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“MIDDLE GROUND,” “DUALITY,” AND “DIVERSIMILARITY” AS RESPONSES TO POSTCOLONIAL AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN CHINUA ACHEBE’S *THE EDUCATION OF A BRITISH-PROTECTED CHILD AND NO LONGER AT EASE*

This paper discusses two literary works by Chinua Achebe—No Longer at Ease (1960) and The Education of a British-Protected Child (2011)—in the context of the issue of diversity in the postcolonial setting. It aims to approach Achebe’s work from a new perspective, by applying a theoretical paradigm employed in business to the study of literature and culture. The “diversimilarity” paradigm, used for managing cultural diversity in organisations, is applied and shown to be pertinent to the investigation of literature, too. The methodology employed combines theoretical data with the practical implications of the conceptual framework on Achebe’s work. The paper starts with a discussion of the diversity concept and then moves on to tackle the diversimilarity paradigm in business. Then the investigation focuses on Achebe’s “duality” and “middle ground” concepts as they assist diversimilarity, concepts which work together at the levels of mentality, ideology, and identity. Finally, the paper focuses on language and the methods proposed by Achebe to manage and solve the existing linguistic diversity problems in Nigeria. The findings show that in the works explored, the diversimilarity paradigm is assisted by other concepts as solutions for the Nigerian people to cope with diversity. Moreover, Achebe shows that the other conceptions that support diversimilarity are still effective, even though they are rooted in the ancestral values of his Igbo people. The originality of the paper results from placing Achebe’s literary work in the context of contemporary concerns related to human identity in the postcolonial globalized environment and from expanding the scope and methods of literary research by employing concepts from other areas of human activity. Thus, the intersection between the worlds of the economy and culture seems fruitful for the investigation of cultural diversity.

KEY WORDS: Chinua Achebe, diversity, similarity, middle ground, duality, diversimilarity, language, culture.

Introduction

Chinua Achebe’s writings record the struggle of colonial and postcolonial Nigeria to unite disjunctive poles in an increasingly globalized world. Caught between the old and the new, his fictional characters, be they

individuals or communities, find themselves at the intersection of cultural integration and disintegration, homogeneity and hybridity, past and present, or old and new.

On the one hand, confronted with feelings of uncertainty, confusion, alienation

and displacement in a colonial or postcolonial environment, Achebe's characters struggle to find coherence, unity, rootedness, and belongingness. On the other hand, the prevalent discourse of difference is very disconcerting for both Achebe and his characters. Still, meditating on the inherited perceptions of African identity in terms of darkness, difference, otherness, or non-humanity, Achebe deliberately chooses another track and attempts to offer an unbiased view of Africa's past and present, and its future prospects.

This paper shows that Achebe is not, as critics have pointed out, a strong proponent of colonialism. Instead, Achebe's reaction to the criticism of colonial practices is built on three essential concepts which are meant both to replace the discourse of otherness and to evade the common one-sided interpretation of events. These three concepts are "middle ground" (Achebe 2011: 5), "duality" (Achebe 2011: 6)—both terms proposed by Achebe himself—and "diversimilarity" (Loden & Rosener 1991)¹, which in fact results from the former two. By means of these paradigms, Achebe makes a double plea: respect for the human person, and replacing difference with the acceptance of diversity as a necessary means to conciliate and cope with human variety. Achebe avoids lamentations about the past and encourages both his countrymen and all of humanity to accept reality as it is. Achebe shows that in postcolonial globalized Nigeria and Africa, a new view

of things must be acknowledged, together with the benefits of education, new technologies, easy access to information, new jobs, travelling opportunities and so on, confirming his message that colonialism must have done "something right" (Achebe 2011: 24).

Two of Achebe's works provide the necessary data for our literary investigation. *No Longer at Ease* (1960) is the second novel in Achebe's African Trilogy (together with *Things Fall Apart* (1958), the first in the series, and *Arrow of God* (1964), the third). *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (2011) is a collection of autobiographical essays which shed light on many of the events, experiences, and attitudes fictionalized in Achebe's novels. Separated by a temporal gap of 50 years, the two works share a number of common themes and ideas, reflecting the tensions of Nigerian identity at the crossroads of culture—thus explaining the choice of these two works from Achebe's rich collection of writings. Moreover, Obi Okonkwo's trials in *No Longer at Ease* are, in many ways, similar to Achebe's own.

