

## ***I. The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: An Introduction***

This research is focused on Olaudah Equiano's autobiography *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* in the light of cultural hybridity in the age of colonialism. This term hybridity refers to creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by slavery of colonization. Hybridity is also implied in horticultural that refers to the cross breeding of two species by grafting from a third species.

Hybridization depicts many forms like cultural, racial, linguistic, and political. The biography *The Interesting Narrative* abounds with elements of cultural, multicultural, marginality, Diasporas, race ethnicity, globalization, migration, displacement, dislocation, alienation and identity crisis. The present study focuses on the issue of cultural hybridity that brings the identity crisis, liminality, and the feeling of alienation in the life of writer. Due to the cultural change, he struggles for his stable identity. Thus, identity involves intense desire for establishing a space by replacing fixed coherent and stable assumption through doubt and uncertainty. Likewise, identity covers the study of culture, race, gender, class, sexuality and other issue etc. It creates space and 'subject position' for example the difference between black and white cultures. Today's identities are in motion. They are not absolute of constant of nature of culture but changeable and our notion of identity is greatly influenced by cultural phenomena. Consequently identity has been rendered hybrid rather than a fixed concept.

The term alienation is derived from the verb 'to alienate' meaning "to make somebody feel that they do not belong to a particular group (*Oxford 29*). It shows the condition of being estranged and isolated. The alienated protagonist feels that he shares some elements with his cultural group that he does not belong completely to it.

Moreover, the situation is ambivalence and resides on the borderline between his belongingness and estrangement. Therefore, the protagonist who is genetically and culturally hybrid exhibits uncertainty, distrust, psychological dissatisfaction and his negative attitude. In a sense, he is alienated from his cultural community as well as from the culture he has encountered. He shows such negative impulse falling prey to alienation.

The writer himself is the protagonist of *The Interesting Narrative*. He is hybrid subject. He is originally from the Eboe tribe and after undergoing painful circumcision for his Eboe identity; he is taken to Britain by slave merchant and converted into Christianity. Although born an African, Equiano is British by acculturation and choice. These binary oppositions place Equiano into this tenuous identity as the Afro- Briton. As such Equiano not only must come to terms with whom or what he is, he must also learn to navigate this neither both identity and his fears about his and his sister's fate. Over six-month period, he served several masters, finally he arrived on the shore of a large river, probably the Niger, which took him to a sea port where he was sold to the white slave traders' choice. This binary oppositions place Equiano into this tenuous identity as the Afro- Briton. As such Equiano also learn to navigate this neither- both identity. As the novel raises racial issues but with the sense of ambivalence, cultural analytical approach has been used for examining and analyzing cultural hybridity.

### **About Olaudah Equiano and His Slave Narrative**

Born around 1745 in the village of Essaka, in the interior of modern-day eastern Nigeria, Olaudah Equiano grew up among the Eboe people before he was kidnapped at the age of eleven with his sister and was sold to other Africans. His memories of Eboe life are almost unreservedly positive, stressing the simplicity of his people's manner, the justice of their moral values and harmony of their society. After

he was kidnapped, he was separated from his sister at the same time, and his fears about her fate. Over six-month period, he served several masters, finally he arrived on the shore of a large river, probably the Niger, which took him to a sea port where he was sold to the white slave traders bound for the West Indies.

Equiano, then, was shipped across the Atlantic or 'Middle passage' to Barbados as slave. He was taken on to Virginia and bought by a British naval officer, Henry Pascal who renamed him 'Gustvus Vassa' after the 16<sup>th</sup> century Swedish King, and later appointed him as a ship's steward. During campaign in the Mediterranean and off the coast of France, the slave youth made the most of his maritime opportunities. Expecting from his master's assurance to be freed after six years of good services, Equiano was instead sold to a West India trader in 1762, and was again sold to Robert King, a Philadelphia Quaker and merchant working for King, Equiano by that time a well-trained sea-man, learnt a good deal about sea-going commercial practices, so that by 1766. At the age of twenty one, the aspiring black man was not able only to buy his freedom but also launch his business career. He then became a sailor, traveled all over the world. In 1773, he took part in an expedition to try to discover the North West passage. After the voyages to ports as far off as Central America and Turkey, Equiano settled in England in 1777. In London, he himself involved in the movement to abolish slavery which led to publication in 1789 of his book, *The Interesting Narrative of Life of Olaudah Equiano*. After the publication of his autobiography, Equiano traveled extensively in England, Ireland to promote his book. He married an English woman, Susanna Cullen in 1792 and died in London on March 31, 1797.

Equiano was not the first African-born slave to recount his experiences in bondage and freedom. But he was the first to write the story himself without the aid

or direction of white ghost-writers or editors, such as his predecessors in their slave narrative relied on. Equiano's impudence in this regard may be one reason why his story places much more emphasis on the atrocities of slavery and pleads more insistently for its total immediate abolition than any previous slave narratives. Most slave narrators of that era impressed their white sponsors with their piety and their willingness to forgive those who had once oppressed and exploited them. Although Equiano made much of his conversion to Christianity, he made clear his dedication to social change by venting his moral outrage toward slavery and by structuring his story that freedom, not the *Life of Olaudah Equiano* suggests that Christianity and abolitionism, the pursuit of individual and social perfection, go hand. This mating spiritual and the secular in the *Life of Olaudah Equiano* were prophetic of the ideological orientation of the nineteenth century African American protest literature.

*The Life of Olaudah Equiano* reveals in unforgettable ways the atrocity that was the Middle Passage. Equiano's *Life* bequeaths to modern African American literature a prescient and provocative example of what W.E.B. Dubois would call 'double consciousness' the African American's fateful sense of 'twoness' born of a bicultural identification with both an African heritage and a European education.

### **Literature Review**

*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* is widely regarded as the slave narrative, a form of autobiography that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century gained a wide international readership because of its compelling first hand testimony against "slavery". It tells a richer detailed story of seagoing adventure, spiritual enlightenment, and economic success in England and the Americas. Equiano's autobiography was the most influential work of English prose by an African American in the eighteenth century. With Philip Wheatley's poems on various

subjects, *Religions, and Moral* (1773), *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* verified the claim, much disputed during the enlightenment that blacks could represent themselves effectively through writing.

Since its publication, it has received different interpretations. Different critics have viewed the book from their own different critical viewpoints. The critics have applied post-colonial, Marxist, anti-cultural angles to analyze the book.

Carl Plasa takes Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* as colonial mimicry. He regards Equiano's re-creating the self in writing as his assimilation of traits that make up an essentialized whiteness civilization, Christianity, nobility, justice, industry, intellect, truth. Plasa writes: "Writing for Equiano is not means of self-inscription, but a concrete political act which is also a form of mimicry: by affirming himself as a writing subject, Equiano suggests that he too possesses those qualities of 'reason and 'humanity' which the Enlightenment would like to preserve as purely white" (16). Historical themes in general require of writer an aptitude for coping with the inexplicable and unpredictable reserves of meaning that comprise non-legendary experience. Douglas Andersen comments Equiano's narrative of his experience as:

The confessions that Equiano makes are largely those evocations of providential oversight and intercession appropriate to the religious "legend" within which he casts his experience. In the Isle of Wight episode, however, below the surface abruptly produce a "transported" boy "about my own size" whose evocative presence promptly threatens the simplicity of Equiano's story. (457)

The policy and project the autobiography carries with John Saillant writes that *The Interesting Narrative* is not solely an act of self-representation. It also participates in a far larger political project, especially designed, as it is, to further the campaign for the

slave trade, just formally commencing in both public and parliamentary spheres as the time when the text was first published and finally succeeding in 1807, ten years after Equiano's death" (105). Further, he writes: "It is equally apparent, however, that *The Interesting Narrative* stands in an acute and disruptive tension with the taxonomies of racial difference outlined above, if the driving concern of Equiano's politicized autobiography is to help bring about the demise of the slave trade" (102). In this critic's view this autobiography is self-representation, but above this is political in implicit level.

Similarly, Thomas Doherty also makes his opinion about this book. He opines that "Equiano's literary journey about the globe parallels his metaphorical progress of political (from slavery to freedom), spiritual (from ignorance to knowledge)" (2). Doherty relates Equiano's literal achievement with human consciousness, acknowledgment of interior depth and intellectual faculty in the brute.

