

## **The Creation of the Third Space in *Kehinde* (1994) Through *Chi***

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### **Abstract**

Most postcolonial critics focus on cultural hybridity, centering their discussions on abjection of a hybrid culture in maintaining a purely autonomous identity in a given postcolonial text. However, Emecheta's *Kehinde* (1994) exhibits a multicultural context in which Nigerian characters are socialized. This context entails cultural exchange which might lead to the acquisition of new forms of life between Africans (Nigerians) and the British. This paper looks at the cultural hybridity in its broader sense by linking it to Homi Bhabha's concept of The Third Space in expressing Emecheta's attribution of her cultural belief on *chi* as a technique in solving the cultural limbo pertaining to Africans in the diaspora. The analysis focuses on the livelihood of *Kehinde* as an African Igbo woman whose purpose is to maintain her Igbo identity based on marriage life while living in Europe.

### **Ikisiri**

*Wahakiki wengi wa kiubadaukoloni wamejikita kukosoa utamaduni mahuluti wakilenga kudumisha asili ya utambulisho wa mhusika katika matini wanazozihakiki. Riwaya ya Kehinde (Emecheta, 1994) inaelezea maisha ya wahusika wa Kinaijeria waishio katika muktadha wenye mwingiliano wa tamaduni nyingi. Hali hii husababisha kubadilishana utamaduni kunakotokana na ujifunzaji wa desturi mpya za maisha baina ya Waafrika (Wanaijeria) na Waingereza. Makala hii inachunguza utamaduni mahuluti katika upana wake kwa kujiegemeza katika dhana ya Homi Bhabha ya Nafasi ya Tatu katika kuelezea mchango wa Emecheta katika imani ya chi (mungu binafsi) katika kutatua mkanganyiko wa kiutamaduni uwapatao Waafrika waishio ughaibuni. Uchambuzi wa riwaya hii umejikita kwenye changamoto anazokumbana nazo mhusika Kehinde kama mwanamke wa Kiafrika kutoka jamii ya Igbo nchini Naijeria anayelenga kudumisha utambulisho wake wa Kiigbo katika maisha yake ya ndoa ingawa anaishi Ulaya.*

## 1.0 Introduction

Emecheta presents the complexities of taking decisions while driven by two cultural world views in her novel entitled *Kehinde*; postcolonial scholars refer to this situation as the cultural dilemma or syncretism. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (2004) suggests the solution to the cultural syncretism via the acceptance of cultural hybridity which offers the survival and operations of multicultural thoughts together as one. Bhabha (2004:38) observes that “All forms of culture are in the continuous process of hybridity”. To avoid the dilemma that one might face in dealing with a syncretic situation, Bhabha sees the possibility of acculturation or cultural pollination as essential to the creation of a space which accommodates more than one culture for the betterment of individuals. Bhabha sees that the hybrid space “displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority and new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom” (Bhabha, 2004:211). It addresses the way an author uses her Nigerian Igbo belief of twins and the existence of *chi*<sup>1</sup> towards the solution to the cultural limbo. Scholars such as Bolatagiki researched on cultural and racial hybridity based on the way image-makers of the mixed race can redress popular representation and facilitate a movement beyond the dichotomy which reduces them to some of their parts (Bolatagiki, 2004). Arguing through the lenses of hybridity, he sees women of the mixed race occupying a Third Space. Bolatagiki engages the viewer in an understanding of the complexities of hybrid identity and represents multiracial people as occupying the Third Space. He takes hybridity as a means of creating a space of belonging which is complete in its nature. He refers to hybridity as the cultural phenomenon of the mixing of unique entities to create a third, wholly indistinguishable category where origin and home are intermediate” (Bolatagiki, 2004: 76).

In line with Bolatagiki, Sakamoto argues that, “giving up the desire for a pure origin, hybridity retains a sense of difference and tension between two cultures, but without assuming hierarchy; it is not just a new identity but a new form of identity” (Sakamoto, 1996: 115-116). This argument reflects the role of hybridity in maintaining the cultural exchange without bias among the two. Hybridity creates wholeness of the newly formed cultural identity rather than assessing an identity by splitting up the constituents from one another relying on its racial or cultural origin. This tendency leads to the subversion of the assumed dominant discourse by giving up the chance for the formation of what Sakamoto calls “newness enters the world”

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<sup>1</sup> Chukwukere (1983:524) defines *Chi* as god, guiding spirit, a spiritual being or force, which, theoretically speaking, every Igbo person (adult or child) possesses.

(Sakamoto, 1996: 116). Hybridity is, therefore, “not found in the sum of its parts, but emerges from the process of opening what Homi Bhabha calls a third space within which elements encounter and transform each other” (Bolatagiki, 2004: 116).