Diversity as difference

In today's multicultural world, such terms as diversity, similarity, difference, "otherness," adaptation, or intercultural encounters have become key concepts used to describe the multifaceted human environment in an increasingly globalized world. These terms are also interrelated, so the investigation of one term generally brings about discussions of the others, too. However, some theoretical demarcations regarding some of these terms seem very relevant for our study.

The concept of diversity rests on the recognition of difference, since its original

¹ Even though Loden & Rosener (1991) employ the term with reference to organizational behavior, with a view to managing staff diversity, the term seems to operate successfully in the case of communities outside the business environment, as well. Today's multicultural societies must handle human variety so as to ensure peace, prosperity, and mutual understanding.

Latin source, *diversum*, meant "facing the opposite direction" (Bolaffi *et al.* 2003: 77). Thus, it refers to the quality or condition of someone or something different, or simply to the fact that things are not identical (Osborne 2002: 109). It is clear then that diversity is often equated with difference. Originally used in structural linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure, the term *difference* expresses the belief that "language is created solely through the use of comparison and contrast between word and concept" (ibid.: 109).

Diversity and similarity or sameness are often seen as the poles of a relationship which is employed for the explanation of phenomena related to ethnicity and racism. Diversity refers to an assortment of individuals with dissimilar group identities within the same social system (Seymen 2006). Therefore, the dimensions of diversity involve the existence of a mixture of linguistic, ideological, behavioral, and cultural differences. It encompasses all differences individuals may display internally and externally, including ethnic heritage, race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, education, socio-economic status, values, personality traits, etc. (Carrell *et al.* 2006). On the other hand, similarity, rooted in the Latin *similis*, meaning "similar," indicates a "likeness" to something else (Bolaffi *et al.* 2003: 77). The pairing has also been used in psychological analyses of racism and has had many positive results.

The concept of diversity has especially been tackled by the education sciences (related to managing diversity in education, enabling access to education in multicultural environments, or providing students with cross-cultural knowledge), economics (handling workforce diversity in corporations; Loden & Rosener 1991), or even

modern biology (for instance, discussions on the "biodiversity" concept; Bolaffi *et al.* 2003: 78).

Diversity is one of the main concerns of the European Community, too. Its actions and programs, together with UNESCO, aim at reaching beyond the frontiers of the European space to include the whole world. For instance, the UNESCO Convention of 2005 on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions aims at establishing an integrative framework which takes account of the richness of cultural diversity based on "mutual respect and understanding between cultures at world level" (CEU 2006). In another document, the European Council confirms that contemporary society can no longer exist without global-scale cooperation, and therefore encourages strong collaboration between EU member states and other countries around the world. It recognizes the significance of strengthening "cultural ties between Europe and the other regions of the world," for they "can be important for the development of intercultural dialogue and the setting up of common cultural projects; moreover, the Union has to ensure the promotion of its cultural and linguistic diversity" (CEU 2008).

Diversity has recently taken on the meaning of multiculturalism or plurality, which partly diminishes its initial semantic implication of difference. Thus, the diversity paradigm alone seems unable to answer effectively the call for multicultural harmony, insofar as it seems to focus on difference and on accommodation to difference. Thus, another term has emerged to fill this gap. The "diversimilarity" paradigm works more efficiently for embracing pluralism in society. The primary objective of diversimilarity is to transform contem-

porary society from a space of difference to one of inclusion of diversity, founded on valuing the differences of others. The diversimilarity paradigm works as a response to discourses of difference (Loden & Rosener 1991). Thus, instead of *either/or* attitudes and mindsets, it openly proposes *both/and* ways of thinking. This theory takes account of valuing both similarities and differences in people, on the principle that people are different and yet similar in many respects. It speaks about having to make concessions in order to find a way to cooperate successfully. Contemplating the motto of the European Union, “united in diversity,” it becomes clear that this view endorses the diversimilarity paradigm by stressing the significance of togetherness while preserving Europe’s diversity in terms of “cultures, traditions, and languages” (EU 2013). This outlook corresponds, to a great extent, to Achebe’s approach when dealing with the complexity of life in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Achebe’s duality and middle ground options

Colonialism has been fiercely criticized for its many abuses, with a focus on difference as one of these wrongdoings. This involved cultural imperialism, which is a particular case of globalization, and the origins of globalization can also be found in the patterns of population movement and settlement instituted during the colonial era and in the period following it (Barker 2004: 76–77).