Another scholar and critic, Samantha Manchester Early has commented this book as the movement of the self of the narrator from 'marginal' to 'central status' with the use of multiple discursive and rhetorical strategies. He writes: "His point of view on issue could and did vary; often is British [...]. It allowed Equiano, an African born ex-slave living among European cultures and societies to move himself both literally and culturally from the dominant European cultural "margin" to a culturally "central position" (2). Equiano's, as this critic means, achievement of literacy and his adoption of English rhetorical strategies, and his authoritative voice of religious conversion (his tendency to Christianity) shifted his marginal African position to the central heart of Englishness.

Very different but relevant, Often twentieth century capitalism's idea about the *Life* comes from Elizabeth Jane Hall Hinds, who studies *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*

under the framework of free-market capitalism where in spiritual and economic values coalesce under financial policies and practices. According to her, the *Life* demonstrates one extreme of Enlightenment individualism forged by an expanding capitalist market place in the half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, and in her view it is narrative of capital gain, she states:

As a merchant Equiano enters imaginatively into a public, free-market “structure of feeling “a market place and legalistic psychology through which the individual becomes as actor in a public spectacle of exchange relation, and consequently exchanges in relation, and consequently exchanges individual subjectivity for a perceived market object status designed to ensure success. (635)

In her above lines what she means that Equiano’s identity is diminished to a free actor by mechanism of rampaging mid-eighteenth century capitalism in the free-market place.

Meanwhile, Eileen Razzari examines religious aspect in these words:

"Equiano’s growing sense of laboratory power of the biblical text for oppressed people. Religion may be viewed as the heart of the matter in Equiano’s conflicted perspectives as the shaping force in this now acquiescent, now critical stance" (409).

In this manner, different literary critics have viewed this text from different perspectives but none of the critics have explored the location of culture presented in the text. So, my research will be worthy to show the location of culture which is hybrid.

This research has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents general discussion of the writer and his autobiography. The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality applied in the research work. It discusses

hybridity and its functions in the society. On the basis of methodology outlined in the second chapter, the third chapter will analyze the text, the fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research. On the basis of textual analysis in the third chapter, it concludes the explanation and arguments put forward in the preceding chapter.



## II. Cultural Hybridity

Cultural Hybridity focuses on the most employed and disputed form in post-colonial studies, 'hybridity' which commonly refers to the creation of new trans-acculturation refers to processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated people cannot rapidly control what emanates from the dominant culture they determined to vary its extents what actually they absorb into their own.

Hybridization depicts many forms including not only cultural but also political, racial social, linguistic etc. It has frequently been used in postcolonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural exchanges and hybridization understood as the process by which colonized peoples imitate the colonizers' language (sometimes in order to subvert colonizers) borrow western ideas and practices and reject their sociocultural structures. On the issue of hybridity, Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin write:

Hybridity occurs in post-colonial societies both as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invade to consolidate political and economics control, or when settler invaders dispose indigenous peoples and force them to assimilate to new social pattern. It may also occur in later periods when patterns of immigration from metropolitan societies and from other imperial influences (e.g. indentured laborers from Indian and China) continue to produce complex cultural palimpsests with the post-colonized world. (*Reader* 183)

Therefore, hybridity concerns various problems in which people are dislocated and displaced from their familiar social environment and indigenous culture when they are compelled to be assimilated to new social pattern.

Regarding the term 'hybridity' prominent postcolonial critics as Home K. Bhaba, Robert Young and Frantz Fanon who have advocate basically about the colonial experience. The colonialists are the settlers and who are displaced from their own points of origin, and have to establish their identity in a new place. Thus, hybridity presupposes the power relation between the subjugated culture and the dominant one. So far, hybridity occur producing new kind of sharing the ideas and beliefs of both culture, but more under the pressure of the influential culture.

Similarly, immigration causes hybridity and this in turn leads to identity crisis creating displacement and sometimes-cultural deformation of subjects. Thus, Home K. Bhabha quoted by Ashcroft et. al. defines hybridity as "the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discrimination identity of discourse analysis to de-historicize and de-locate the cultures from their temporal, spatial, geographical and linguistic contexts.

The issues of hybridity, colonization in-betweenness have influenced post-colonial critics. They argue each culture either of colonial or of colonized loses its identity in a colonized society. And this situation emerges a new culture that is neither purely culture of colonized nor purely that of colonizer. Thomas B. Macaulay presented such new culture in his treatise "Minute on Indian Education" at the British parliament on Feb. 2, 1825. According to him, British Government has given European Education to Indians to create an intermediate class of people.

On this issue, he argues that by training certain Indian elites in English or Western education, language and culture, the British rulers would be able to create an "intermediate" class of people who would be distinguished from the general mass of people or native population. Macaulay means "... a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in Taste, in notion, in morals, and in intellect" (61). Such

‘intermediate’ class of people would be as interpreters between the British and millions of Indians they ruled. It means that these ‘intermediate’ classes of people would be ‘brown’ in terms of their skin and only they would be ‘almost’ white in terms of their cultural training, manners, languages, mode of speech and accent.

Macaulay focuses upon the “construction” of these kinds of people because he thought that few hundred thousand British Subjects would be unable to rule and regulate millions of native Indian. The production of this ‘in between’ class, ‘White but not quite’, in fact protect British interests and help them to rule a vast and potential unruly land.

A key theorist of anti-imperialism nationalism, Frantz Fanon observed that the colonized man adapted the European models, of life and behaviors because they thought those models were superior to the natives’ ones. Like Macaulay, he also developed his idea of a ‘comprador’ class or elite who exchanged rules with white colonial dominating class and or elite with colonial dominating class and argued that these “comprador” were “masked” by their partnership with the value of white colonial powers. In *Black Skin and White Mask*, he studied how colonial authority works by inviting black subjects to mime white culture. He, further, stresses:

Every colonized people- in other words, every people –in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality-finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is cleaved above his jungle states in proportion to his adoption of the mother country’s cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (18)

So, Fanon argues the colonized people suffer from inferior complex. They feel that there is lack of something within themselves in comparison to what the Westerners have- the civilization –when they are away from the colonizers. Chris Barker in his *Cultural studies Theory and Practice* makes a distinction between two kinds of hybridization: Structural and Cultural and says:

The former refers to a variety of social and institutional sites of hybridization for example border zones or cities like Miami or Singapore. The latter distinguishes cultural responses which range from assimilation through forms separation, to hybrids that destabilize and blur cultural boundaries. (202)

According to him, hybridity concerns with social and intuitional frameworks and it also destabilizes and blurs the cultural territories.

Hybridity is mostly known as a post- colonial phenomenon; it has occurred since the time of cultural mixing hundreds of years ago. Cultures are trans-local and involve globally. Hybridization actually occurs out of recognition of difference and produces something new. It refers to the creation of new transcultural forms. Most recently, it is associated with colonizer/ colonized relations. To be more precise hybridity is associated with their independent and the mutual construction of their subjectivity. It is the in- between space that carries the burden and meaning of culture: therefore, postcolonial situation is not a monolithic one way follows from the West to the East. Thus, mutual cultural follows between the West and the East develop the situation of culture hybridity. Hybridity identity is always a place of territory rather fixed and stable. While talking about Fanon vision of revolutionary cultural and political change, Homi K. Bhabha in his essay *Cultural Diversity and Cultural Difference* says:

Hybridity as a fluctuating movement of occult instability could not articulated as cultural practice without an acknowledgement of this indeterminate space of the subjects of enunciation. It is that third space, thought representable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbol of culture have no primordial unity or fixity: that even the same signs can be appropriate, translated, re-historicized and read new. (qtd. In *Reader* 208)

Thus, culture is always changeable and it has been fluctuating where no fixity or indeterminacy. It creates a third space that is the place of intermingled subjects. Talking about hybridity, Bhabha, in his essay *Culture Diversity and Cultural Difference*, says:

(Hybridity)is the inter- the cutting edge that Derrida has opened up in writing itself that carries the burden of the nationalist, histories of the nationalist, histories of the ‘people’. It is this space that we will find those worlds with which we can speak of ourselves and others, And by exploring this hybridity. This third space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves. (In *Reader* 20)

Hence, Bhabha stresses that hybridity is a place where cutting edge of translation and negotiation creates ‘third space’. There is no subjectivity. It will be the case of others of us. The term ‘negotiation’, according to him, is the cultural exchange. In this essay *The commitment to theory* Bhabha further, writes, “the event of theory comes from the negotiation and antagonist instances that open up hybrid sites and destroy those negative polarities between knowledge and its objects and theory and practical political reasons” (*Location* 112). Regarding the matter of hybridity, Bhabha argues

that hybridity is reevaluation of the assumption and belief of colonial identity in which there may be repetition of dominant identity. He adds:

Hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority. (*Location 122*)

Thus, hybridity is the product of colonialism. The colonizers are more powerful to secure their identity.

Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha firstly adopted the term 'ambivalence' into postcolonial discourse theory. Influenced by Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft et. al. defines hybridity as describing "the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized (*key concepts 12*). Moreover the relationship would be ambivalent; that is why the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer. Ambivalence also refers to a simultaneous attraction towards and repulsion from an object, person or action. The complicity and resistance do exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. Bhabha illustrates, "Ambivalence at the source of discourse on authority enables a form of subversion, found on the ground of discourse on authority a form of subversion, found on the ground of intervention" (*Location 12*). Ambivalence basically is unsettling to colonial dominance. In fact, controversial proposition lies at the center of ambivalence. Colonial relation is compelled to be ambivalent because it never really wants colonial subjects to be exact replicate of the colonizers. It would be threatening.

Likely, colonialism creates an ambivalent situation where the monolithic power would be disputed. Thus, anti-colonialism is the political struggle of colonized fact that anti-colonialism opposes as a resistance to the operations of colonial in

different levels, namely, political, economic and cultural institution. Anyway at the ambivalence of colonial discourse implicated the colonizing and colonized subjects. Therefore, it can be said that the concept of ambivalence is related to hybridity.

In addition, Bhabha brings postcolonial perspective in relation to the contemporary critical theory in a quite radical way. He explains at length, the act of doubling the white man's image in effect displayed the representations of authority. In *Location of Culture*, he tries to clarify about mimicry and ambivalence that function within colonial discourse. It has come to describe the ambivalence relationship between colonizers and colonized especially when one considers that colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' colonizer by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institution and values. He says that mimicry, therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance; an uncertainty in its control of the behavior of the colonized. Bhabha further opines, "It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double that my instances of colonial imitation come" (*Location* 86).

In another word, the colonized mime the colonizer by adopting colonizer's culture language and values. As Bhabha says, "almost the same but not quite" (qtd. *In key concept* 140). The mimic men never become pure white but appear also as mockery or parody of the whites: The colonized want to acquire the superior position of the colonizers through mimicry. However, they are able to represent the colonizer as expressed by Bhabha:

The menace of mimicry in its double vision which is closing the ambivalence of colonial discourses also disrupts also authority. And it

is a double vision that is result of what I've described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object. (*Location* 88)

He uses the 'mimicry to define the colonized, as a mimic man is not the same person as the colonizer by wearing a 'mask' to imitate the colonizer. Thus, mimicry of the colonizer places the colonized in an ambivalent, hybrid space or 'in-betweenness'. In this way, cultural hybridity incorporates with different issue which are studied in post-colonial theory such as Diaspora, migration, dislocation, alienation etc.

Diaspora studies one of the major areas to study post-colonial theory. The word 'Diaspora' is derived from a Greek word, which means dispersal and was originally applied to describe the condition of the Jewish people living outside religious commitment that gives the sense of exile from a place or Al. writes:

Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movements of people from their homelands into new regions, is a central historical fact of colonialization. Colonialism itself was a radically Diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlements of millions of Europeans over the entire world. (*Key Concepts* 68-59)

This is to say that colonized people who go to the metropolitan centers represent the most recent and most significant aspect of Diaspora movement. Nowadays, many critics have accepted 'diasporic identity' as a positive affirmation of their hybridity.

Diaspora is the movement of people from known location (their homelands) to unknown location (new regions). Hence, Diaspora creates a sense of dislocation and alienation because they could not adjust themselves in new location and culture.

Ashcroft et.al. further writes:

After the slave trade, and when slavery was outlawed by the European power in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the demands for



cheap agriculture labor in colonial plantation economic was met by the development of a system of indentured labor. This involved transporting, under indentured agreements, large population of poor agricultural areas, such as India and China, to area where they were needed to service plantation. (*Key Concepts* 69)

Therefore, the word Diaspora which has initiated in the beginning forms an easily identification with Jewish communities and is celebrated including the experience of people marked by forced migration and enslavement (the African Diaspora in the U. S. Latin America and Caribbean), the system of indenture labor (the Indian Diaspora in Caribbean) and as a shifting condition of colonial and postcolonial period (for instance, and Caribbean communities in England).

Diaspora studies are an academic field established in the late twentieth century to study dispersed ethnic populations, which are often termed Diaspora peoples. Initially, Diaspora was concerned narrowly to the issue of migration. But in English literature, it is studied its areas along with cultural studies. The new concept of diaspora insists the idea that it explains the complexity, diversity and fixity of migrant identities and experiences. It relates the idea of uprooting of migrants from their societies and cultures of origin, and given the sense of alienation, displacement, exile and dislocation. Thus Diaspora also causes cultural hybridity in diasporic regions.

Migration, being the subject of postcolonial discourse, is not a new phenomenon. It widens its areas that it becomes a significant issue of political studies. It has also created new problems as many peoples are uprooted and forced to leave their homes behind. The voluntary and unwanted migration accelerates to challenge the cultural and demographic stability of the globe as well. Migration breeds the state of cultural and geographical rootlessness, leading to the feeling of alienation and

estrangement, which are the adverse diaspora effects. In the other word, migration is also one of the major factors for cultural hybridity.

Dislocation refers to the lack of fitness when one moves from a familiar to unfamiliar location. Heidegger's term 'unheimlich' or 'unheimlichkeit' - literally 'unhousedness' or 'not-at-houseness' - which is sometimes translated as 'uncanny' or 'uncanniness' is often taken as depicting the unpleasant experiences of dislocation. Further, dislocation is a socio-cultural phenomenon which is result of translocation by slavery or in prison, by invasion or settlement, a consequent of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown location.

In the past, dislocation was developed physically, socially and individually in the institution of slavery and the system of indentured labor. Ashcroft et.al. says, "The practices of slavery and indenture labor resulted in world -wide colonial diaspora" (*Key Concepts* 69). In this way, diasporic communities formed by slavery, indenture labour and forced or voluntary migration are dislocated and alienated new social - culture milieu. It can be extended to include the psychological and personal dislocation.

According to Hall, the face of society is that ruptured place where there is instability of the identities .The reason behind is that of the decline of old identities .which stabilized the social structure for long time. That is why; it gives rise to new identities, and fragment modern subject. It indicates the identities crisis. Dislocation can also be defined to describe both displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation, and the experience related with it. Place and displacement are crucial, and displacements are crucial feature of post-colonial discourse but place means not simply physical landscape. Moreover, Ashcroft et. al define and argue that a "place in post-colonial societies is a complex interaction of language, history and environment.

It is characterized firstly by sense of displacement in those who have moved to the colonies or the more widespread language, of a gap between the 'experience' environment and description by sense of immense investment of culture is construction of place" (*Reader* 391).

The problem is here if one possesses English as a mother language and she/he who speaks it as a second language because of the lack of fitness between language and place. Therefore, the concepts of place and displacement create the complex interaction of language, history and environment in the experience of colonized people. Sometimes, taking the issue of, 'place' does not become a society's cultural discourage until colonial intervention drastically disrupts the primary modes of its representation of separating 'space' that dislocation 'space' into colonized 'place' that dislocation becomes obvious. Thus, what becomes apparent is that the 'place' is much more than the land. For instance, in Aboriginal societies, place is traditionally not a visual construct, measurable space, or even a topographical system but a tangible location of one's own being.

Culture is not static; it grows out a systematically encouraged reverence for selected customs and habits. In fact, Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* defines culture as the "total pattern of human behavior and its products embodied in speech, action, and artifacts and dependent upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generation." So, culture covers all aspects of human behavior embodied in speech, action, and different objects which are transferred generation and generation.

