CHAPTER THREE

COLONIAL INFLUENCE ON ETHNIC CULTURES

“I don’t know where I belong”

(Laurence 350)

In the preceding chapter an attempt was made to emphasize the significance of the retrieval of the past in positioning the ethnic cultures of Africa and Canada in the novels of Achebe and Wiebe in the postcolonial politics, so as to underscore their relevance and importance. Though the roots of the respective cultures, as has been evidenced in the novels of the two writers chosen for the investigation, are firm, it has been exposed to severe attacks from colonial cultures. A common feature of the postcolonial situation is ambivalence – ambivalence in the present and towards the future too. Ambivalence is considered as a state of “in-betweeness” or what Homi Bhabha terms as the “third space” or “in-between space” in “Signs Taken For Wonders”. Postcolonial hybrid identity is a state in which the hybridized neither belongs to the world of the colonized nor of the colonial. The present chapter investigates this ambivalence, in the context of the novels of Achebe and Wiebe,
foregrounding the belief that hybridity and the resultant ambivalence are essential part of the transmutation of the cultures that still has an independent identity.

Hybridity, as a term has undergone various changes in the last ten years. Originally, the term was related to the biological meaning of selective breeding of plants to produce new varieties. Robert Young, in his book Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race, enunciates that a hybrid is technically a cross between two different species. The term ‘hybridization’ carries two meanings. First, it refers to the botanical idea of inter-species grafting. Second, it regards different ‘races’ as different ‘species’, for which the theory of Darwinism was the base (6-7). It is with the adoption of the second definition that all other human races were considered ‘different’ and inferior to the English breed, and it is this second grade treatment given to the non white races, which is contested by the postcolonial writers. With the expansion of the postcolonial dialogue, the term hybridity attains philosophical and political dimensions. Its importance as a strategy for the project of decolonization is on the increase and the present chapter investigates the same in the novels of Achebe and Wiebe.

Aijaz Ahmad in his essay “The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality” conceives hybridity in two essential forms:
The idea of hybridity - which presents itself as a critique of essentialism, partakes of a carnivalesque collapse and play of identities, and comes under a great many names - takes essentially two forms: cultural hybridity and what one might call philosophical and even political hybridity. (286)

These two forms of hybridity, namely cultural hybridity, and philosophical and political hybridity are essential areas of investigation in postcolonial studies. No doubt, the concept of hybridity is as old as the humanity. But with colonization, it has attained tremendous political significance. Colonization essentially affected the ideological and knowledge systems, political systems, social institutions, private and public ways of behaving and literary and aesthetic sensibilities of the native communities. Cultural mixing became an inevitable byproduct of colonial expansion, leading to cross-cultural dialogues and political inquiries.

“Hybrid moment” arises in literature to deconstruct the colonial cultural discourses and authority, as explained by Benita Parry in “Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse”. To quote Parry would only be apt in the context:

In a ‘hybrid moment’ what the native rewrites is not a copy of the colonialist original, but a qualitatively different thing-
in-itself, where misreadings and incongruities expose the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text and deny it an authorizing presence. Thus a textual insurrection against the discourse of cultural authority is located in the natives’ interrogation of the English book within the terms of their own system of cultural meaning. (42)

Postcolonial literary societies interrogate the colonial cultural authority and politicize hybridity in their process of decolonization. Hybridity is a key term in contemporary criticism. It primarily implies the activity of “making one of two distinct things” (Young 26). Ella Shohat in her essay “Notes on the Post-Colonial” opines that hybridity is a “catch-all term”. She hastens to add that it occurs through the forms of “forced assimilation, internalized self-rejection, political cooptation, social conformism, cultural mimicry and creative transcendence” (331) and it is difficult to discriminate between these diverse modalities of hybridity. It takes multiple synonymous figures. Grossberg in his influential essay on “Identity and Cultural Studies” defines hybridity as the state of “in-betweenness”. He considers the terms ‘creolisation’, ‘mestizaje’, ‘in-betweenness’, ‘diaspora’ and ‘liminality’ as synonyms to hybridity. It involves the mobility and crossover of ideas, and identities that are constantly being challenged and undermined.
Young conceptualizes hybridization as the “forcing of a single identity into two or more parts, a severing of a single object into two, turning sameness into difference” (26). Hybridity makes difference into sameness and sameness into difference or in other words “changes as it repeats and repeats as it changes” (27). This concept becomes significant as the postcolonial writers aim at attaining political acceptance by stressing their “difference”. Difference in identity is sought in times of threatening homogeneity. Young explains his stand, and the same is quoted for reference:

Fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and disruption, of conflict and change. Despite these differences, the fundamental model has not altered: fixity implies disparateness; multiplicity must be set against at least a notional singularity to have any meaning. In each case identity is self-consciously articulated through setting one term against the other; what has happened is that the hierarchy has now been reversed. (4)

In the postcolonial scene the search and purpose of identity is to reverse the hierarchy of the dominant cultural forces. Hybridity becomes a political decolonization of such hierarchical representations.
Shohat writes that the postcolonial situations call for the subversion of ‘central’ and ‘peripheral’ cultures. Through the process of hybridity, the dominant mode is destabilized. Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo fall in line with Shohat in their essay “Performing Hybridity in Postcolonial Monodrama”. They write that, “Hybridity has been used as a political strategy in various forms and contexts to deliberately circulate the historically marginalized knowledge and practices as a means of destabilizing the power of the dominant culture” (7).

Bhabha has tried to disclose the contradictions inherent in colonial discourse in order to highlight the colonizer’s ‘ambivalence’ in respect to his position toward the colonized Other. Bhabha’s analysis, which is largely based on the Lacanian conceptualization of mimicry as camouflage focuses on colonial ambivalence. He sees the colonizer as a snake in the grass who, speaks in "a tongue that is forked," and produces a mimetic representation that “emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (“Of Mimicry and Man” 361). Further, he asserts that it becomes a metonymy of colonial desire and end up as inappropriate colonial subjects. Such subjects produce a partial vision of the colonizer’s presence, and thus de-stabilize the colonial subjectivity, unsettle its authoritative centrality, and corrupt its discursive purity. Actually, he adds, mimicry repeats rather than re-
presents (363), and in that very act of repetition, originality is lost, and centrality is de-centred. What remains, according to Bhabha, is the trace, the impure, the artificial, or the second-hand. Thus hybridity, Bhabha argues, subverts the narratives of colonial power and dominant cultures. The series of inclusions and exclusions on which a dominant culture is premised are deconstructed by the very entry of the formerly-excluded subjects into the mainstream discourse. The dominant culture is contaminated by the linguistic and racial differences of the native self. Hybridity can thus be seen, in Bhabha's interpretation, as a counter-narrative, a critique of the colonialist narrative and its exclusion of other narratives.

This chapter attempts to evaluate hybridity with regards to the changes induced by colonialism, in the socio-political and cultural features, and also the individuals in relation to it, in the novels of Achebe and Wiebe.

Canadian identity is essentially hybridized when compared to that of the Nigerian. The Canadian cultural mixture comprises the cultures of the white colonizers from various parts of the European continent as well as the migrants and exiles from different parts of the globe, along with different indigenous cultures of the Indians and the Metis. Canada’s
cultural integration has paradoxically paved the way for heterogeneity and cultural interchange.