Therefore, within the third space, one expects to enjoy cultural transformation, modification and newness in its wholeness due to the fluid nature of a hybrid culture. For this case, cultural hybridity streamlines one’s perceptions towards another culture and hence strengthens a sense of cultural negotiation. Therefore, hybridity serves as a zone within a multicultural context within which diverse cultures are evolving to the new modes which are unique and complete in their own. Bolatagiki argues that the third space is “not made of units but of dimensions, or rather shifting directions. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle, through which it pushes and overflows” (Bolatagiki, 2004: 48).

Critics on works with twin characters offer different views with regard to the identities of Africans in the diaspora. Cooper (2008) observes that the use of twins serves as a coded language for the writers’ own splitting, doubling and questing for their identities while living in the diaspora as well as for their connection with Africa (p. 51). Cooper assesses novels in her analysis whereby she is centered on Oyeyemi’s *The Icarus Girl* (2005), Evans’s *26a* (2006) as well as Eduyang’s *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* (2004). She exposes the way African writers in the diaspora negotiate their identities by treating twins as metaphors of a hybrid identity. The twin characters which feature in these writings are also the displaced Africans either of the mixed race parents or who were born and migrated to Europe in the early ages. They, therefore, learn the other part of their African identity by reverting back to Africa. Oyeyemi and Evans include the myth of twins from African cosmology which helps their works to acquire Africanness. I see the need to address *Kehinde* with the subject of hybridity to attest the way hybridity has been playing the role in solving cultural syncretism at the levels of writers themselves and the characters involved in the writings not only in works published in 2000s as argued by Cooper but even before that using Emecheta’s era.

To create a hybrid space, Emecheta uses twin characters, Kehinde and Taiwo, whereby Taiwo is a deceased twin whose spirit reincarnated and became a *chi* to Kehinde. Then Taiwo is portrayed as the driving force towards Kehinde’s decisions and actions. Emecheta’s portrayal of Taiwo as Kehinde’s *chi* reflects her choices on what she believes and she wishes the operations of the *chi* can be in a multicultural context. I observe the character Kehinde as used by the writer to impact the theme of individual change due to psychological endeavors she has been experiencing as a result of cultural hybridity. Through the character Kehinde,

Emecheta attributes strong personality to decisions that would not only free an individual from the chains of inhumanity but vows to the personality that is alive, awakened and healthy enough to take step ahead to achieve much more success.

## **2.0 Locating Kehinde within a Hybrid Context in *Kehinde***

*Kehinde* is a novel by Buchi Emecheta which was published in 1994. Emecheta is an Igbo woman who is among the migrant writers in Britain. *Kehinde* tells the story of an Igbo female character whose mother and twin sister died at birth. She is taken by her aunt Nnebogo to live in Lagos. Although Igbo believes twins are abomination, her survival is ensured due to Aunt Nnebogo's affiliation with the Yoruba at her residence and her belief in a Christian faith which accepts twins. Kehinde as a grown up woman migrated to Europe to live with her husband Albert. Problems begin when Albert receives a letter from her relatives which informs him to go back home, Nigeria. Albert's decision to go back to Nigeria affected his marriage life. He left Kehinde in London so as to sell a house. Failing to get someone to buy the house, Kehinde decides to go and join her husband and kids in Nigeria. Kehinde is shocked to find out that in just a year, Albert has already established a family with another woman and had a baby boy. Kehinde fails to cope with living with an extended family of Albert and polygamous life. She finds her husband is detached and, therefore, she no longer enjoys the romantic affair like they did in Europe. She goes back to London and, guided by her *chi*, she re-thinks and re-assesses her statuesque as a woman, wife and mother. She finally begins to unchain herself from traditional life which is typically patriarchal in nature and begins to recognize her rights and fight for the ownership of properties and re-establishes her statuesque. The influence of the *chi* made her possible to achieve her goals.

From Bhabha's point of view, the powerful phrase I considered in this novel is based on the aspect of *chi* as a symbol of the resolution to the psychological limbo. This syncretic situation has a root cause from the mixed cultures as reflected through the attributes of the character, Kehinde. The dilemma Kehinde faces towards making life decision is connected to her adoption of new religion, Christianity and western education and heightened up by her being an immigrant living in London for more than eighteen years. Having guided by a *chi* becomes the solution to the dilemma and gives room for the cultural co-existence as all these are what is summarized by the argument of Homi Bhabha with regard to the solution of the complexities arising from cultural hybridity. Bhabha sees that the hybrid space "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority and

new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom” (Bhabha, 2004:211).

Kehinde throughout the novel is constructed as the character that seems to balance between her Africanness and modernity for the betterment of her life. After the psychological struggle of either accepting or rejecting African and practices of marriage, Kehinde finds herself accepting the advices of her *chi*, which seems to be more just to her. She then reconciles that, “Now we are one” (Emecheta, 1994:141) whereby the narrator goes on saying “the living Kehinde said to the spirit of her long dead Taiwo” (Emecheta, 1994:141). The phrase reflects Kehinde’s acceptance of the will of her *chi* which when she went back to Nigeria following her husband, the *chi* stopped to communicate with her, letting Kehinde think and decide alone. The clue is that Emecheta evokes the reader to speculate the reasons for this kind of communication, which I explain from African cosmology pertaining to the life destiny of an individual and his/her relationship with his/her *chi*.