Raymond Williams has analyzed culture in three categories. Firstly, according to him, "culture is a state or process of human perfection in terms of certain absolute or universal value". Secondly, "culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative

work, in which, in a detailed way, human thoughts and experiences are variously recorded. Thirdly, “culture is description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meaning and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior” (*Culture* 48).

During 19<sup>th</sup> century, culture was accepted as a whole and distinctive way of life, and as the form of human civilization reading, observation and thinking about moral perfection and social good. Culture also is the high point of civilization reading and the concern of the elite groups. It also plays vital role in art and literature. That is to say, culture is the issue of creativity and change. It shows the social relations of reproduction and gives meaningful production in the society. There are other terms like multicultural, race, ethnicity, marginality etc. which are frequently studied by the postcolonial theories.

Multiculturalism has taken two distinct features. On the one hand, multiculturalism celebrates the diversity of cultural groups. It is also defined as ethnic revitalization, which seeks to preserve the cultural practices of targeted group and to resist the homogeneity of assimilation. On the other hand, it shows the densities of individuals as primarily cultural, determined by their membership in a group and not as the expression of or unique self-consciousness. To the large, it celebrates the differences between the cultures, race, caste, rituals and social activities. It shows the awareness of the social, economic and cultural realities.

From a multiculturalism perspective, all societies today are culturally heterogeneous in different degrees. The tension between liberal-western universalism and cultural loyalties is worldwide setting. The tension is clear in the influence on their language belief, aspirations, and patterns of consumption, life-style, self - understanding and innermost fears etc. are often systematic that they do to notice it

with traditional and cultural beliefs in developing societies. Multicultural perspective widens the frontier characteristic by many critics. Likely, racial issue can be also studied in multiculturalism.

The term 'Race' classifies and genetically distinguishes distinct groups. Firstly, humanity is divided into unchanging natural types, and is recognizable by physical features that are transmitted' through the blood' and divides between 'pure' and mixed' races. In addition, the term implies the mental and moral behaviors of human beings, and individual personality, ideas and capacities etc. are concerned to the racial origin. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin explain: "Racism can be defined as a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, casual way to psychological or intellectual characteristics and which on this basis distinguishes between 'superior' and 'inferior' racial groups" (*Key Concepts* 199). Race has been attached historically and primarily to one attribute: color and the relationship between 'race' and 'status' has a long history. In 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was slavery system where blacks were kept as slaves. In Darwinism, *The Origin of Species* (1859), Darwin postulated the notion of race through natural selection. What he has admitted the probability for racial development, was known as social Darwinism. Bill Ashcroft et. al, adds "*The Negro of black Africans* color and allegedly 'primitive' color, but primarily because they were best known to Europeans as slaves" (*Key Concepts* 199). In brief, Negroes are always looked through whiter stereotyped eyes and they are supposed to be slaves. It creates problem in terms of ethnic belongingness.

Ethnicity is a term that is not the mainstream and groups that are not traditionally identified with the national Mythology. In fact, ethnicity comes in recent times in the contexts of immigration. Thus, Bill Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin define:

"A groups or category of persons who have a common ancestral origin and the same cultural traits, who have a sense of peoplehood and of group belonging, who of immigrant back ground and have either minority or majority status within a larger society" (*qtd. In Isajaw*, 118- 82). Ethnicity encourages a sense of belonging based in part, on a common mythological ancestry. Ethnicity is not a matter of fixed and stable selves. In fact, ethnic groups are marginal from the point of view of those people who are in power, and people who do not and want to be identified as to ethnic groups according to the boundaries of the definition of ethnicity.

Moreover, particular ethnic groups become diasporic when it comes into contact with another more dominant ethnic group. Consequently, the issue of preservation of ethnic identity becomes prominent where the resultant identity is never pure, rather it will become hybrid. In a word, it gives a sense of lacking of representation and the subject is marginalized under the superior of dominant ethnic group.

Marginality is a term that is used to refer to the place of repressed or subordinated textual meanings and also to the position of dissident intellectual and social groups like women, gays, lesbians, black etc., who are step at a remove from the normative assumption and oppressive power structure of mainstream society. The marginality concept has reference to the general and all inclusive condition that exists and has continuous interaction with and had a dependency upon and deviates in certain socially normative patterns from a more dominant group. The marginality is a group, which is culturally and socially on the periphery of and defined by outside groups, especially the dominant groups.

In this regards, Everest H. Stonequist has defined the following four type of marginal man: the migrant foreigner, the second generation immigrant, the Jew

emancipated from the ghetto and the man of mixed blood. In *The Marginal Man* Stonequist says, 'The marginal man is the one who leaves one's social group and culture. He is unable to fully adjust to new group or culture. He always remains on the margins of both and considers himself of not belonging to either of the culture' (18). Cultural marginality is one of the wide areas of study and discussion. It emphasizes on the behavioral patterns, beliefs, customs and organizations of the marginal groups as distinguished from cultural patterns of the dominant group. The minority groups are distinguished from cultural patterns of the dominant group. The minority groups, which sustain various patterns of social behavior can be isolated, identified and observed. Paige, in *Education for Intercultural Experience*, writes:

Cultural marginality describes an experience; one typical of global nomads and others who have been folded by exposure to two or more cultural traditions. Such people do not tend to fit it perfectly into any one of the cultures to which they have been exposed but many fit comfortably or the edge in the marginality is in and of itself neither bad nor good although the experience has the potential to be both. It is characterized by the potential for, on the one hand, feeling at home everywhere. (1)

Marginality includes such interaction process like conflict, cooperation, competition, accommodation, and assimilation etc. One can distinguish the process through which an accommodative plateau or an assimilative stage may be reached between dominant and non-dominant groups. Bill Aschcroft et. al. say, "The marginal therefore indicates a positionality that is best defined in the terms of the limitations of a subject's access to power" (*Key Concepts* 135). So, marginal man lacks positionality and subjectivity that indicates the crisis of identity. In this way, above discussed issues basically give

birth to the condition of cultural hybridity. Then other important issues like identity crisis and alienation will be discussed ahead in details.

### **Identity Crisis**

The issue of identity is something previously assumed to be fixed or stable that is to be questioned with the experience of doubt and indeterminacy. One of the reasons that identity questioned is because of globalization and they are not absolutes of nature and culture. Thus, today's identities are not static and they are not absolutes of nature and culture. The factors of changes in identity can be put into the words of Chris Barker. He writes:

Identity is hotly debated when it is in crisis. Globalization provides the context for just such a crisis since it has increased the range of source and resources available for identity construction during colonialism and its aftermath, combined with more recent acceleration of globalization, particularly of electronic communications, have enabled increased cultural juxtaposing, meeting and mixing. (*Cultural Studies* 200)

Thus, the issue of identity is discussed widely. It is affected by the high speed of globalization and mass media etc. which mix different cultures in the same place.

Regarding the issue of identity, Clifford says, "culture and cultural identities can no longer be adequately understood in terms of place, but are better conceptualized in terms of travel" (*qtd. In Barker 200*). It can be said that identity is sketched from various dimensions because of the emergence of new theories in the recent era. Indeed, identities are not constant. Furthermore, they are influenced by different factors like the economic, political and cultural as colonialism, globalization and immigration. As a result, no fixed and constant identity will remain for a long



time, which causes cultural hybridity and mixes indispensably. The exponents the post-colonial theory agrees that cultural hybridity is one of the vicious consequences of ambivalent relationship between colonizers and colonized, between the dominant and marginal group. Once the colonial settlers and arrived in the new place, they involved in a binary relationship between the people of two cultures, language and races. This created a hybrid and cross-cultures, and a mixture of language and races and further gave birth to hybrid and cross-cultural society.

Identity is not stable and fixed, and is always fluctuating. So, the crisis of identity may happen due to the lack of location to a specific culture or nation. Kobena Mercer, quoted by Hall, says, “Identity only becomes as issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable, is displaced by experience of doubt and uncertainty” (275). In this way, Kobena Mercer says that the question of identity is only considered when he/she is departed from the fixed and stable culture. Thus, the crisis of identity insists the feeling of alienation that are dislocated from their known or origin.

#### **a. Culture**

The concept of culture is central to cultural studies, yet there is no ‘correct’ or definite meaning attached to it. Etymologically, the word ‘culture’ was derived from the Latin word ‘cultural as a noun of process connected to growing crops that is cultivation. Subsequently, the idea of cultivation was broadened to encompass the human mind or ‘spirit’ giving rise to the idea of the cultivation or cultured person. The New Encyclopedia Britannica defines culture as “integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that is both a result of an integral to the human capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge for succeeding federation” (784).