Multiculturalism is a proclaimed political policy in Canada, which encourages the concept of ‘cultural mosaic’. It celebrates and protects the interest of the multiple groups in Canada. J.M. Bridgeman in an article “Canadian History and Culture” projects Canada’s multiplicity thus:

To serve our country’s outdated ties, to create our own symbolic Head of State would eliminate the false impression that Canadian culture is ideally British, that is this day and age, immigrants from certain parts of Europe or the commonwealth have some sort of preference or superior status. We are in law now a multi-cultural nation. Creating an indigenous Head of State would celebrate both our origins and multi-cultural nature. (par.2)

Canada adopted the policy of multiculturalism in 1971 and passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988, which undertakes to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of the Canadians. It also seeks to protect the interest of the immigrants in Canada. Multicultural policies ensure a separatist identity to all cultures that exist in Canada, and it simultaneously projects a national cultural identity. To Maggie Ann Bowers the term “multiculturalism” carries the following sense: “[. . .]
each cultural group, while contributing to society, remains separate and distinct” (52).

The liberal philosophy of multiculturalism acknowledges the equality of all cultures. Multiculturalism encourages both unity and diversity. The Canadian cultural identity calls for both “collective” and “single” identification factors. Canadian cultural identity politics accelerates a notable double identity. Though, Canada officially declares itself a multicultural nation, it is very obvious in the political context of Canada that the English and the French are the dominant cultural forces. The Canadian cultural identity was conceived with these dominant forces as the centres, and hence, the native cultures received setbacks. With postcolonial politics of difference, the indigenous and other migrant groups of Canada have come forth to subvert the hegemony of these two cultures. The migrants seek to assert their nationality as Canadians by relating their past in the country of their origin, and their present experiences in Canada, but simultaneously maintaining their separatist identity in the multicultural mosaic. Thus Canadian identity is enigmatic, i.e. either or both, “same” and “different”. Canadian cultural identity is unique as well as problematic, since it lacks a unifying national culture. The process of adopting multicultural identity helps to resolve the ambiguities raised by different cultures.
The postcolonial culture in the independent nations is essentially hybridized. The postcolonial Nigeria has transformed its socio-cultural life under the influence of its colonizer. The political structures, educational systems, laws of punishment, religious ideologies and cultural habits of the whites are infiltrated into the indigenous structures. In Nigeria, the traditional Igbo life is under jeopardy; especially in big cities like Lagos. The younger generation has fallen into the clutches of ‘modernity’ and cultural aping of the western world, as evident in the novels of Achebe.

Achebe captures the socio-cultural transformation of the Igbo Nigerian society in *Things Fall Apart*. In the second part of the novel, there are visible signs of colonial influence. The Christian missionaries are the foregrounded colonial agents. Obieke, one of the elders in the clan, clearly visualizes the colonial intrusion and painfully observes that the colonials have “won our brother, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together” (176). They are inescapable prisoners of white influence and an elderly man foresees the forthcoming destruction in *Arrow of God*: “Then I knew there was no escape. As daylight chases away darkness so will the white man drive away all our customs. I know that as I say it now it passes by your ears,
but it will happen. The white man has power [. . .]" (85). The elderly man has already predicted the impending doom of the native power structures.

Achebe’s description of the colonial encounter and the continuing influence of the white man’s power in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria is reflected in Arrow of God, No Longer at Ease and A Man of the People illustrating that the “world is no longer what it was” (Arrow of God 53).

Political systems are easily vulnerable to forced assimilation, as inferred from Things Fall Apart. In the traditional Igbo society punishments and judgments are administered with the consent of the ancestral spirits or Masked elders. Most of the disputes are settled in a cordial and peaceful manner. With the colonial advent the Igbo system of peace settlement looses its importance giving way to the colonial system. The District Commissioner appointed by the white government interferes in the village affairs. Gradually he succeeds in establishing the white codes of law and punishment. In this context, it is important to note his announcement: “We have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice just as it is done in my own country under a great queen” (194). The alien laws replace the native Igbo law. This political enforcement is of little use to the Igbo people who follow a very simple way of life. Arrow of God discloses the white government’s intervention
in the land dispute between Umuaro and Okperi to root its power over the natives. The enforced political structures completely take over the indigenous system as seen in *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*.

The postcolonial African State has lost its ties with the communal past in certain fronts. Achebe highlights this ambivalence of the postcolonial state in his post-independence novels. N. Rama Devi makes a pertinent observation on the Nigerian socio-political transition:

[In] the post-colonial situation, there seems to be a radical transformation in the entire scenario, a tilt in the balance. With the new politicians taking over political power, we find corruption and self-interest creeping in[. . .]. People have allowed the politics to be westernized only to the extent of learning to serve the self first. In fact, the concept of ‘people’ or society as an organic community has receded, with the individual becoming an abstract entity [. . .]. (“Pre- and Post-Colonial Society in Achebe’s Novels” 41)

Odili Samalu’s father points out that in post-independent period village communities have become obsolete: In the affairs of the nation there was no Owner, the laws of the villages became powerless” (Achebe *A Man of the People* 149).

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Chief Nanga and President Sam in *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* respectively are corrupt, power-crazy and self-centred politicians. Chief Nanga is the Minister in the democratic rule and President Sam is the military head of the State of Kangan. *A Man of the People* deals with one such politician who seeks to serve the self first. Chief Nanga is a “born politician”, an embodiment of greed and selfishness. Max, the political opponent of Chief Nanga, calls him a “corrupt, empty headed, illiterate Capitalist” (75). Achebe portrays Chief Nanga as extremely self-centred and gullible:

Chief Nanga was a born politician; he could get away with almost anything he said or did. And as long as men are swayed by their hearts and stomachs and not their heads the Chief Nangas of this world will continue to get away with anything. He had that rare gift of making people feel – even while he was saying harsh things to them – that there was not a drop of ill will in his entire frame. (66)

Politics is the platform Odili and Chief Nanga choose to avenge one another. Odili is a young educated man who seeks the help of Chief Nanga to acquire a postgraduate scholarship abroad. He offers to get a job for Odili:
By the way, Odili, I think you are wasting your talent here. I want you to come to the capital and take up a strategic post in the civil service. We shouldn’t leave everything to the highland tribes. My secretary is from there; our people must press for their fair share of the national cake. (12)

Chief Nanga takes Odili to the capital with the promise of a foreign degree and a fair share in the “national cake”. Odili accepts Chief Nanga’s invitation and stays in his house in the capital. Odili is raged by Chief Nanga’s rape of a young girl, whom Odili has regarded as his preserve, and leaves his house. His wounded pride of manhood finds vent in Max’s patronage, who encourages him to join politics. Odili hopes to take revenge through seducing Nanga’s intended wife, and by contesting his seat.

Like the previous novel, Anthills of the Savannah also examines power and its misuse by the political leaders. Military rule promises peace and discipline to the nation. But the promise is left unrealized. President Sam develops an “unquenchable thirst” for power. He feels highly insecure and turns down his friends and sacks the dissidents paving way for dictatorship. The politicians as portrayed in the Anthills of the Savannah are no longer interested in the needs of their countrymen. They try to protect their own power and position at any cost. There is a
wide gap created between the leader and his people. Western political ideologies infiltrate into Nigerian politics with the advent of the colonials, which results in an unstable political condition. *A Man of the People* ends with the political dissonance between the civilians and the government. The civilian rule is overthrown and the military coup is introduced to restore peace among the citizens. The uprising begins overnight:

> Overnight everyone began to shake their heads at the excesses of the last regime, at its graft, oppression and corrupt government: newspapers, the radio, the hitherto silent intellectuals and civil servants – everybody said what a terrible lot; and it became public opinion the next morning.

(149)

In *A Man of the People*, as said above, the civilian government fails and the sole responsibility rests on the shoulders of the military ruler to safeguard the peace and security of its people. However, in the next novel *Anthills of the Savannah* it is shown that military rule too is a failure.

