out for great things. He was still young but he had won fame as the greatest wrestler in the nine villages. He was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and had just married his third wife’ (p-6). However, OKonkwo loses his position of importance when he executes his own adopted son Ikemefuna, just to prove his manliness. Those are the beginning of hard days for OKonkwo and later he accidentally kills one of his clansmen during the funeral of an important elderly man Ezeudu. He has to flee with his entire family to his motherland MBanta away from his fatherland Umuofia.

Taking advantage of the absence of the leader the British gradually infiltrate into Umuofia. Achebe has exhibited this process with great depth. From Chapter-15 onwards the first white man starts appearing on the scene. OKonkwo’s friend Obierika narrates to OKonkwo how a white man appeared on horseback in the marketplace and how he was killed because it was predicted that the white man ‘would break their clan and spread destruction among them’ (p-101). Few days later a group of white man arrived and wreaked havoc in the market with their shooting. This was generally the white man’s method of taking revenge. This was the strong method by which the white men made their presence felt in Nigeria. Two years after OKonkwo’s exile 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’ (p-105). This is the point from which the process of adaptation begins. The natives who became Christians were generally the weaker members of the society, men of no consequence, the ‘efulefu’. The chief priestess of Agbala, Chielo called the converts the excrements of the clan. But the fact remains that it was such members who helped in the oncoming of Christianity in Nigeria. The most significant person to become a Christian however was OKonkwo’s own son Nwoye. The white man began to spread the message that the white man was also their brother. They were all Sons of God. He told them about this new God, the Creator of all the world. He also told them that they were worshipping false Gods. Those who did not worship the true God were evil and heathen. ‘We have been sent by this great God to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die’ (p-106). The Igbo men were excited. The missionaries burst into songs which had the power of plucking at silent and dusty chords in the heart of an Ibo man. Nwoye specially found a sense of relief in the hymns. The Ibo men were gradually converted into Christianity. This is how the process of adaptation started working in Nigerian society which gradually allowed control to slip over to the British. Next the British wanted a piece of land for themselves. They were given a portion of the Evil Forest which was ‘forbidden land’ for the Umuofians. In that land they built a Church and got their first three converts. ‘At last the day came by which all missionaries should have died. But they were still alive, building a new red earth and thatch house for their teacher Mr. Kiaga. That week they won a handful more converts’ (p-111). The process of colonization thus worked through conversion and when OKonkwo came back he was furious to find that his people had accepted the new religion and handing over power to the Christians. ‘The clan had undergone such profound change during exile that it was barely recognizable. The new religion and government and the trading stores were very much in the people’s eyes and minds’ (p-133). OKonkwo in his impetuousness killed a white man and knowing no tribesman would save him he killed himself. British colonization thus slowly crept into Nigeria, Achebe’s own country through a process of mutual ‘consent’.

If one looks at Colonel Lugard’s indirect system of governance one may notice that such a system of government involved mutual adaptation. The British adopted the rule of tribal leaders for their own benefit while the tribals adopted the governance of British in the temptation of becoming a powerful king and receiving benefits from the British government. Thus it was a process of mutual adaptation which however ultimately led Nigeria to lose her independence. Deeply concerned about such methods and discussed its ill effect in Arrow of God. In this novel Ezeulu is offered to be a ‘puppet-chief’ which he refuses to become. Arrow of God is a novel where Achebe projects the causes of British colonialism as not only a process of mutual adaptation but as one caused by the inefficacy, disunity and disorder within his own people, that is the Igbo race. On refusing to become a ‘puppet chief’ Ezeulu is arrested. None of his countrymen endeavour to rescue him. Upon being released, Ezeulu disgusted at the inefficacy of his own people refuses to take the sacred yam which causes famine in his country and brings ill fortune. As a result the natives gradually turn away from their spiritual leader towards the Christian missionaries who welcome them with open arms. Colonial subjugation of the Nigerians by the British was thus to a large extent due to the internal dissension within the Ibo race (Achebe, 1960).

No Longer At Ease is a novel of hybridity. Obi Okonkwo
caught between two cultures, his native African and his
western educated training is confused to choose between
the two. Obi trained by western ideals of honesty and
hard work after his training in England comes back to
Nigeria to find that the people of Umuofia are corrupt and
dishonest. Obi went to England to be trained as a civil
servant and he held great hope and promise for the
Umuofians. Obi spent four years in England but all along
he felt nostalgia for Nigeria specially Lagos. ‘Lagos was
always associated with electric lights and motor cars in
Obi’s mind’ (p-12). When In United Kingdom he wrote
poetry on Nigeria with Lagos in mind:

‘How sweet it is to lie beneath a tree
At eventime and share the ecstasy
Of jocund birds and flimsy butterflies;…. ’ (Achebe,
1960, p-14)