Culture, thus, consists of language, ideas, belief, customs, taboos, codes, institution, tools, techniques, works, arts, rituals, ceremonies and symbols.

Every human society has its own particular culture, or socio-cultural system. An individual's attitudes, values, and belief are greatly influenced by the culture in which he or she lives. Culture changes takes places as a result of ecological socioeconomic, political, religions, or other fundamental factor affecting a society. Famous English anthropologist E.B. Tylor defines culture as "the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."(qtd. in Mitchell 45)

The concept of culture is a tool which is more or less useful to us as a life form. The study of within sociology, anthropology and literature pre-date culture studies as streams of thoughts with particular themes and theoretical meanings.

Culture has undergone a massive change by the mid twentieth century. Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of culture representation involved in the contest for political and social authority with the modern world order. So, culture becomes the most contested space with the emergency of postcolonial criticism.

Postcolonial perspective emerged within the geopolitical division of east and west, north and south from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the 'discourses of minorities'. They formulate their critical revision around the issue of culture difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moment within the rationalization of modernity. According to Bhabha, postcolonial criticism forces us to engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value of composed of incommensurable demands and practices, production in the act of social survival.

Culture research comes out to create a symbolic textually, to give the alienating everyday an aura of self-hood, a promise of pleasure (438). Edward W. Said writes a notable postcolonial /culture critic writes about the general relationship between culture and empires, for him, 'the scope of orientalism' matches with 'the scope of empire'. At the same time, he also sees the culture representing as well as functioning as a form of hegemony. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony of European ideas about the Orient themselves reiterating European superiority over oriental backwardness. Said further writes: The history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings.

Cultures are not impermeable; just as Western science borrowed from Arabs; they had borrowed from India and Greece. Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures. (Culture 261) So, culture is both powerful means of differentiation, appropriation and domination. While culture is concerned with tradition and social reproduction, it is also a matter of creativity and change.

Culture is the arts and values, norms and symbolic goods of everyday life. Williams' concept of culture is 'anthropological' in so far as it centers on everyday meanings: values, norms and material / symbolic goods. Meanings are generated not by individuals but by collectives. So the idea of culture refers to shared meanings. Two people belong to the same culture is to that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other. Thus, culture depends on its participating meaningfully what is happening around them, and making sense' of the world, in broadly similar ways. Culture for Williams is constituted by the meanings

and practices of ordinary men and women. Culture is lived experience: the texts, practices and meanings of all people as they conduct their lives. Such meanings and practices are enacted when we struggle to shape our lives creatively. Culture does not float free the material conditions of life; on the contrary, for Williams “whatever purpose cultural practice may serve, its means of production are always unarguable material” (87). Thus, the meanings of lived culture are to be explored within the context of their condition of production, thus, forming culture as a whole way of life. Culture studies ask questions about which meaning are into circulation by whom, for what purpose and in whose interesting. The concept of culture within cultural studies is also a political one concerned with question of power. Much of the cultural studies have been centered on question of power, knowledge, ideology and hegemony. Considerations of meaning have led cultural as a set of signifying practices that is the organization of signs that generate meaning.

To sum up, cultural function as a part of cultural technologies which organization and shape social life and human conduct. Culture is matter not just of representations and consciousness, but of institutional practices, administrative routine and spatial arrangement. Culture studies are an arm of reforming and regulatory government.

### **c. Hybridity**

Hybridity refers in its basis sense to mix. Thus it is possession or occurrence of mixture. Hybridization is understood as the process by which hybridity occurs and a hybrid is formed. The term originates from agriculture and has for a long time been strongly related to the concept of racial purity from colonial history. Its contemporary uses are scattered across numerous academic disciplines and is salient in popular culture.

Hybridity originates from the Latin 'hybrid', a term used to classify the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar. A hybrid is something that is mixed, hybridity is simple mixture. As an explicative term, hybridity became a useful tool in forming a fearful discourse of racial axing that arose towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Scientific models of anatomy and craniotomy were used to argue that Africans and Asians were racially inferior to Europeans. Hybrids were seen as an aberration, worse than the inferior races, a weak and diseased mutation. The rhetoric of hybridity is associated with the emergency of postcolonial discourse and its critiques of culture imperialism. The history of hybridity is characterized by literature and theory that focuses on the effects of mixture upon identity and culture. The notion of hybridity is central to Bhabha's work in challenging notion of identity, culture, and nation as coherent and unified entities that exhibit a linear historical development. Hybridity expresses a state of 'in-betweenness,' as in a person who stands between two cultures. His key argument is the colonial hybridity, as a culture form produced ambivalence in the colonial master and as such altered the authority of power. His arguments have become key in the discussion of hybridity; however his thesis is largely concerned with the narratives of culture imperialism. According to Bhabha, hybridity became more concerned with challenging essentialism and has been applied to sociology theories of identity, multiculturalism, and racism. In his interpretation, hybridity can be seen as a counter narrative a critique of the canon and its exclusion of other narratives. The language of hybridity seems to its theoretical impetus from Fanon's astute reading of colonial oppression as a catalyst for the accelerated mutation of colonized society. But the discourse of hybridity is not without its limitation. In this context, Leela Gandhi says:

Despite postcolonial attempts to foreground the mutual transculturation of colonizer and colonized; celebration of hybridity generally refers to the destabilizing of colonized culture. The West remains the privileged meeting ground for all ostensibly cross – culture conversation.

Moreover within the metropolis, multicultural celebration of ‘culture diversity’ conveniently disguises rather more serious economic and political disparities. In this context, it is also crucial to remain wary claims which favor hybridity as the only ‘enlightened’ response to racial /colonial oppression. (136)

Hybridity is one of the most disputed terms in postcolonial studies. According to Ashcroft Griffiths, and Tiffin, hybridity commonly refers to “the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (*Key Concept 118*). Hybridization takes many forms including culture, political and linguistic.

Robert Young, a widely written commenter on imperialism and post –colonial, has remarks on the negativity sometime associates with the terms hybridity. He notes how it was influential in imperial and colonial discourse in giving damaging report on the union of different races. Young argues that at the turn of the century, ‘hybridity’ has become a part of a colonist discourse of racism.

As understood within the domain of postcolonial criticism, hybridity is the result of the orientalist project of the West. The term ‘hybridity’ has something to do with the traumatic colonial experience since it is the ‘ambivalent relationship’ of the colonizer and the colonized. Since the colonial settlers were displaced from their own point of origin, they felt the necessity off establishing new identity in an alien land. A binary relationship between the people of two cultures, races and languages emerged in a colonized society producing a hybrid or cross culture society. The foundational

discourse of conquest and colonization are the modern move to deploy hybridity as a distinctly anti-imperialist and anti-authoritarian development.

Hybridity subverts the narrative of colonial power and dominant culture. The series of inclusion and exclusion on which a dominant culture is premised are deconstructed by the very entry of the formally-excluded subject into the mainstream discourse. The dominant culture is contaminated by the linguistic and racial differences of the native self. In Chris Barker's words: "Neither the colonial nor colonized culture and language can be presented in 'pure' form, nor separated from other, giving rise to hybridity in metropolitan culture like American and British, for example, Latino-American and British Asian" (26). To sum up, hybridity is an expression of everyday life in the post-imperial era. Hybridization and realization of language, literature and culture identities have a common theme on postcolonial literature. This challenges not only the central of colonial culture and marginalization of the colonized, but also the very idea of 'centre' and 'margin'. The forthcoming chapter deals with culture hybridity in Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* no longer at ease and its impact on the life of the protagonist, Equiano.