One of the consequences of colonialism is the creation of political mimics like Chief Nanga and President Sam. In an interview to Feroza Jussawalla, Achebe voices his views about such political leaders:
The leader is not a leader of his people. He’s something totally outlandish in terms of the interests, the concerns, the comfort of his people. And one can see how that came about as a consequence of the colonial system, the creation of a ruler who had no responsibility to his people. The colonialist wants somebody who can run this foreign, this alien institution, help him run it for the advantage of the colonial power. So I think that derailment, that separation of the leader from those he leads, is perhaps the greatest evil. (172)

The characters reflect the society in which they live. The characters Chief Nanga and President Sam in A Man of the People and Anthills of the Savannah respectively offer parallel study to the socio-political changes in post-colonial Nigeria.

Chief Nanga feigns a double role as both a master and slave. Politicians are there to serve the public needs, says Nanga: “Don’t you know that Minister means servant? Busy or no Busy he must see his master” (A Man of the People 9). In reality people have little share in his fortune, “the share in the national cake” as his wife reverses his role: “When those standing have not got their share you are talking about those kneeling” (88). Chief Nanga’s role is reverted to that of a master.
Chief Nanga is drawn towards power and wealth. But paradoxically, he attacks those Africans who have had western education. He poses himself as “authentic” with regards to African culture, but imitates the European life. His house is sophisticated as it is filled with “western things”. Achebe writes that he lives in the “cosy comfort of a princely seven bathroom mansion with its seven gleaming, silent action, water-closets!”(41). He prefers to speak English and his children are brought up in the western culture. Ironically enough, Chief Nanga insists that the children should visit their village at least once a year. His wife also feels that “without it[. . .] they would become English people”(39). She complains about her children who speak only English at home. She tells Odili: “Don’t you see they hardly speak our language? Ask them something in it and they reply in English. The little one, Micah called my mother ‘a dirty, bush woman’”(39). Chief Nanga encourages his children to speak the colonizer’s language and it alienates them from their culture.

Chief Nanga is the Minister of Culture but when he presides over the function in honour of the literary writers, he does not know even the names of the renowned writers in Nigeria; and Odili ridicules Nanga thus: “I had expected that in a country where writers were so few they would all be known personally to the Minister of Culture. But it was clear Chief Nanga hadn’t even heard the man’s name before”(63). Odili
satirizes the ignorance of Nanga that exposes his indifference to the native literature and culture. Odili says, “Just think of such a culture less man going abroad and calling himself Minister of Culture. Ridiculous. This is why the outside world laughs at us”(23). Chief Nanga poses himself to be the patron of African culture by his way of dressing, but he ironically imitates the European culture. Charles Ponnuthurai Sarvan in his contrastive study of Achebe’s A Man of the People and Narayan’s The Guide calls Chief Nanga a “fraud not only in political and commercial terms but also culturally”(56). Chief Nanga does not represent the African culture but ‘repeats’ everything that is colonial.

In President Sam, Achebe creates a colonial politician-playactor. Ikem Osodi, the editor of the The Gazette mocks at President Sam as a mere mimic of the west. According to Ikem, he is basically an actor and half of the things we are inclined to hold against him are no more than scenes from his repertory to which he may have no sense of moral commitment whatsoever. He was fascinated by the customs of the English, specially their well-to-do-classes and enjoyed playing at their foibles. (Anthills of the Savannah 45)
In President Sam’s “imitation of the English”, there is sign of “intellectual playfulness” (46). Ironically, Ikem finds him preparing to play the Head of State and observes,

For the first time the possibilities for his drama in the role of an African Head of the State and deciding that he must withdraw into seclusion to prepare his own face and perfect his art. (48)

In a highly critical situation, Achebe presents a picture of President Sam as that of a colonial subject. He becomes insensitive to the drought problem in Abazon and the revolution that it set off in Kangan. Instead of meeting the people, who have assembled before his office to explain their state of poverty, he pretends to be engaged in conversation with foreign politicians. He tells his secretary: “Tell them, if you like, that I am on the telephone with the President of United States of America or the Queen of England. Peasants are impressed by that kind of thing, you know” (16). Sam knows that the peasants are awed by the western world. Sam exploits the native people’s naivety. Instead of facing the drought problem in Kangan, President Sam tries to evade the problem and escape by posing as if he is busy with international matters.

The post-independence Nigerian politics is thoroughly corrupted. Next to politics, western education has a larger role to play in Nigerian
society. Education alienates individuals from their community. Umuofia people raise funds through their Progressive Union and sponsor students to get university education abroad. In No Longer at Ease, Obi returns from London with high views on western education and its service to the new independent nation. He holds that education should facilitate one to do service to one’s country. Obi insists that Nigeria’s future lies in the hands of the educated men who intend to take up high positions to serve the cause of the nation. Formal education provides luxury for the educated mass and is a passport to become a “reformed recognizable Other” (Bhabha “Of Mimicry and Man” 361).

A university degree was the philosopher’s stone. It transmuted a third-class clerk on one hundred and fifty a year into a senior civil servant on five hundred and seventy, with car and luxuriously furnished quarters at nominal rent. And the disparity in salary and amenities did not tell even half the story. To occupy a ‘European post’ was second only to actually being a European. It raised a man from the masses to the elite [...]. (105)

Girls in Nigeria aim for higher education. Clara, Obi’s girlfriend is educated in England. This marks a tremendous change from the
traditional past when women’s education was unthinkable. After the colonial advent, formal education is accessible to both men and women.

The situation in Canada is not very different from that of Nigeria. Education plays a major part in transforming the life of the native Indians. The Ojibwa Indians are introduced to the civilization of the modern world through formal western education. Implementation of formal western education and the use of learning the English language eventually resulted in the total rejection of the native language. In First and Vital Candle the young boys refuse to learn conjuring and magic from their elders. Their inclination is to learn mathematics, and to read and talk English. Kekekose’s younger son, Alex, receives his education in a boarding school run by the missionaries. His cousin, Violet, hopes to learn the foreign language and plans to “comeback and teach” (353) her people. English language becomes very important to the younger generation. Sally, who teaches the Indians, discourages the use of the Ojibwa language by her students. She insists that they should get accustomed to the English language: “Sally couldn’t let them speak Ojibwa not only because it was government regulation but because otherwise they would never learn to speak proper English [ . . . ]" (220). In this context, teaching English language to the natives is a political contrivance.
In *No Longer at Ease* Achebe captures the dilemma of an educated individual who is caught in-between two cultures – the native and the colonial. Achebe views this predicament of being in-between as one of the evils of western culture that has been transmitted through western formal education.

Obi is the central character in *No Longer at Ease*, and he is representative of the colonial hybrid. He receives his higher education in England with the aid of the Umuofia Progressive Union. In his early years in London, Obi finds it difficult to adapt himself to the English culture, but soon he assimilates the British ways. Achebe succinctly portrays Obi’s predicament in England:

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. But when he had to speak in English with a Nigerian student from another tribe he lowered his voice. It was humiliating to have to speak to one’s countryman in a
foreign language, especially in the presence of the proud owners of that language. (Achebe No Longer at Ease 57)

However, after his return to Umuofia, English was no longer a “humiliation” but a privilege. In his address to the Umuofia Union he makes compromise with the English language: “[Obi’s] “speech which started off one hundred percent Igbo was now fifty fifty” (93). Cheikh Ante Diop concedes that “flight from one’s own language is the quickest shortcut to cultural alienation” (“Conversations with Cheikh Ante Diop” 409), and it is true in Obi’s case.