However, Achebe cannot be considered a harsh criticizer of colonialism. Rather than continuing this line of thought, he intends to reconcile differences, and this program becomes one of the central concerns

of his writings. Right from the beginning of Achebe (2011), he positions himself on a different level from other writers, interpreting colonialism from the “middle,” thus taking a “middle” stance and avoiding the “foreground” or “background” perspectives (Achebe 2011: 5). This “middle ground” view of events allows him to offer a balanced outlook on events. On the one hand, this position sanctions the recognition of the benefits of colonialism, and he professes that if he were to present “the pros and cons of colonial rule,” the readers “would get only cons” from him (ibid.: 4).

It is striking that both solutions he launches, which could eventually solve many of the crises in contemporary Nigeria, stem from his old traditional culture, from the ancient Igbo ideology and mentality. This culture is not cut off from the values cultivated by the contemporary society; the old principles retain their validity through the centuries, making the traditional way of thinking as topical now as ever.

Achebe signals that the discourse of difference in postcolonial Africa and the world should be replaced by the concept of *duality*—which takes account of the nature of human character—because no person is either bad or good, but both good and bad. It also denies the existence of one perspective only when interpreting certain aspects of reality, because “the preference of the Igbo is thus not singularity but duality” (Achebe 2011: 6). As elsewhere in Achebe’s work, Igbo proverbs translate principles and beliefs, so he quotes a proverb to enforce his argument, stating that “Wherever Something Stands, Something Else Will Stand Beside It” (ibid.). This proverb can entail more interpretations. First, it calls attention to the vital necessity

of recognizing the presence of the human fellow next to you, for in society no man lives only by himself. Second, thinking of the colonial context, it signals the celebration of the "other" on equal grounds. Third, in terms of ideologies, it indicates that one's opinion or idea is not necessarily the best and the only one possible.

The "middle ground" attitude supports the duality paradigm and is even more thought-provoking. Cherished by the Igbo culture, it denies "mutual recrimination" (Achebe 2011: 5), extremism, or oneness, and is thus seen as the most fortunate position, as an Igbo children's rhyme shows: "The front one, whose eyes encounter spirits/ The middle one, the dandy child of fortune/ The rear one of twisted fingers" (ibid.: 5).

Like duality, the "middle ground" attitude avoids fixed attitudes and beliefs related to a certain culture. It does not assert ownership of truth, justice, beauty, life, or other priceless values. Nor does it claim to be the originator or ultimate beneficiary of these values. It is a mindset which shows awareness of its intermediary, changeable, unstable existence and nature, recognizing that "the middle ground is neither the origin of things nor the last things; it is aware of a future to head into and a past to fall back on; it is the home of doubt and indecision, of suspension of disbelief, of make-believe, of playfulness, of the unpredictable, of irony" (Achebe 2011: 6).

Another idea associated with the "middle ground" option is that it promotes conciliation, cooperation, and finding a common route. Rather than looking for the right or wrong view, attitude, or opinion, which might lead to discord, it always targets the existence or restoration of "harmony" (Achebe 2011: 6). It calls attention

to cooperation on the premise that everyone can contribute. Therefore, "in a great compound, there are wise people as well as foolish ones, and nobody is scandalized by that" (ibid.), and this Igbo attitude could be applied to other communities, too.