#### **d. Liminality:**

This term derives from the word 'limen', meaning threshold, a word particularly used in psychology to indicate the threshold between the sensate and the subliminal, the limits below which a certain sensation ceases to be perceptible. The sense of the liminal as an interstitial or in-between space, a threshold area, distinguishes the term from the more definite word 'limit' to which it is related. The importance of the liminal for post-colonial theory is precisely its usefulness for describing an 'in-between' space in which culture change may occur: the transcultural space in which strategies for personal or communal self-hood may be

elaborated, a region in which there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different states. For instance, the colonized subject may dwell in the liminal space between colonial discourse and the assumption of a new 'non-colonial'. But such identification is never simply a movement from one identity to another; it is a constant process of engagement, contestation and appropriation. Homi Bhabha quotes the arts historian Renee Green's characterization of a stairwell as a 'liminal space' a pathway between upper and lower areas, each of which was annotated with plaques referring to blackness and whiteness' (Bhabha 1994) to indicate how the liminal can become a space of symbolic interaction. That is, the stairwell, the liminal, prevents identities from polarizing between such arbitrary designation as 'upper' and 'lower', 'black' and 'white'. In a sense one could say that post-colonial discourse itself consistently inhabits this liminal space, for the polarities of imperial rhetoric on one hand, and national or racial characterization on the other, are continually questioned and problematized. For Bhabha, the liminal is important because liminality and hybridity go hand in hand. This 'interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up possibility of the culture hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or improve hierarchy' (1994: 4). He further employs liminality to show that 'post-modernity, post-colonialism, post-feminism' are meaningless if the 'post' simply means 'after'. Each of these represents a liminal space of contestation and changes at the edges of the presumed monolithic but never completely 'beyond'. The present can no longer be envisaged as a break or a bonding with the past or future; our presence comes to be revealed in its 'discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities'.



### III. Cultural Hybridity in *The Interesting Narrative*: Textual Analysis

This research is focused on Olaudah Equiano's autobiography *The Interesting Narrative* in the light of cultural hybridity in the age of colonialism. It is usual to remember that in contemporary cultural theory the term *Hybridity* functions as a polemical term whose contention is directed against the idea of cultural purity in all its shapes. Especially as defined by Homi K. Bhabha the concept of cultural hybridity objects not only to openly racist ideologies but also to the liberal discourse of assimilation that supposedly reduces cultural difference to folkloristic, indeed touristic, attractions. This text shows how western modes of writing and traveling endow the colonial process of intercultural encounter with an emancipatory potential.

The intercultural quality of Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* is more complicated than it first appears. Equiano claims that he was born in 1745 in the part of Africa that is now Nigeria. The narrator Olaudah Equiano is kidnapped with his sister in his 11 from Essaka village of Nigeria and sold to slavery and carried to Barbados by British slavers through "Middle passage". Traditionally, the slave ship set out first from a home port bound for the Atlantic coast of America. After exchanging their cargos of various goods for slaves, they depart for the West Indies or another destination on the American continent so called middle passage or second legs of the voyage-where the most human cargo is stored on board in the most inhuman condition imaginable. His only one consolation of his grief –his sister –is also separated from him. The narrator says:

They make them tie me faster and stop my mouth; they then put me into a large sack. They also stopped my sister's mouth and tied her hands [...], And the only comfort we had was in being in one another arms all that night and bathing each other with tears. But also we were

soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together. The next day yet experienced for my sister and I were then separated. (49-50)

Once again, the luck makes Equiano and his sister unite in one evening in an English master's house. As soon as she sees him she gives a loud shriek and runs into his arms. He is quite over powered. Neither of them could speak but for a considerable time clung to each other in mutual embraces, nor able to do anything, but weep. They hold one another by the hands across his breast; and thus for a while they forgot their misfortunes in the joy of being together.

Reading *Interesting Narrative* is a dual exercise in reading culture. The novel's actions focus upon the culture rite of black circumcision. Furthermore, the protagonist is an African recently brought to Britain by Kidnappers. This offers an example of ideal Afro-Britain, embodying the culture of Africa and inhabiting the geographical space of the American. When he was brought into Euro-American culture, he hears a European quote from the Old Testament, the narrator comments: "I was fully surprised to see the laws and rules of my own country written almost exactly here a circumstance which I believe tended to impress our manners and customs more deeply on my memory" (92). If we try to trace the various stages of Equiano's ethnic self-understanding, we can say that in the beginning he suffers from his difference. When as a child he realized that others mistreated him not by chance but because of his skin color, he makes a desperate attempt at self-transformation "I tried often times myself if I could not by washing make of my face of the same color as my little playmate (Marry), but it was all in vain: and I now began to be mortified at the difference in our complexions". (109)

Identity is in crisis in *The Interesting Narrative* because the protagonist who is assumed as having a fixed, coherent and stable identity in the black Igbo culture of

Africa is displaced to the European dominant culture. Cornel West further opines, identity has “desire for recognition, quest for visibility; the sense of being acknowledged; a deep desire for associated” (15). Therefore, identity is associated with desire –desire for recognition, association and protection over time and in space. The known identity, which stabilized the social world ebbs out producing new identity and fragmentation of the modern individual’s subjects.

Hence the ‘identity crisis’ is assumed and felt in the process of changing identity; dislocation the central structure in the social world. Hall writes “modern identified are being de-centered that is dislocated or fragmented” (274). Hall further quotes Kobena Merviers and expresses that identity only becomes an issue when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable, is displaced by the experiences of doubt and uncertainty. Therefore, identity is constructed under certain circumstances which are not chosen deliberately and is questioned when it is in crisis. Thus identity crisis evokes the sense of belongingness to a specific culture in a certain time and place.

In *The Interesting Narrative* Equiano realize his identity in crisis when African and European cultures are cut across each other and when he has been dispersed from their home lands or known location. He adopts the dominant culture by acculturation and choice but seeks the traces of the specific culture, tradition, language etc. in which they were enclosed Straut Hall calls such emerging cultures as cultural hybridity" (247). Similarly, Rushdie presents his view that "the bearer feels culturally translated borne across" (17). This is why, identities are forever questioned and actual “crisis” remains in their ambiguous structure. Most of the contemporary writers, especially V.S Naipaul, express nostalgia for stable identity. They think themselves as culturally exiled and try to rejoin them with their root culture which can

be noticed conspicuously in their writing and texts. Equiano serves as the stage upon which the opera of Africa American cultural /ethnic identity can be performed.

Equiano is an African as well as a Briton. He seems fully aware of the consequences inherent in pledging full allegiance to either or both but is also that the two are differently connected but separate. Although born as an African, Equiano is British by acculturation and choice. These binary opposition places him into his tenuous identity as the African–Briton.

Similarly attributing the life of Equiano with dislocated position, Terry S.

Bozeman views this autobiography from the multicultural condition of life. He writes:

Published over a century before W.E.B Dubois articulates the notion of a double consciousness, Equiano's narrative explores the notion of hybrid existence. . . . He comes to be viewed instead as inhabiting an interstitial landscape caught between an identity to which he can never fully return and one in which he will be allowed to fully take part. (61)

Bozeman means that Olaudah Equiano has awareness of his identity as a Briton.

Thus, his role lies within these two. Equiano's autobiography is an example of culture hybridity in the age of colonialism but his idea of hybridity itself is a weapon for the resistance to Eurocentric cultural and political imposition. Franks Kelleter says:

"According to post-colonial model indigenous, displaced person, African slaves and other marginalized groups are no longer seen as helpless and mainly passive objective of an helpless and mainly passive objective of an inevitable historical process but as after agent in a reciprocal dynamics of dispossession and appropriation" (2).

According to him, cultural identity is always the result of a complex process of exchange. Cultural and political assimilation are exploitative, but western modernity itself is hybrid phenomenon. Equiano's hybrid position –Olaudah Equiano (African

identity) and Gustavus Vassa (English name) can be taken as resistance to colonial exploitation.

Furthermore, he is exceptional among his contemporary British brethren: not only is he able to stand both on the inside and outside of the window of British society. Equiano can move efficiently between the two. The issue is which role Equiano assume when he needs to and how he comes to know and understand his liminal position as well as his ability to work within it. Accepting the essence of who Equiano is, in the end, is to acknowledge the reality that he was a living oxymoron perpetuating a simple complex life .Seymour Drescher points out: "People like the African Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa) who passed through the full cycle from capture in Africa through slavery in the Americas to freedom, intern marriage and ultimately into abolitionism in England were quite exception" (22-23).

Deciphering Equiano's complexity is to locate him between two extremes. Hardly conceivable is the possibility that any two identities could be more opposite than the Africans and the British. On the one hand, Equiano as the African assumes the role of master's objects, incapable of establishing his own identity outside his status as a void. On the other hand, Equiano as British subject is the agent of himself, able to make his own conscious identity known as not void. The vast space between the voided nonbeing of the African and that of the "ultimate being" the British citizen remains deceptively large. When examined through the lens of Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, however, these opposition extremes do not appear as daunting.