In Nigeria, Obi receives appointment as Scholarship Secretary in the Federal Ministry. His high ideals and devotion to serve his country finds expression in his address to the Umuofia public: “Education for service, not for white-collar jobs and comfortable salaries. With our great country on the threshold of independence, we need men who are prepared to serve her well and truly” (37). Initially, Obi is disgusted with the Nigerian people who encouraged corruption. On his way to Umuofia, Obi encounters corrupted police officers who exploit the ignorant drivers. Obi accepts the colonial officer’s view upon such Nigerians who comments: “They are all corrupt” (3). Obi reflects:

“What an Augean stable!” he muttered to himself. “Where does one begin? With the masses? Educate the masses?” He
shook his head. Not a chance there. It would take centuries.

A handful of man at the top. Or even one man with vision – an enlightened dictator. [ . . . ] But what kind of democracy can exist side by side with so much corruption and ignorance? (51)

Towards the end of the novel he is convicted for accepting bribe. With a civil post in Nigerian government, Obi could have enjoyed a comfortable life. His extravagance lands him in economic insufficiency. He is bankrupt and is unable to clear his debt to Umuofia Progressive Union.

Philip Rogers in his essay, “No Longer at Ease: Chinua Achebe’s ‘Heart of Whiteness’”, studies Obi’s transition in the following words: “Obi had theorized that the elimination of bribery and corruption from Nigeria’s civil life would necessarily follow when young, Europeanized university men (Obi, that is) took over the senior posts in the civil service” (55). But ironically, “Obi discovers [that] he cannot refuse the bribe, he tries to hide the pile of money – and the failure of his theory – from himself by covering it with newspaper” (55). Obi fails in his ideals.

Obi not only fails in his duty as a responsible citizen and a civil servant, but he also fails in his personal life. Obi loves Clara, a “girl of doubtful ancestry”. She belongs to the Osu clan, which is on a lower rank
than his community. He has sexual relationship with Clara, with the promise of a possible marriage. Obi wavers between his family and Clara. Obi appears rationalistic in his argument for the Osus

Our fathers in their darkness and ignorance called an innocent man osu, a thing given to idols, and thereafter he became an outcast, and his children, and his children’s children forever. But have we not seen the light of the Gospel? (151)

However, he has no strong and deep commitment towards Clara to fight against the irrational caste system which he knows is ridiculous. As a consequence, Clara is forced to abort her baby. His dilemma continues to haunt him, as he wavers between his feelings for Clara and the irrational caste system.

Obi is unable to connect himself to any of his friends or family members. There is no warmth and closeness in his relationship even with his father. Joseph is his only friend but their relationship has no long lasting ties or bondage. The only person with whom Obi has a strong attachment is his mother. However, later this too turns out to be superficial. When she is dead, he never has the intention to attend her funeral. Obi oscillates between his decisions: “Obi wondered whether he had done the right thing in not setting out for Umuofia yesterday. But

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what could have been the point in going?” (184). To him, “It was more useful to send all the money he could for the funeral instead of wasting it on petrol to get home” (184). He never realizes that his presence and tribute is much more important than money.

Achebe reflects Obi’s ambivalence throughout the novel which is left unresolved, yet symbolizes the predicament of any African educated elite. Obi is truly a modern African who “struggles to come to terms with his complex heritage – traditional, modern, indigenous, and imported” (Kolawole 123). Obi’s incapacity to have any sort of emotional relationship with Clara, his family and the Umuofians leads him astray. He is a typical colonial hybrid. He neither fits into the traditional nor into the western world.

Like Obi, Odili too is in a state of in-betweeness. Odili neither understands the village nor his father. He is in a sense alienated and it is reflected in his act of disrespect towards his villages and his father. He disrespects the village’s fear of malevolent magic, a belief that is essential part of Igbo belief. Odili questions the wisdom of the village with his so-called university education. When Odili’s father takes sides with Chief Nanga and asks Odili to withdraw from the election, Odili threatens to hit his father thus:
I struggled to refuse to open my mouth, over when my father foolishly shouted at me and drew here as though to strike me. Fortunately for both of us he didn’t do it; for me it would have spelled immediate disaster; a man who hit his father couldn’t have much of a hearing thereafter in my constituency. (Achebe A Man of the People 117)

Odili is a manifestation of the same materialism that he professes to hate. Odili in the process of avenging Chief Nanga, turns out to be a replica of Chief Nanga. Odili’ chooses to contest the election, not that he wanted to serve his people but he wanted to defeat Chief Nanga for robbing Edna, whom he had intended to marry.

Wiebe’s Alex emerges as a colonial subject as he tries to imbibe the English manners. His education in the mission school helps him to speak “swifts in well-practices scummy fluency” (First and Vital Candle 227). He does not care about native taboos and develops a liking towards Violet, his cousin, which he knows is considered as incest in his band, but he “he’s thinking like a white man, or at least trying” (211). Violet rejects his love, and the narrative emerges unmasking Alex’s duality: “the only thing worse than being refused by a woman was to have that refusal known; despite all of Alex’s white-man pretensions that certainly remained Indian in him” (227-280).
The ambivalence generated in Obi, Odili and Alex can be equated to what Bhabha categorises as a hybrid: “[. . .] the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated something different – a mutation, a hybrid” (“Signs Taken from Wonders” 153).

Achebe constructs a foil of Obi in the character of Beatrice in the Anthills of the Savannah. Through Beatrice, Achebe resolves the ambiguity manifested in Obi. She is self-made, independent, intelligent and beautiful. Beatrice works as a senior Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and the only person in the service with a first class honours in English. She has graduated from Queen Mary College, University of London. His Excellency Sam, praises Beatrice: “Our Beatrice beat the English to their game. We’re proud of her”, and calls her “one of the most brilliant daughters of this country”(68).

Beatrice happened to grow up in a western atmosphere with a modern perception. In the words of the narrator, BEATRICE NWANYIBUIFE did not know these traditions and legends of her people because they played but little part in her upbringing. She was born as we have seen into a world apart; was baptized and sent to schools which made much about the English and the Jews and the Hindu and practically
everybody else but hardly put in a word for her forebears and the divinities with whom they have evolved. (96)

Beatrice is representative of the people of her age. The young and educated, hardly associated themselves with their past culture and tradition. Western education has removed them from their world and rooted them in an alien culture of different values. She reflects the feminist ideals of the west. She voices her feminist views as follows:

I was determined from the very beginning to put my career first and, if need be, last. That every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinist bullshit I had completely rejected before I knew there was anything like women's Lib. You often hear our people say: But that's something you picked up in England. Absolute rubbish! There was enough male chauvinism in my father's house to last me seven reincarnations! (80-81)

Career stands first for Beatrice. Though she loves Chris, she resisted any sort of “flinging into his arms for the asking”(81). Beatrice refuses to fit into the traditional boundaries of the women folk. She feels that tradition has been indifferent to the whole lot of women. She speaks for women:
But the way I see it is that giving women today the same role which traditional society gave them of intervening only when everything else has failed is not enough, you know, like the women in the Sembene film who pick up the spears abandoned by their defeated menfolk. It is not enough that women should be the court of last resort because the last resort is a damn sight too far and too late! (84)

Beatrice speaks on behalf of women. Traditional society of Nigeria restricted women within the four walls and denied any social responsibilities to them. Their service was limited to their husbands and children. Women in modern Nigeria receive scholarships to pursue higher education abroad. Education has liberated them from the economic and social inadequacies. They work as nurses, barristers, secretaries and politicians as represented by Clara, Eunice, Beatrice and Mrs. Okilo respectively.