No matter what, the Igbo culture involves finding "a way to cope" (Achebe 2011: 7), a way to come to terms with new situations, conflicts, opposing views, or different people. It certainly does not mean "cowardice" (ibid.), but a very simple solution which fences out conflict, discrimination, segregation, and inhumanity. Still, Achebe's message goes further than that. It highlights that when cultures intersect, such a standpoint engages a compromise between two opposite views, beliefs, values, or objectives. It brings to the surface opinions and attitudes or ways of thinking that are not extreme and that a lot of people can agree with. It is the safest road to reaching a neutral position, the best to foster mutuality and togetherness.

Furthermore, the "middle ground" is "where the human spirit resists an abridgement of its humanity" (Achebe 2011: 23). It is built on uncrippled humanity, on good-natured, compassionate, and charitable feelings. As a means to counteract the common view of colonialism as an unambiguously horrible event, Achebe gives some examples of "middle ground" mental attitudes from the colonizers' camp. For instance, the British reverend Robert Fisher was more interested in building a new school in Umuahia than in his office as bishop. In addition to considering the beneficial role of education for African children, he strongly promoted and understood the significance of togetherness. The crest he brought to Umuahia "was a pair of torches, one black, one white, shining

together silently” (ibid.). Recognizing the suggestive message he transmitted, a generation later an Australian teacher affixed the logo “*In unum luceant*” to this emblem (ibid.).

Another example is that of an English merchant, J. M. Stuart Young, who also managed to apply the “middle ground” solution with great success. First of all, he understood that he must unite aspects of the local culture with those of his English background, so he willingly combined aspects of his native identity and elements of the traditional African identity. For example, he made a pact with a mermaid of the Niger River to remain single in return for riches (Achebe 2011: 15). Secondly, he opened up trade to African merchants, and the people of Onitsha admired him greatly for not trying to impose his trade on the African people, but for including them in it, too. He understood that cultural encounter means exchange, giving and receiving in return, rather than imposition, domination, and appropriation of the other’s property, valuables, and identities. Such people from the colonizers’ group tried and managed, though partially, to fill that gap between the two sides, the colonizer and the colonized, a gap created by the colonizers. Their salutary behaviour attempted to unite the two parts, to reach “across the severe divide which colonialism would have, and touched many of us on the other side” (ibid.: 24).

These illustrations celebrate the uneasy yet rewarding preference for the midway position in human interaction of any sort, a position that endorses the halfway attitude between the Igbo and the Igbo, the Igbo and the African, the African and the English, the colonized and the colonizer, the black and the white, or between any human being and any other human being.

Diversimilarity

In Achebe’s works, diversimilarity is founded on the combined activity of the previously described concepts. The first example is the lesson Achebe’s two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Nwando teaches her parents when facing change and diversity, a lesson which underlines the acceptance of *both/and* practices. Enrolled in a nursery school, her utter unhappiness is soothed after her father begins to tell her stories on the way to school (*My Daughters*, Achebe 2011: 71–72). This way, she could experience both the new American world and her African background, so much infused with story-telling.

Achebe himself also looked for this middle way: his ideology and views were influenced by the two important paternal figures in his life, his uncle and his father. His uncle firmly respected his origins and connection to the past, but he was also an open-minded man who did encourage his nephew to look for personal answers. On the other hand, his father embraced more openly the options and answers given by the colonizers’ ideology. It was by the union of these two attitudes that Achebe’s own “dialectic” (Achebe 2011: 37) was born, the same kind of duality he promotes, resting strongly on collective history without dismissing the call of the present, or of the private self.

Both *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease* confirm that total cultural resistance to something new is wrong and can only lead to the individual’s succumbing, as shown by Okonkwo’s case in *Things Fall Apart*. In this case, strict adherence to collective identity while dismissing the new culture is not a functional solution. However, if the African breaks away entirely

from his heritage, collapse is also inevitable. Obi gradually adapts to the new ways of the society he lives in so that he can survive. But he does so by disregarding the old ways of his society, so the sense of alienation is fatal for him. The assertion of personal identity by dismissing the old culture also seems ineffectual. This way, Achebe suggests that the time for radical change has not yet come. People like the majority of the Umuahia Progressive Party, or his father's uncle, Udoh, were the ones who best coped with the new situation, because they connected collective identity with personal identity in an indivisible way. They fused old and new harmoniously so that the fusion could help their way in the new world.