Bhabha's text allows one to visualize how subjugated people formulate alternative mechanism in the face of a crushing of oppressive forces. Understanding the binary functionality of Equiano's socio-geopolitical position supports the belief

that he is too complex to fall simply under a single category one name, or a purely singular existence. Bhabha writes of this positioning in these words:

Private and public past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially oppose. These spheres of life are linked through an “in between” temporality that takes the measures of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment of the aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double edge which represents a hybridity, a difference “within” a subject that inhabits the rim an inbetween reality. (13)

It is specially this “in-between” reality that so complicates Equiano. Because he rests among multiple location of identity, Equiano develops an inherent level of intimacy towards each aspect of his identity. The interstitial locale he inhabits becomes crucial to understanding the position Equiano occupies.

Equiano’s reality of what lies before him when he first encounters the awaiting slaves-ship indicates the stark contrast of the two worlds he will later inhabits. The sight that confront him are so alien that Equiano finds himself speed less; the difference between the inhabitants of the world is stolen from the one he is being carried off to are so viscerally apparent that Equiano thinks that he has entered into world of bad spirit” (1:70) one for which he has not yet develops a vocabulary to describe. But this world of “bad spirit” would not long remain a source of fear for him Equiano writes:

During our passage I first saw flying fishes which surprised me very much they used frequently to fly across the ship and many of them fell

on the deck I also now first saw the use of the quadrant. I had often with astonishment seen mariners make observation with it and could not think what it meant. They at last took notice of my surprise; and one of them, willing to increase it, as well as to gratify my curiosity, made me one day look through it. (83)

Where the two worlds collide and understandable might inspire the deepest terror Equiano makes his curiosity known and is in a sense rewarded for it. Chinosole argues that “some degree of mental colonization was the price Equiano paid for the privilege socio-economic position that permitted him to write and publish his autobiography at that time” (50). While it might be argued that Equiano did not necessarily “pay” for this and other privilege it is more accurate to say that he was negotiable for them.

For Equiano even his name(s) points to need to understand and navigates the hybrid zone that he inhabits. Like many slaves, Equiano was given several names by his owner “Micheal” and “Jacob” were two names given to him earlier in his life. However, it is the name disparity of Oaudah Equiano –Gustavus Vassa that points to his ultimate multiconscious awareness with his progress and awareness develops via his gradual English language acquisition. Equiano seems to sense the agency inherent in identifying one’s name. He writes of this awakening in the passage below:

While I was on board this ship, my captain and master named me Gustavus Vassa. I at that time began to understand him a little and refused to be called so, and told him as well as I could that I would be called Jacob; but he said I should not, and still called me Gustavus, and I refused to my new name which at first I did it gained me many a cuff; so at length I submitted . . . . (96)

He understands that to name himself to make the initial steps of subjectifying himself and to place himself and not merely be placed in position of establishing his own center. Essentially, what Equiano does is what Bhabha terms “presencing himself”. By presenting himself, Equiano forces his readers not to look at either extremity of any element of his manifold existence but, rather to gather an awareness of that zone between any two terms fused together in an attempt to identify him. It is that intersection that Equiano refuses to be ignored. Whether it is the African –Britain, the Christian heather or the slaves –freedom and duality, Equiano ultimately positions himself within and around all these dichotomized position. His names present his own faces, the face of the *trickster*. The issue becomes why he refuses not to dismiss one name for the other. His *Narrative* stands witness to the issue of self-naming. The facts remains that it is his name that gives him his marketability.

*The Interesting Narrative*, despite the alienated condition of the protagonist Equiano, who is the victim of cultural changes, is hybrid by culture. So he belongs to neither of culture–African nor American –even though he adopts of both culture by acculturation and choice. His position is that of “ambivalence” in the words of Homi K.Bhabha. At the same time, it also sketches how the protagonist is dislocated from his familiar place to unknown places; from his culture to new unknown culture:

I had observed that my father’s house was towards the rising of sun I therefore determined to seize the first opportunities to making my escape and to shape my course for that quarter for I was quite oppressed and weighed down by grief after my mother and friends and my love and liberty ever great was strengthened by the mortifying circumstances of not daring to eat with the free born children. (50-53)



Therefore, dislocation and displacement cause the resulting of alienation. Equiano is pathetic in this loneliness within himself after estranged from his root culture and struggle to find out his cultural identity and stability. In the name of pride, his root culture exploits him physically and emotionally. Equiano writes “I soon grew a stranger to terror of every kind and was in that respect at least, amongst an English man” (132). This statement lays the foundation, or sentences like the following [w]e sailed once more in quest of fame, I longed engaged in new adventure and to see fresh wonder” (154). Later on, the narrator writes: “[B]y seeing still of a roving disposition and desirous of seeing as many different parts of the world as I could, I was roused by the sound of frame to seek new adventure and to find towards the north pole in that our creator, never intended, we should a passage to India” (171-72). Words like these can be spoken only by a hero.

In the case of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African, assimilation and ethnic self-dramatization always go hand in hand. It is some significance in this context that Equiano spends his period of apprenticeship mainly on boats and ship “moving “as Paul Gilroy writes, “to and fro between nations, crossing border’s in modern machine that were themselves micro system of linguistic and political hybridity”. So while Equiano is in no position to exchange his services and commodities freely, he leaves nothing undone to appointment of this deal of action. Fully aware of his economic value, he offers then competence and dependability to receive in turn what he calls a *character* and what later generation will simply name *reputation*: an authorized public persona: “I was very thankful to captain Doran and even my old master” he declares, “for the character they had given me: a character which I afterwards found of infinite service to me” (100).

The hybridity is formed from the mixing and movement of two cultures. The mixture is represented by Equiano, an African born in Essaka and accepts his Eboe culture and tradition but spends most of adult's life in Europe. So in Britain, Europe is influenced by Christianity and through this Braininess comes in his consciousness: "I have been habited by the laws of land" (177). His look Africans but culturally he is really neither African nor British. His identity is quite ambiguous. Equiano says, "I had been long tired and returning to England where my heart had always been" (188). In the words of Equiano, it is clear that he is looking for a new identity as British and he is alienated from his previous culture known place and people.

Equiano is living with double consciousness. Double consciousness is a way of perceiving the world that is divided between two antagonistic cultures: that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community. Equiano's world is also divided between two antagonistic cultures-one is his Ibo culture and another is American culture. His Ibo culture takes away by his slavery and gives him physical pain and suffering. He writes, "I had seldom beaten at home. I therefore resolved to fly; and accordingly I ran into a thicket that was hard by, and hid himself in the bushes" (54). He is caught between two cultures: African and Britain. Neither does he deny his Britoness nor does he fully accept this African culture. This feeling of beings caught between two cultures, or a sense of belonging to neither, rather than to both.

The autobiography *Interesting Narrative* creates a vivid psychological landscape of the writer who is alienated from the known culture. He belongs to the mixture of two cultures. He belongs to the mixture of two cultures which divided him as unified subject. The hybrid situation places set him in a sense of ambivalent position. As a hybrid subject living in different places sets him in a sense in Europe, Equiano feels himself alienated and in estrangement. The main reason of his feeling

of alienation is his identity crisis –On the one hand, he long for his parental root by purchasing freedom, but in other hand, he can't keep himself aloof from his entry with slaves traders. Such alienation breeds frustration, loneliness, pessimism, bad temper, negative attitude towards life and Equiano is victim of all these psychological states of mind.

Equiano alienation and frustration are more elaborated when Equiano survives the middle passage and at the end of the transatlantic voyages is sold to a Virginia planter. He does not stay in the America for long, however, as he is almost immediately sold again to Machael Henry Pascal, a lieutenant in the British navy. Although Equiano's living condition aboard Pascal's trading vessel were much more human than the transatlantic slaves' ship. Equiano tormented by the captain and over for their amusement captain Pascal in particular would jocularly tell the boy that he would kill and eat him. The treatment of cannibalism echoes Equiano's first meeting with European slaves traders: "I asked, if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks red faces and loose hair" (71). The Africans' fears of white cannibal were commonly expressed in tribals' love and its logic arose directly from the slaves, trade.