Beatrice, though ignorant of her traditional past, later understands its value and tries to imbibe it. Beatrice takes Emmanuel – the student leader, Braimoh – the taxi driver, and Adamma – the nurse into her house. She supports them economically and morally. This reveals her social commitment. She also plays a vital role in the political upheaval, which is led by Ikem and Chris. She constantly evaluates their political
ideologies and views, and assists them voluntarily in their political moves. Her social and political commitment reveals her attachment to her community. Uma Narayanan, in her feminist study entitled *Dislocating Cultures*, writes that the contemporary society expects its women to play the traditional role to re-establish their cultural values:

> The sense of cultural anxiety created by rapid social change often results in responses that focus on changes in gender roles as the paradigmatic symptom of cultural threat and loss. This in turn results in calls for a return to and restoration of our ‘traditional way of life’, a return that is to be accomplished by returning women to their ‘traditional place’. (20)

Beatrice subverts the traditional role of men in the naming ceremony. She insists that Elewa should initiate the naming ritual that was usually performed by men in the past, but with a difference. The gender role is reversed as Elewa takes her husband’s role and names her child. Elewa’s child is given a boy’s name Amaechina, “may-the path-never-close” suggesting that women equals men in postcolonial Nigeria. In this episode it could be seen that tradition is followed with difference. It could be also sensed that Beatrice assigns a new role for the womenfolk in the postcolonial Nigeria and in this context it is fitting to call her as
both “English and African” (Ikegami 74). Beatrice crosses the boundaries of gender difference that is articulated in the traditional Igbo community. Achebe constructs Beatrice’s identity across traditional cultural norms and classifications.

Culture carries forward what a society considers right or good and valuable, but when it is exposed to new cultural ideologies, new meanings of self-differentiation and forging of new identities, and continuity emerge. The Igbo traditional religion also has its transformations. Christianity became the dominant religious force during colonial regime. The Christian missionaries succeeded in converting the outcastes and other dispossessed groups into Christians. The church is built in the Evil Forest challenging the belief that Evil Forest will destroy the white man’s religion. Ironically, the church flourished with more members who were converted from the outcastes and the dispossessed. Thus the missionaries gradually paved the way for the administrators. P. Varalakshmi makes a pertinent observation on the matter that the “whole history of the colonialists’ exploitation of Africa proves that the missionaries were mere harbingers of the colonial administration in Africa”(60).

The colonial did not directly enforce their religion. Achebe’s and Wiebe’s novels exemplify that white religion is adopted by the natives as
a survival strategy. For instance, the novel *Arrow of God* ends with signs of assimilation in the native religious order. The New Yam festival, which is celebrated as a thanks-giving to the earth goddess Ani, undergoes a transformation. Yam is no more dedicated to the native gods but to Christ. The ritual of thanks-giving continues but to an alien god. When a new religious institution is established in Umuaro: “In his extremity many a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity. Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son” (230).

Regarding the Igbo religious transformation H.H Anniah Gowda remarks that, “If the traditional religions had not been so callous, Christianity would not have made a great appeal. All those who were regarded as outcaste embraced the new religion” (44). The people of Umuaro adapt Christianity, a new religion for their continuous survival.

The Indians too, like the Umuaro clan, show an inclination towards the white religion as it offers continuity for survival. The Indian Kekekose, the only surviving conjurer in the whole of the Indian Crane group resists conversion for a long while; but finally yields. His three sons are already baptized into the new religion. As a shaman of the Crane group, he attends to the needs of his people who trusted him. However, when his wife is paralyzed, the spirits are helpless. The missionaries help
her to get medication in a hospital. Kekekose understands the white man’s power and decides to become a Christian himself. He explains the reasons for changing his faith to a new religion:

My people, for as long as most of you can remember, even as long as I can remember, almost, I have been a man who could speak with the spirits. When I was young I had a great dream, and I have had many since. I had them when I was weak from fasting, almost dead, and the spirits that came to me took pity on me and said they would help me. And in the conjuring tent they did. You have seen what they did. What was done in the conjuring tent was done by the spirits, not me. And what was done under the beat of the drum was done by them also, not me. I called to them and sometimes they came. And always we, all of us, like our fathers for generations before us, dreamed for pimadaziwin, the Good Life, here on earth, and always we hoped, expected that the spirits would give it to us.

But you have seen, and I also, how evil and sickness and violence spread among us. And though the spirits – what they are, no man can say; I only know that sometimes we knew they were there – though the spirits sometimes helped,
sometimes they also destroyed. And, most often, they were not to be found at all. And against the greatest evil of all to come to us here, they were no help. (Wiebe First and Vital Candle 322-23)

Kekekose visualizes the practical advantage in choosing the white man’s religion. His speech illustrates his internal motive in accepting the new religion through the missionary. He says,

\[
\text{... we must find a path, perhaps a new one, I told him, and he could make the way clear by breaking the evil that held us, by forcing the things that had to be forced, because he had the power, for government listened to him [the missionary]. (325)}
\]

Kekekose comprehends that the missionaries act to the advantage of the government. Kekekose also finds a new path by accepting the white man’s religion. The people convert in order to protect themselves: “they must act differently to keep out of jail, or get part of the logging paper” (325). Kekekose adopts Christianity for the survival of his Ojibwa group. Kekekose knows that the missionaries had the links with the government and the “government itself gave them its power” (323). The missionaries showed them “how to build better houses, grow gardens, cut logs and saw them” (323) and preached the “good news”
among the Indians. Earlier, Kekekose had “hated the churchmen who manipulated the naïve minds of the Eskimos into super-religious fanaticism [. . .]” (325). But he too changes his religious identity later.

If Kekelose converts to Christianity for materialistic ends, Maskepetoon adopts Christianity for spiritual reasons. The character of Maskepetoon offers a fine study of the cross-cultural assimilation that happened in Canada with the advent of the white missionaries. Maskepetoon is a Cree warrior whose life is shaped by Christian faith. He is feared by his native enemies, the Sioux and the Blackfeet. He once offered to guide Governor Simpson of the Hudson Bay Company through the mountains of the Western Ocean. For the first time in his life, he comes across a white man, who introduced him to Pacifism. His meeting with Methodist Rundle enlightens him on Christ’s teachings. Maskepetoon known for his victories in the bloody wars, transforms himself into a peace loving Christian. He maintains peace with his enemies and stops going for war. Professor Dyck a researcher of Maskepetoon’s life history explains his spiritual transformation thus:

Maskepetoon has been turned even further, twisted shall we say three hundred and sixty degrees so that his body is again facing in the traditional direction, but there is something very different about him also. He is still as it were looking
back, over his shoulder. Looking at that point of Christian
world view directly opposite to his originally accepted
Indian one, that world view toward which he was himself
once completely, bodily turned. His body now faces Indian,
his head faces Christian. (Wiebe My Lovely Enemy 157)

Maskepetoon is by birth an Indian and by choice a Christian. This
duality is symbolic of the meeting of two cultures and values. M.F.Salat
discerns this symbolic duality in Maskepetoon’s image in his essay “Rudy
Wiebe and the Indian Past”. He observes that Maskepetoon “combines
within him the dualities of Christian and Indian beliefs [which] provides
him with a vision” (100). Salat crystallizes a third image in which the
counters fuse together. He writes: “There is no either/or; there is both”
(101). Wiebe appropriates Maskepetoon’s fused identity or double
identity with that of the Canadian identity.

The fusion of contraries in cultures is extended in Wiebe’s A
Discovery of Strangers. The love between the Indian girl Greenstockings
and the young voyager Robert Hood emerges as a symbolic merging of
two cultures and races. Hood teaches the Indian girl his English manners
and habits, and she teaches him her native way of life. Wiebe captures the
intermixing of the two opposite cultures in the dialogue of
Greenstockings and Hood in the following words:
Hood tries to feed Greenstockings with the silver spoon he has carried inside his clothes from England [. . .].