Diversity is commonly expressed in binary oppositions (Osborne 2002: 109). Achebe upholds the annulment of difference, which works as a system of opposing terms structured essentially on concepts like white/black, civilized/primitive, European or British/African, or even colonizer/colonized. In such pairs, one term is often believed to dominate the other (ibid.: 110); however, Achebe aims to deconstruct the existence of a dominating pole in the relationship, thus seeking to rehabilitate the much-sought state of equality.

The diversimilarity model reconciles the antagonistic poles of diversity and similarity. In Achebe's works, it accommodates supra-national interests and national identities, group identities and individual aspirations, conserving the old and embracing the new. How can this be achieved? By implementing social, economic, political, and cultural programs, and especially by targeting ideological changes that would elevate valuing diversity and sameness. This seems vital, because present-day Nigeria itself is built on diversity, so it must respond adequately

to the inter-ethnic differences rooted in its history, as well as to the changing patterns of demographic composition resulting from globalizing trends.

Language(s)

Achebe's views on the nature and employment of language(s) also fit into our discussion of duality, middle ground, and diversimilarity. First of all, Achebe points out that the mythology of imperialism did not adhere to the middle ground standpoint he advances. On the contrary, it rested on a language which rejected the truth of any simple statement and the meaning attached to it, thus distorting reality.

The use of the English language by African writers like Achebe has been criticized as a subconscious form of taking part in and assisting the imperial project. It has been argued that the use of English has functioned as a subtle instrument to colonize the mind (Ngugi 1986). In response, Achebe's middle ground option seems efficient again, for he promotes the employment of both languages on the premise that for him, as for most writers, there is no such conflict between his mother tongue and the writing language, to the extent that they often become "one and the same" (Achebe 2011: 97). Achebe supports linguistic diversimilarity and clearly confesses that "for me, it is not either English or Igbo/Ibo, it is *both*" (ibid.: 120, author's emphasis). Consequently, he responds to those one-sided calls for using one language, the mother tongue, with a plea for the employment of both languages.

But the problematic discussion on one or more languages also needs tackling, and Achebe has answers for this, too. In Nigeria, the absence of a factor ensuring unity

has even led to civil war. The dangers of violence and nationalism in the newly born nation could be averted only by finding a feature binding it together. Nigeria's history shows that the inflexible adherence to the mother tongue has often had a divisive impact on communities. Though an "alien language" (Achebe 2011: 100), English functions as a factor of ethnic unity in Nigeria, given the fact that around 200 different nationalities coexist there. The very existence of linguistic diversity sustains the competing nature of native languages in the African states, and this has brought about language problems, so imperialism was not the primary blameable agent. Achebe shows that this factor came as a unifying force in a region where linguistic and ethnic tensions seemed to need a solution from the outside.

Achebe also deals with the much-debated complaint that English was imposed on the colonized peoples. He shows that beginning in the 1850s, the gradual adoption of English—which led to Nigeria's present-day intensive use of English in many of its routine affairs—was not the result of forceful endeavours. In reality, the situation was very different. English responded to a need in a changing world, to the explicit demands of a native population who had to cope with new realities.

This is also connected to what Obi in *No Longer at Ease* feels about speaking Igbo or English. He feels great pride and pleasure when he has the chance to speak in Igbo when meeting another Igbo-speaking student in a London bus. But he feels humiliated when having to speak in English with a Nigerian student "from another tribe," as if "that one had no language of one's own" (Achebe 2010: 40). He feels frustration at not being able to communi-

cate with an African fellow since they did not know each other's dialects.

Obi's tribulations with language also confirm that paying allegiance both to his native language and to English seems to be the best variant in postcolonial times. His mistakes during the reception ceremony after returning from England represent the effects of his altered identity after contact with the Western culture. He disrespects the dress codes for such ceremonies and his language is "most unimpressive" (Achebe 2010: 26) because it is dull and denotative, devoid of the metaphorical and proverbial richness of the Igbo language. In the village of his forefathers, the importance of language was fundamental for the people's identity: "there was language, in song and speech, all around you..." (Achebe 2011: 12). Later, having understood his error, Obi satisfies his countrymen by alluding to their past, to their beliefs and cultural ancestry, to the importance of communion. His recognition of the authority of the past arouses his people's admiration.