Equiano begins the enculturation process that blends his African identity with element of western culture. As a young boy at sea, Equiano acquires the same Gustavus Vassa who learns English and begins education that includes British as well as maritime essential. Equiano spends five years on the sea with Pascal as his master including service on a war ship. He uses the time on board Pascal ship and the leniency of his comparatively begins to educate him in the language, customs, law, and religion of English society. These chapters of the narrative represent Equiano's

life on the sea with Pascal as a time of relative freedom. In December of 1762, however Equiano is abruptly and unexpectedly sold to captain James Doran.

Equiano westernization does not afford him the guarantees, rights and privileges of freeborn from the white Briton. When he is summoned to the cabin of captain Doran where his former and present master stands before him, Equiano uses his understanding of English law, religion and language to argue against the action taken by Pascal: "[U]pon this captain Doran said I talked too much English and if I did not behave myself well and be quiet he had methods on board to make me I was too well convinced of his power over me to doubt what he said :and my former suffering in slaves –ship presenting themselves to my mind the recollection of them made me shudder" (177-78). Equiano mastery of English and the logic of his argument are over ridden by his slave status. His betrayal by Pascal evokes in his feelings of helplessness, represented by his remembrances of the middle Passage as Pascal leaves Doran's ship, Equiano throws himself on the deck in English. He feels like being "plunged ...in a new slavery; in comparison of which, all my services hitherto had been perfect freedom" (180). When he first came to England a great part of which he had spent at sea; so he became injured for his service and began to himself as happily situated. His master treated him always extremely well, he writes, "When I first came among them, and first time afterward. That fears, however, which was the of my ignorance, wore away as I began to know that I could speak English [...] had the stronger desire to resemble them; to imbibe their spirit, and imitate their manner; I therefore embraced every occasion of improvement" (132-33). He adopts all the activities for his stable identity as English man. He was going to be hybridized by nature and manners. He is in between double identity –African as well as British. He feels suffocation in his double identity: "I fell into the Thames; and not being able to

swim. I should unavoidable have been drowned” (135). He neither accepted totally the English culture nor denies his Ibo culture. He is celebrating both cultures: "I lost something in seeking after Christian and though, when Sabbath came, I was much inclined to go to public worship. I was obliged to hire some black man to help to pull a boat across the water to go in quest of the gentleman" (2:37). Equiano has been hybridized mentally and always wants to stay in England. He feels very sophisticated there. He is satisfied with his delivery cargo and "I had been long tired, and returning to England where heart had always been" (2:37).

*The Interesting Narrative* also represents the culture contact in the life of Equiano between peoples with different cultures, usually leading ‘to change in one or both systems’. Equiano continued to travel, sometimes by land, sometimes by water, through different countries and various nation, till, at the end of six or seven months after he had been kidnapped: “I passed through and the manners and customs of all the different people among whom I lived” (1:69). He visits different religious places: “I was always fond of going to see the different modes of worship of the people whenever I went" (2:94).

Europeanized gentleman, Equiano honors his Eboe culture, arguing that readers should do the same, specifically on the basis of Eboe and Hebrew biblical culture as he draws repeated parallels between the two:

We practiced circumcision like the Jews and made offerings and feasts on that occasion in the same manner as they did .Like them also our children were named from some events, some circumstances or fancied foreboding at the time of their birth ...we had many purification and washing; indeed almost as many and used on the same occasion, if my recollection does not fail me, as the Jews. (1:45)

By detailing the proximities of Eboe and biblical Hebrew culture, he challenges readers' assumption about 'primitive' behavior asking them in effect to recast their favorite Bible stories in a contemporary, specific African setting. So Equiano is a hybrid, living at the edge of a religious ideology stretched to the limits by his experience.

Similarly, Frank Kelleter presents Equiano's appropriation of traits that make up an essentialized whiteness-civilization, Christianity, nobility, truth as colonial mimicry.

Assimilation is best described as a subtle strategy by colonial power to achieve culture hegemony. There can be little doubt of course, that the practical result of assimilationist politics are frequently exploitive, but once we grant that western modernity is itself a hybrid, we should be ready to acknowledge that it is able to produce genuine forms of resistance to colonial exploitation. Olaudah Equiano *Interesting Narrative* can serve as a prime example here because this text shows western modes of writing and traveling endows the colonial process of intercultural encounter with an emancipatory potential. (20)

He sees his cultural hybridity as a weapon for the resistance to Eurocentric cultural political and racial imposition. He sees Equiano hybrid position –Olaudah Equiano (African black name) and Gustavus Vassa (English name) as resistance to colonial exploitations that is enacted in terms of races and color. Equiano's conversion of Christianity and his preference and assimilation of European culture and custom are simply his implicit campaign to erase the cultural difference that exists between white and black. Moreover, his appeal to encourage for intermarriage between black and white denotes his subtle resistance and disagreement with the racial discrimination

and injustice. Equiano does not intend to create utopia for black but he asks all blacks and white to form the world of harmony rupturing the racial gap between whites and blacks.

The autobiography is a sense of political writing as it protests the social evil i.e. slavery and advocates for justice and equality for blacks. Politically or socially and culturally or symbolically, by structuring his story, he shows his moral outrage towards racial discrimination. His overall emphasis is that freedom, justice, humanity and equality are not the consolation of religion, but emerge as the priority of the life.

Thus, the narrator along with the other black undergoes the racial injustice, prejudice discrimination, domination, and mental and physical torture in all social and culture activities in racist societies that are in the grip of racist ideology, which is disseminated to them through the ideological agencies. The characters are equally conscious of the whites unfair treatment to them and they resist implicitly or explicitly, physically or verbally, but they are made suffered more because the belief that dominated is to be dominated and the black are subordinated to the whites has trapped the society under the net of such misleading category of classification which the suffered find hard to escape.

#### **IV. Celebration of the Cultural Hybridity in *The Interesting Narrative***

The spiritual autobiography studied in this thesis is thus a unique document of author's dilemma when he has been brought far away from his country for slavery. The text is basically about the plight of black people of Nigerian village named Essanka. The protagonist is author himself, named Olandah Equiano, kidnapped with his sister when he was in his 11 from Essanka and sold to European slavers. First going to Barbados and then on to Virginia, Equiano was purchased by Captain Pascal who in turn sold him to a Quaker Robert King in 1763. Though he would never purchase his freedom, Equiano would never cease his crusade against slavery. Although born an African, Equiano is British by acculturation and choice. These binary oppositions place him into his tenuous identity as the Afro-Briton. Equiano is exceptional among his contemporary British brethren: not only is he able to stand both on the inside and outside of the window of British society, Equiano can move efficiently between the two.

The issues are which role Equiano assumes when he needs to and how he comes to know and understand his liminal position. Equiano is to acknowledge the reality that he was living oxymoron perpetuating a simply complex life. Equiano's Complexity is to locate between two extremes. Hardly conceivable is the possibility than any two identities could be more opposite than the African and the Briton. On the one hand Equiano as the African assumes the role of his masters' object incapable of establishing his own identity outside his status as void. On the other hand Equiano as British subject is the agent of himself able to make his own conscious identity known and not voided. The vast Space between the voided non-being of the African and that of the "ultimate being" the British citizen remains deceptively large.



The next issue treated in this thesis was that colonialism led to the domination of the African countries at the hand of the European powers. But the same colonial practice also opened the new era of globalization and hybridity, since it became imperative for the trading countries to make contact with new people and countries. But the relationship remained one sided. It was incomparably easy for the people, commodities and ideas and images from the European countries to follow into the less developed part of the world than it was for the people and commodities from the non-European countries to enter the European continent. This unequal relationship ultimately led critics and theorists to question whether the so-called global and multicultural era was not yet another guise for the former colonial powers to hold down the rest of the world.

The real idea of Equiano is that life cannot be fixed and codified. The very nature of existence is that it is changing and when one thing changes everything gets changed with it. The grates linger comes from the desire to fix life: culture is safeguard when the alienist acknowledges so that the basement into the next cycle of history will not be a too violent reversal. Due to his inability to sustain the moral values, Equiano believes to be correct in the face of the obligations and temptation of his new position. He becomes the victim of cultural hybridist. Neither can he form his own identity nor challenge the existing values of the hybrid cultures successfully.

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