‘Just purse your lips a little,’ he says as her face emerges again, ‘it’s hot, an ‘oo’ like this, then it won’t clink against your beautiful . . . teeth.’ (168)

Further, Hood trying to feed Greenstockings is symbolic of his teaching her the English culture. Wiebe constructs a language of paradox to mark the mixing of entirely two different cultures and people. The “English silver” and “savage concoction” metaphorically denotes their radical cultural difference.

He [Hood] is almost laughing at ‘beautiful’, which he has never said aloud to a woman before, and at his shaky hand, at the metallic weight with which he is offering her own food to her wet open mouth. Even stranger – the gelatinous food scooped steaming from a cooked or smoked caribou stomach; as if English silver could ever place that savage concoction acceptably on white linen, lift it to perfect teeth [. . .]. (168-69)

Racial hybridization was an inevitable process in the history of colonialism and it is obvious in the Canadian context. In A Discovery of Strangers, Wiebe deals with the problem of racial mixing. Greenstockings
bears a child for Hood, an incident that marks the culmination of the encounter between the primitive and the modern / the native and the western. The hybrid child belongs to both the worlds creating a new racial breed. From the white point of view the child is an ‘in-between’. According to Young, the mixing of two different races produces only a degenerated breed. Hence, miscegenation induced cultural degeneration among races. To quote Young’s words,

Culture itself becomes the product of a sexual difference with the heterosexual mixture of races [...] produced by the same process of sexual relationship between the male and female races that produce the degenerative force of endlessly miscegenated offspring – the same mélange of races, [...].

(Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race 112)

The racial mixing is miscegenation from the white point of view. However, for the colonized this racial mixing itself is a means of recentring their position in the cultural politics. Wiebe makes a hint at the end of the novel of the possible production of a new racial hybrid in the birth of a hybrid child subverting the myth of the English as being the only untainted breed. “Cross-culturality [is] the potential termination point of an apparently endless human history of conquest and annihilation justified by the myth of group purity” (The Empire Writes Back 36).
Louis Riel is a racial hybrid, part French and part Cree. Wiebe presents Riel’s duality in his manner of attire. Riel is dressed formally, “frock coat and all”, yet shod in moccasins, symbolizing his connections with the indigenous. His face “stone white, betrayed nothing of his ancestry” (The Scorched-Wood People 10), but his moccasins does. The subject, therefore in Bhabha’s terms “almost but not white” (“Of Mimicry and Man” 361). Wiebe’s narrative turns into a mockery thus:

[Riel] never knew the right connections, the correct behaviour as even the most ignorant white did instinctively; he always had to laboriously puzzle things out, hold tight an uncommitted face while juggling off-balance in a world that would never be his [. . . ]. (80)

Riel tries to imitate and connect himself with the French manners but fails terribly.

Riel also mimes the authoritarian symbol of library and religion. When he spawns page after page in a spectrum of official and quasi-official modes, he does not neglect the muse-inspired discourse of the private emotions. Letters, memoranda, prayers and manifestos flow in aspirations towards the library. His relationship with the priest is obvious when he takes his counsel during the Battle of Batoche, and when he rebels and begins to write over the frozen Catholic texts, which serves as
models. In Riel, Wiebe offers a fine example of a cultural in-between and a personification of the Metis community.

Rituals in a society maintain the ongoing sentiments of a people that are essential for social solidarity. In traditional Igbo culture, ‘kola’ was the respect that a petitioner showed to greatness but in the new order ‘kola’ becomes cash paid for a service – respect is equated with money. In the Igbo traditional society what had been honourable behavior becomes a symbol of bribery in the colonial world. In the two traditional novels, Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God, kola has a special utility. In Things Fall Apart Okonkwo present a pot of palm wine and a cock to Nwakibie and seeks a loan of four hundred seed yams. Nwakibie offers kola to his guests and Okonkwo says, “I have brought you this little kola” (23). The kola symbolizes the close bond between the host and the guest and their mutual benevolence. But this traditional significance of kola is totally lost in No Longer at Ease, when Obi accepts the bribe, the man places the currencies on the table saying, “This is just small kola [. . .] We shall make good friends”(160).

Traditional religious rituals of the Igbos are absorbed into the “new” religion. For instance, the kola nut ritual is conducted in the urban atmosphere, but “not sacrificed to idols” (Achebe No Longer at Ease 59)
as in the traditional Igbo culture; instead it is offered to Jesus. The Igbo Christians pray in a manner described below:

He took the saucer, drew up his knees together to form a table, and placed the saucer there. He raised his two hands, palms facing upwards, and said: ‘Bless this kola nut so that when we eat it it will be good in our body in the name of Jesu Kristi. As it was in the beginning it will be at the end. Amen.’ (60)

The kola nut ritual is fused into a white religion. In the past, the Igbos dedicated kola nut only to idols as a symbol of goodwill and health.

Igbo marriages take place in the western fashion. Achebe portrays an Igbo Christian wedding in No Longer at Ease, wherein the elaborate marriage rituals of the pre-colonial past are missing:

When the missionaries brought their own kind of marriage, they also brought the wedding cake. But it was soon adapted to suit the people’s sense of drama. The bride and groom were given a knife each. The master of ceremonies counted ‘One, two, three, go!’ And the first to cut through the cake was the senior partner. (188-89)

Though it is a Christian wedding, the senior partner is given the honour to initiate the wedding ceremony, as is the custom of the Igbo.
Mask played a vital role in the pre-colonial Igbo culture. It was ordained with multiple roles as arbitrator and judge. It has lost its relevance in the new society. In Christmas celebrations, masked dancers present themselves comically to a song. Achebe presents the degeneration of a tribal art when the rope restraining the Mask comes undone during one such presentation:

One might have expected this sudden access to freedom to be followed by a wild rampage and the loss of life and property. But the Mask tamely put his matchet down, helped his disciples retie the rope, picked up his weapon again and resumed his dance. (*A Man of the People* 98)

The food habits have changed with the introduction of western consumerism. It is important to note that in *No Longer at Ease* the traditional Igbo food becomes a rare food. Even on significant occasions, these traditional Igbo food is not served and “no decent restaurant served Nigerian food”(37). Cold beer and champagne are served instead of palm-wine. In *A Man of the People* Odili is requested to include in his “peace offering a bottle of schnapps, two bottles of White Horse and a bottle of Martell” (31). Powdered yam and bitter leaf soup have become rare delicacies. Achebe, in the novels *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, emphasizes that any festival or celebration was accompanied by a
thanks-giving ritual to the ancestors; and bitter leaf soup and yams were a prominent delicacy in a feast. Nevertheless, after the western influence the traditional food habit has transformed considerably to accommodate the new items of food as evident from the following description of a wedding feast:

Two young women then brought in a simmering pot of stew hot from the fire. Kegs of palm wine followed, and a pile of plates and spoons which the church stocked for the use of its members at marriages, births, deaths, and other occasions [. . .]” (Achebe No Longer at Ease 11).

In colonial Nigeria, cultural mimicry is rampant in the higher class. Dancing is considered as a necessary social accomplishment. Western music is also given equal importance. In No Longer at Ease Achebe records the cultural change that takes place in the dancing rituals of colonial Nigeria. Dance and music were essential characteristics of a traditional Igbo community. A dancing ritual marked every festival or occasion. In modern Nigeria, dances are conducted in hotels and parties to entertain the elite. “High-life”, “waltz”, and “blues” are the common dances. Most of the dances are “high-life”. Occasionally a “waltz or a blues was played” (128) in parties. The young people drink and smoke too. Joseph, Obi’s friend while attending a party given by Obi in a three-
star hotel, tells him that “Dancing is very important nowadays. No girl will look at you if you can’t dance” (16) and one of the girls, as he observes, is in “a tight-fitted red and yellow dress. Her lips and long finger-nails were a brilliant red, and her eyebrows were fine black lines. She looked not unlike those wooden masks made in Ikot Ekpene” (17). The women appear “heavily painted and perfumed” in modern Nigeria. The pre-colonial women’s fresh and natural physical beauty is contrasted with attempts to distort the African personality with artificial signifiers of beauty. Cultural aping becomes a prominent feature in the Nigerian upper class society.