However, Achebe does not miss the occasion to cast an ironic glance at this kind of linguistic gift. Even were we to accept that the Africans were dispossessed of their language, English itself could become their tool of "revenge" through the ages, an instrument by means of which the African writer could "overthrow colonialism itself in the fullness of time" (Achebe 2011: 120). Eventually, it could turn out to be the best device assisting them in totally denouncing and subverting its power, influence, and reverberations through time.

Conclusions

Colonial practices left painful marks on the African identity and, specifically, on Nigerian identity in its diversity. Achebe

cautions against the disastrous condition of present-day Nigeria, where the identity problem still causes constant dissensions among ethnic groups, paralleled by discrediting perceptions of difference echoed by Western societies. However, he responds to all forms of denigration and dehumanization with a sympathetic attitude. His message is a positive one, imbued with humanistic values that insist on cooperation, humaneness, respect, and togetherness. He stresses that, unlike the colonizers' mentality, African identity is built on intersection, cooperation, and communication, thus abiding by the central concerns of globalization. Achebe's message is the rather pragmatic realization of the fact that, quoting a Senegalese writer's words, previously foreign communities are now walking on a common historical path: "we have not had the same past, you and ourselves, but we shall have strictly the same future. The era of separate destinies has run its course" (Achebe 2011: 123).

The poem *Obi* writes in London, "Nigeria," deploring the country's fragmented identity but also acknowledges the significance of solidarity and humaneness for its future in a Westernized setting: "God bless our noble countrymen/ And women everywhere./ Teach them to walk in unity/ To build our nation dear;/ Forgetting region, tribe or speech,/ But caring always each for each" (Achebe 2010: 82).

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In fact, Achebe extends the discussion of diversity beyond the national boundaries of countries by addressing the weight of successfully managing diversity in a global environment as far as racial, ethnic, mental, ideological, or other types of backgrounds are concerned. He ultimately signals that, in spite of Africa's long suffering as a result of colonialism, the best way to rehabilitate its present is to bring together both differences and similarities.

Achebe's theories of middle ground and duality instantiate the diversimilarity paradigm used by organisational management theories and indirectly evince its utility for multicultural communities. Cultural diversity should therefore be treated as an asset not only within business organisations but also within cultural groups in general.

As Achebe suggests, the advantages of diversimilarity in postcolonial African society, as well as in contemporary society on the whole, include: impeding tension, conflict, or segregation, erasing conceptions of "otherness," fostering harmonious sociocultural environments and social integration, and promoting equality and participative actions by stressing the importance of interaction with an ultimate view toward enriching human experience. Finally, it involves the interpretation of difference as a means of securing unity for present and, most significantly, future societies.

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„NUOSAIKI POZICIJA“, „DVILYPUMAS“ IR „PANAŠUMAI / SKIRTUMAI“ KAIP ATSAKAS Į CHINUA ACHEBE *THE EDUCATION OF A BRITISH-PROTECTED CHILD* IR *NO LONGER AT EASE* POKOLONIJINIUS IR GLOBALIUS IŠŠŪKIUS

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pokolnijnės situacijų įvairovės kontekste aptariami du Chinua Achebe literatūros kūriniai – *No Longer at Ease* (1960) ir *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (2011). Siekiama pažvelgti į juos iš naujos perspektyvos, literatūros ir kultūros studijoms taikyti teorinę paradigmą, veikiančią versle. Atskleidžiama, kad panašumų / skirtumų (diversimilarity) paradigma, taikoma kultūrinių organizacijų įvairovei valdyti, tinka ir literatūrai tirti. Metodologija, taikoma analizuojant Achebe darbus, leidžia derinti teoriją su konceptualiomis praktinėmis implikacijomis.