At this time four years later he finds rotting dogs in the
storm and he smells its putrid smell with clenched teeth.
At England he converses with his fellow Nigerians in his
native language. He feels proud to do so. ‘Four years in
England had filled Obi with a longing to be back in
Umuofia. This feeling was sometimes so strong that he
found himself feeling ashamed of studying English for his
degree. He spoke Ibo whenever he had the least
opportunity of doing so. Nothing gave him greater
pleasure than to find another Ibo speaking student in a
London bus’ (P-45). As a civil servant Obi knew that
many of these secretaries were planted to spy on
Africans. ‘ One of their tactics was to pretend to be very
friendly and broadminded. One had to watch what one
said’ (p-77). In his office as a civil servant Obi noticed the
habit in the Umuofians of taking bribes. He himself
abstained from the practice as far as practicable but
finally gave in to it after his mother’s death. This was the
time when he was arrested and the novel begins with the
judge saying ‘I cannot comprehend how a young man of
your education and brilliant promise could have done this’
(p-2). As far as the Umuofians are concerned as Mr
Green Obi superior comments ‘They are all corrupt’ (p-3).
Obi is thus caught in duality of cultures and finds it
difficult to maintain his idealism amidst the rampant
corruption. Thus No Longer At Ease is a novel of hybrid
cultures in which Obi finds himself.

Achebe’s novels prove through the instance of his own
race, the Igbo race that Nigeria adopted many conditions
that the British imposed upon them, somewhat willingly,
condoning Gramsci’s notion of ‘consent’ and adapted
many practices of the colonial masters including religious
conversion and allowed the British to gradually establish
their political stronghold upon Africa.

Adaptation of colonialism by the black: Cultural
interchange and intermixture

In Black Skin White Masks Fanon gives a psychological
explanation of the desire of the black for the white. He
says, ‘As I begin to recognize that the Negro is the
symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I
recognise that I am a Negro. There are two ways out of
this conflict. Either I ask others to pay no attention to my
skin, or else I want them to be aware of it. I try then to
find value for what is bad—since I have unthinkingly
conceded that the black man is the colour of evil. In order
to terminate this neurotic situation, in which I am
compelled to choose an unhealthy, conflictual solution,
fed on fantasies, hostile, inhuman in short, I have only
one solution: to rise above this absurd drama that others
have stayed around me, to reject the two terms that are
equally unacceptable…. ’ (Fanon, 1967). Thus the black
man hating his own position begins to desire the
superiority of the white and thereby adapt white culture.

Achebe’s arguments in An Image of Africa are in the
same vein as Fanon’s. Achebe says Conrad’s “Heart of
Darkness projects the image of Africa as "the other
world,” the antithesis of Europe and therefore of
civilization, a place where ‘man's vaunted intelligence
and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality’
(Achebe, 1977). The book opens on the River Thames,
tranquil, resting, peacefully at the decline of day after
ages of good service done to the race that peoples its
banks. But the actual story will take place on the River
Congo, the very antithesis of the Thames. The River
Congo is quite decidedly not a River Emeritus. It has
rendered no service and enjoys no old-age pension. We
are told that going up that river was like traveling back to
the earliest beginnings of the world. Achebe protests in
this essay against the dehumanized portrayal of Africa in
Conrad’s Heart of Darkness. But in the same breath
Achebe says in his essay Education of a British Protected
Child (2009) that Nigeria was in need of leadership and
for this Nigeria had to adapt British ways to rise from her
own ashes.

All these psychological agonies account for the
element of desire in the black man’s world and hence the
need for adaptation the Achebe portrays in his novels
along with his protest. Dr. Mehta says in Gandhi’s My
Experiments With Truth ‘We come to England not so
much for the purpose of studies as for gaining experience
of English life and customs,’ Gandhi describes ‘The
clothes after the Bombay cut that I was wearing were, I
thought unsuitable for English society and I got new ones
at the Army and Navy stores. I also went in for a chimney
pot hat costing nineteen shillings … I wasted ten pounds
on an evening suit made in Bond Street the centre of
fashionable life in London’ (Achebe, 1977). All these are
instances of adaptation.

Gandhian resistance to colonialism was possible only
after this extent of adaptation and somewhat similar is the
protest of Achebe who shows adaptation as a process
before voicing resistance. Achebe’s novels are broadly
resistant but Achebe must have felt the necessity of
adaptation in the process of colonialism which he subtly
brings out as he unravels his novels. Postcolonialism should not be simply considered as a violent term of repression and resistance. This study has attempted to prove the presence of cultural interchange and intermixture, the use of adaptation and acceptance as necessary adjuncts in the process of post colonialism.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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