Achebe shows that the schoolchildren of Anata mimic the western cultural modes. In A Man of the People, the city values have invaded the villages and Odili observes the school children wearing “Italian-type shoes and tight trousers and the girls wore lipstick and hair stretched with hot iron; I even saw one in slacks, which I thought was very bold indeed” (96-97).

Celebration of May Day is a political aping of the colonials and is uncharacteristic of the native Nigerian politics. Achebe narrates the May Day celebration in postcolonial Nigeria in his novel Anthills of the Savannah:
your fat civil servants and urban employees of public corporations march on May Day wearing ridiculously undersize T-shirts and school-boy caps [. . .], and spouting clichés from other people’s histories and struggles, hardly do they realize that in the real context of Africa today they are not the party of the oppressed but of the oppressor. (146)

As observed in the quotation above, May Day celebration is the symbol of colonialism and in no way represents Nigerian culture.

The foregoing discussion accounts that Igbo colonial and postcolonial societies have gone too far from the pre-colonial cultures. Similarly, in the Canadian context colonialism has transformed each Indian group in the guise of modernization. Modernization to Gareth Griffiths is “synonymous with the promotion of cultural values of the colonizer, and the development of so-called civilization” (“The Post-colonial Project: Critical Approaches and Problems” 166). The Cree Indians were great warriors and were noted for their courage and strength. Many a battle had been fought and won by the Cree Indians under the leadership of Big Bear, the Chief of the Cree people. They occupied themselves with hunting. The white traders mixed with them and provided allowances, rations, medical facilities, ammunitions and liquor in exchange to fur. This is a part of the ‘modernizing’ activity. The whites
imposed their system of laws and punishment upon its colonies. A court was constructed by the white men to judge the cases regarding the Indians. Before the coming of the white man’s law courts, each community Chief judged the cases and crimes were minimal. The Ojibwa Indians had only heads or elders of their groups to control them. They had no political leader or chief in the modern sense. But with the intrusion of the colonizers, they were forced to elect a political leader among themselves: “Ojibwa people never have chief until the government said it, with the treaty, and they voted one”(202).

Tetsot’ine Indians were introduced to tea, needle and fire, which is a move towards modernization. The whites provide them with guns to hunt the animals, though they are “never as accurate as a quick arrow” (23). The Expedition members feel that they should “teach them [the Tetsot’ines] the absolute, practical necessity of money”, and Doctor Richardson insists that “they must want more than they need. That is civilization”(59). The Indians are ignorant of any economic structures whereas the colonial survival was based on economic exploitation of its colonies.

In the multicultural society of Canada, each immigrant community has brought with it, its own cultural practices. Each of these maintains its religious traditions, economic patterns, close-knit family structures and
ethical standards. They rarely mix with other settlers or natives fearing homogenization. For instance, the religious groups such as the Mennonites keep themselves aloof from the Canadian Indian and the Metis societies. However, it must be noted that though the Mennonites prefer to retain their cultural identity by upholding their religious convictions, they welcome technological and scientific changes.

In the novel *Peace Shall Destroy Many* there are a few significant changes in the Mennonite community. First the scientific and technological advancement of the colonizing countries find an intrusion into the same. To mention some of them, the Wapity community head, Block gets a tractor for his farm. Radio finds a place in the Mennonite household, which exposes them to the outside world and helps them to update news and know of the weather and the market prices. Second, consequent to the cultural intrusion of the west certain changes takes place in the socio-cultural contexts of the native community. To point out a few, there are evidences of mixed marriages between the Metis and the Mennonites, though very rare. Though there is strict adherence to the traditional German language, the younger generation speaks English among themselves. The young educated speak English exclusively among themselves without the knowledge of the elders.
The Wapity Mennonite community protects itself from outside influences. However, the community shows a few signs of assimilation in certain aspects. In *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, Joseph, who has served in the army, appreciates that his community is different from other religious fanatic groups, and that, it has accepted certain technological changes in the society. He tells his Wapity people:

You live so differently here from most Mennonites. If you could get out to see for yourself. At least you use modern machinery and wear ordinary clothes: you haven’t fallen into the pitfalls of some Mennonites who almost equate Christianity with a certain cut and colour of clothes, prayer caps and beards […] (69)

The Mennonites in the south of the Wapity settlement, unlike the Wapity Mennonites, reject the “physical separation idea” and mix with the other communities, still observing the common faith of the pacifists. For instance, like the Mennonites of Wapity, they also favour the use of German language in Church. But, as Block argues, there is an urge that “outward matters should change” (202). Block observes that “Each generation changes only slightly” (201); and as they change, the Mennonite community incorporates the social, political, economical and cultural structures of the British. In *The Blue Mountains of China*, as
Frieda Friesen points out, the Mennonites change with time. They involve themselves in business and even in politics, whereas the old generations strictly restrained themselves from these activities. In My Lovely Enemy, Wiebe indicates that in contemporary Canada modernization and education influence the Mennonite life. Unfortunately, these influences have a negative facet also. Professor James Dyck has a good profession, a loving family consisting of his wife and daughter. His extramarital relationship with Gillian is an act of adultery causing erosion in the strict religious values of the Mennonite community.

Language mixing is a notable form of cultural hybridization. Pidgin and creolized languages preserve the history of the cultural contact. Generally, Pidgin is a simple mixture of two or more languages. The structure of pidgin, as Young defines it, is “the vocabulary of one language superimposed on the grammar of another” (5). Pidgin is often seen as a threatening form of degeneration or pervasion. Achebe in his interview to Jussawalla speaks about the existence of Pidgin English in Nigeria and accepts it as one of the Nigerian languages: “Pidgin exists. You talk about those who are irritated by it. There are others on the extreme who say everything must be written in pidgin; this is our language. There are people who are saying that and it’s just as absurd. Pidgin English is there” (173) and appreciates that,
It’s there, and it’s a valid language with its uses. It’s used in Nigerian society in the same way as I reflect in my modern novels. There are things which it cannot do very well. There are things which it can do very well. People think it’s rather inefficient, but there are even moments when it is more concise and far more efficient than Standard English. (173)

Achebe employs pidgin for verisimilitude and for humour. The choice of pidgin depends upon the context as delineated in the words of Christopher: “Whether Christopher spoke good or ‘broken’ English depended on what he was saying, where he was saying it, to whom and how he wanted to say it” (No Longer at Ease 125).

The use of pidgin relates to situations and persons. A taxi driver necessarily uses pidgin or “broken” English. In No Longer at Ease Obi interrogates a driver for deliberately killing a dog. The driver answers him: “Dog bring good luck for new car. But duck be different. If you kill duck you go get accident or kill man”(18). The driver’s use of the pidgin language adds reality to the character. An ordinary driver does not speak flawless English, as he may be an illiterate. Braimoh in the Anthills of the Savannah is a taxi driver and he also speaks pidgin. In another situation, Achebe puts Pidgin in the mouth of the unruly mob. The following conversation is a fine example of Pidgin and it provides satiric humour.
The mob is furious with the President and demands his resignation from his position as a military leader:

‘No be you tell whiteman make he commot?’ asked somebody from the crowd. ‘Ehe, white man done go now, and hand over to President. Now that one done loss for inside bush. Wetin we go do again?’