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„UMIARKOWANE STANOWISKO“, „DWOI- STOŚĆ“ I „RÓŻNICE W PODOBIENSTWIE“ JAKO ODPOWIEDŹ NA POSTKOLONIALNE I GLOBALNE WYZWANIA W *THE EDUCATION OF A BRITISH-PROTECTED CHILD* ORAZ *NO LONGER AT EASE* CHINUY ACHEBE

Streszczenie

Artykuł zawiera analizę dwóch utworów literackich Chinuy Achebe – *No Longer at Ease* (1960, wyd. pol. *Nie jest już łatwo*, 2011) oraz *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (2011) – w kontekście postkolonialnej różnorodności. W opracowaniu podjęto próbę spojrzenia na utwory Achebe z nowej perspektywy poprzez wybór do badań literackich i kulturowych paradygmatu teoretycznego, mającego zastosowanie w biznesie. Okazuje się, że paradygmat różnic w podobieństwie, stosowany w zarządzaniu różnorodnością kulturową organizacji, sprawdza się także w badaniach literackich. Przy-

Straipsnio pradžioje aptariamas skirtingumo konceptas, toliau diskutuojama panašumų / skirtumų (*diversimilarity*) paradigma versle. Vėliau tiriami Achebe dualumo ir nuosaikios pozicijos konceptai, nagrinėjami panašumų ir skirtumų konceptai, kurie veikia intelekto, ideologijos ir identiteto lygmenyse. Galiausiai sutelkiamas dėmesys į kalbą ir Achebe siūlomus metodus siekiant valdyti ir spręsti kalbinės įvairovės problemas Nigerijoje.

Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad panašumų ir skirtumų paradigmą nagrinėtuose kūriniuose lydi kiti konceptai, padedantys Nigerijos žmonėms susidoroti su skirtingumu. Achebe parodo, kad tos kitos koncepcijos, pagrįsdamos panašumų bei skirtumų konceptą, vis dar yra veiksmingos ir priklauso Igbo tautos protėvių vertybėms. Straipsnis originalus tuo, kad Achebe literatūrinis darbas aptariamas šiuolaikinių interesų, susijusių su žmogaus tapatybe pokoloninėje globalizuotoje aplinkoje, kontekste. Autorė, į tyrimą įtraukdama kitų žmogaus veiklos sričių sąvokų, pasiūlo platesnę literatūros tyrimų ir metodų galimybių skalę. Ekonomikos ir kultūros pasaulių sankirta gali būti sėkmingai tirama kaip kultūrinė įvairovė.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: Chinua Achebe, skirtingumas, panašumas, nuosaiki pozicija, dvilypumas, panašumai / skirtumai, kalba, kultūra.

Jėta metoda analizy utworów Achebe łączy dane teoretyczne z praktycznymi implikacjami schematu konceptualnego. Na początku artykułu omówiono koncept różnorodności, następnie przeanalizowano paradygmat różnic w podobieństwie w biznesie. W dalszej części skupiono się na konceptach dwoistości i umiarkowanego stanowiska Achebe w relacji z konceptami różnic w podobieństwie – koncepty te są realizowane na poziomie mentalnościowym, ideologicznym i tożsamościowym. Na końcu przedstawiono uwagi na temat języka i metod zaproponowanych przez Achebe do zarządzania problemami wynikającymi z różnorodności językowej w Nigerii oraz rozwiązywania tych problemów. Wyniki badania dowodzą, że w analizowanych utworach paradygmat różnic w podobieństwie występuje obok innych konceptów, ułatwiających mieszkańcom Nigerii przezwyciężanie różnic. Achebe pokazuje, że te inne koncepty wspierające koncept różnic w podobieństwie nadal są efektywne, a nawet są zakorzenione w systemie wartości ludu Igbo. Oryginalność niniejszego opracowania polega na tym, że twórczość literacka Achebe jest przedstawiana w kontekście współczesnych interesów związanych z tożsamością człowieka w postkolonialnym, zglobalizowanym otoczeniu, jak też na tym, że rozszerza zakres i metody badań literackich za pomocą pojęć z innych dziedzin działalności człowieka. Tak więc przecięcie się światów ekonomiki i kultury znajduje owocne zastosowanie w badaniach nad różnorodnością kulturową.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Chinua Achebe, różnorodność, podobieństwo, umiarkowanie stanowisko, dwoistość, różnice w podobieństwie (*diversimilarity*), język, kultura.

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