‘We go make another President. That one no hard,’ said a third person.

‘He no hard, eh? Next tomorrow they go tell you say your new President climb palm-tree and no fit come down again,’ said the second man to a tremendous outburst of laughter. He was obviously a wit to reckon with, and knew it.

‘So wetin we go do now?’ (197-98)

The word “commot” means leave, emerge or come out; “make” means create or become; “wetin” is an interrogative relating to what, which, what thing?; “go” indicates the future tense; and “done” indicates completed action. The above conversation is not grammatically correct. But it carries sense which is intelligible to the readers.

The authors of The Empire Writes Back propound that the crucial function of language in postcolonial writing is to seize the language of the
colonials and replace it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized space (38). Achebe in his essay “The African Writer and the English Language” writes about the double usage of the English language:

The African writer should aim to use English language in a way that brings out his message without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience [. . .] But it will have to be a new English, still in full communication with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

(61-62)

According to Achebe, English should be adapted to narrate the African experience. English language thus is made to lose its hegemony over the African languages. Pidgin is adopted to oppose the language of the metropolitan centre.

The educated intellectuals in Achebe’s Anthills of the Savannah speak impeccable English whereas the characters from the lower strata of society speak pidgin. Like Shakespeare, Achebe uses different varieties of English for the different categories of characters ranging from the sophisticated intellectuals to the ordinary, common folks particularly in
The Anthills of the Savannah. The use of pidgin again, is a strategy to provide the world with the details of a culture in transition.

Like the Igbos, the Mennonites also, though they have their own traditional languages, adopt English as their language of communication with the outside world. Wiebe portrays the cultural contact of the Mennonite community with the outside world in The Blue Mountains of China. Cultural and linguistic pressures from outside the community together with a yearning to express their cultural heritage forces the Mennonites to create a new “hybrid” language. In the concluding chapter of The Blue Mountains of China the direct syntactic translation of Frieda Friesen’s father shows linguistic appropriation that is attempted by Wiebe: “But think always like this, [. . .] it does come all from God, strength, sickness, want and plenty”. Again, Friesen’s diction and syntax in the opening of the novel explains the mixing of a closed traditional Mennonite of Paraguay with that of the English-speaking community. Her language carries a German accent with the accounting of names such as Johann and Friedl:

I have lived long. So long, it takes me days to remember even parts of it, and some I can’t remember at all until I’ve been thinking over it a little now and then for weeks, and little Johann or Friedl asks, “Urgrossmuttachi, what is that, so cold in Canada
the ground is stiff?" Then I have to be careful or I'll start making it up, they like to hear so much. What I tell I remember only through God's grace. (9)

Native writers like Achebe live within their territory and have their own ancient and sophisticated language and English simply offered an alternative medium. In this case English is modified to suit the familiar African atmosphere and culture. But, a settler writer like Wiebe has no ancestral contact with the land and the alien atmosphere is made familiar with the absorption of native elements in to English. This unique blending of the English language with the typical native elements could be seen in Canada's Christmas carol written by Catholic Brebeuf:

"Within a lodged of broken bark
The tender Babe was found.
A ragged robe of rabbit-skin
Enwrapp'd his beauty round;
But as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high.

... 
The earliest moon of winter-time
Is not so round and fair
As was the ring of glory on
The helpless Infant there.

The chiefs from far before him knelt

With gifts of fox and beaver-pelt.

(enumeres added, Wiebe First and Vital Candle 229)

The native elements in the Christmas carol are lodge, rabbit-skin, hunter braves, chiefs and beaver-pelt, which replaces the respective words in the original version. Jesus Christ was born in a castle and was wrapped in clothes, and was first visited by the shepherds followed by the magi who honoured Him with incense and gold.

The unglossed words carry aspects of hybridity. The unglossed German words such as when Frieda Friesen tells of “Johann K. Friesen of Schoenbach who also became my veloibta that spring” (Wiebe Blue Mountains of China 14). Frieda Friesen’s narrative abounds with such unglossed words: Sommastov Schluga, ackstov nuscht, groutevov, betchla, leguas, hauptcheuik etiskauste and twieback. Wiebe has translated most of the Indian names into English for readability. Mistahammaskua is Big Bear’s native name. “Okeemow peeaysis” is King Bird, “Napasis” is Iron Body and “Kah-nee-o-keesikow-paniss” is Four Sky Thunder. Wiebe translates most of the native names as such: Little Bear, Sitting Bull, Crawfoot, Poundmaker, Little Pine, Sweetgrass, Loneman, Root Grubbing Woman and Birdseye respectively. Wiebe’s
Mennonite novels exhibit certain unglossed Low German words, while he translates the native names of the indigenous characters.

The Igbo words find their way into the English language, which sets an international familiarity to them and simultaneously decolonising the Standard English form. For easy reference a few such words are listed: *ilo* – the village playground, *obi* – hut, *ajofia* – Evil Forest, *agbala* – a strong woman, *afo* – one of the days of the week, *akara* – bean oil, *alusì* – spirit or god, *anwars* – magic, *asa* – smoked dry fish, *debia* – medicine man, *eze* – king or priest, *jigida* – ornamental waist bead, *nzu* – white clay or chalk *ogene* – musical instrument, *ogwu* – a term for medicine. These Igbo words are found transliterated without any translation in the texts which certainly is a postcolonial strategy.

From the foregoing discussion it could be drawn that the influence of the colonizer is felt more in the native cultures of Nigeria rather than in the native cultures of Canada. Two more inferences could be drawn from the study. One, the colonial white culture in both contexts have been more enforced than welcomed and the tools of enforcement have been first politics, religion and then education, and consumerism in various forms. Secondly, in both the countries the consequence of the enforcement has been mainly negative. The natives in both contexts lost
their own cultures and did not gain to their benefit as a community and as an individual from the colonial culture.

In Nigeria, assimilation happens between the native culture and the white culture; and in Canada fusion happens between the native Indian cultures themselves and between these cultures and the European culture. However, the study is concerned only with the latter. Achebe records the ambiguity due to political, religious and cultural changes of colonization and Wiebe records the mixing of the indigenous religious and cultural forms with the colonial. In A Man of the People and Anthills of the Savannah, Achebe portrays the ambiguity in the so-called superior political strategies of the colonials. Fraudulent politicians like Chief Nanga and President Sam are embodiment of the highly corrupt political system and neo-colonialism in Nigeria. Obi Okonkwo, Odili Samalu and Alex are colonial hybrids, products of colonial education. Achebe does not disfavour Eurocentric education, as in the case of Beatrice in Anthills of the Savannah. He suggests that colonial, formal, Eurocentric education is important for women, as it would inculcate the western thoughts even as they promulgate the native values. Religious transformation, as portrayed by Achebe and Wiebe is an example of social confirmism. When Igbos and the Indians find the native god inefficient and nonproductive, they seek the help of the white man’s God for continuous
survival. Wiebe sees racial mixing is a subversion of the racial purity claimed by the whites. Yet, Riel’s cultural “in-betweeness” is a reflection of the ambivalent position of the Metis community in Canada. Cultural aping in the Igbo marriage ceremonies, dressing styles and food habits portray the degeneration of traditional values among the Igbos.

Achebe deliberately uses pidgin in his novels to explain the cultural transcendence in Nigeria, which is also a fine example of creative transcendence. Achebe uses the Igbo words, and Wiebe uses German words in his Mennonite novels without translation as a strategy to subvert the use of Metropolitan English. The Canadian Christmas carol is also a fine dismantling of the English language.

The following chapter discusses the politics of struggle of the Nigerian ethnic cultures and the Canadian multiethnic cultures for survival as native cultures with a past, as depicted in the novels of Achebe and Wiebe.