Emecheta begins to introduce the idea of cultural hybridity and its positive impact in the novel when molding the characters of Kehinde. Kehinde was named a Christian name, Jacobina by her adopting mother aunt Nnebogo. This name gives her a chance to survive better due to the fact that when she was born, Igbo still perceived twins as evil beings. Then she was immediately taken to Ibusa, a town village in Lagos where she is forced to change the name from Jacobina to Kehinde. Ibusa is populated by Yoruba people who, contrary to Igbo, value and praise twins. They give special names to twins and they believe that twins once treated well might bring wealth and success to their parents. Kehinde is renamed from Jacobina to Kehinde, the name given to the second twin meaning “arriving after the other” (Leroy, Oruene, Schomerus and Bryan, 2002). Here, the naming and renaming of Kehinde reflects acculturation based on Christianity and Yoruba traditions that made the survival of Kehinde possible. This reflects cultural pollination and its positive impact on the livelihood of Kehinde while still in Nigeria.

Like Achebe’s suggestion on the wellbeing of twins in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), among the early baptized Igbo people is a woman with sets of twins who were thrown to the evil forest. The woman adopts Christianity, a modern religion as it offers room for the survival of twins. Likewise, in Emecheta’s *Kehinde*, the survival of Kehinde was made possible not only by the Christian faith but also due to aunt Nnebogo’s obedience to the Yoruba traditions pertaining to twins at Ibusa town village. After Kehinde sees a mother of twins dancing in the market in a traditional Yoruba ceremony of mothers’ of twins, and Kehinde being among the

chosen to give the gifts to her fellow twins, she says she knows by revelation that she is also a twin and having her Taiwo (Emecheta, 1994:19).

Emecheta is trying to suggest that acculturation does not only occur at international level but also within ethnic groups. The survival and wellbeing of Kehinde was due upon the acceptance of positive cultural exchange based on the good values of both the Christian faith and Yoruba customs pertaining to twins. Otherwise, in Igbo community during that time, Kehinde would still be associated with evil spirits, misfortunes and bad luck. In assessing the socio-political and cultural issues, Emecheta suggests the positive cultural exchange at the level of religious beliefs that contribute to the survival of the innocent beings in Nigeria as exemplified by twins' survival like Kehinde in *Kehinde*.

### 3.0 The Igbo Belief on *Chi*

One among the common beliefs in African cosmology is the belief on the existence of the supernatural powers that guide peoples' ways of life. *Kehinde* is a novel which blends Igbo's belief on *chi* and the traditional belief of the Yoruba with regard to twins. Igbo do believe in the existence of Chukwu, who is their supreme god and creator. Regardless of having the supreme god, Igbo people believe that every individual has his/her own personal god that guides his/her deeds in the aspect of thinking, reasoning and doing. And above all, this spirit is the determinant of an individual's destiny. The personal god that guides individual's everyday life is named *chi*. "Igbo themselves conceptualize *chi* as the foundation of their intellectual effects to make sense of the bewildering diversities of human personality, experience and cosmic phenomenon" (Chukwukere, 1983: 532). Also, "the *chi* is the destiny-spirit believed to be an emanation of the Creator" (Ogunboye et al, 2000: 77). Therefore, being the destiny-spirit, an individual is much closer to his/her *chi* than to the Supreme deity, Chukwu. The rule is, one has to maintain a closer and good relationship with his/her *chi* for him/her to arrive to a better destiny as explained later with respect to the relationship of the character Kehinde and her *chi* and the destiny she arrived in the novel *Kehinde*.

Therefore, Emecheta purposefully portrays Kehinde as having her *chi* as her dead twins symbolically using twins as a symbol of acculturation from the point of view that Emecheta as an Igbo woman has a strong belief in the close relationship between one's *chi* and the determinant of one's destiny as she shows the destiny of Kehinde as a result of her obedience to the voice of Taiwo, who is also her *chi*.

Tracing back from *Things Fall Apart*, at the beginning of the novel Achebe portrays Okonkwo as a successful man who defeated Amalinze the cat; later on he

was able to yield a big harvest after borrowing yam seeds from the rich man Nwakibie. The novel goes on portraying Okonkwo achieving fame in Umuofia community, and the narrator says: “if ever a man deserves his success that man is Okonkwo. At an early age, he had achieved fame as the greatest wrestler in all the land. That was not luck. At most, one could say that his *chi* or personal god was good... Okonkwo said yes very strongly, so his *chi* agreed” (Achebe, 1957:19). This fictitious portrayal of associating a person’s fame and greatness with the relationship with his/her *chi* via Okonkwo’s life reflects the strong belief of Igbo in the *chi*.

However, Achebe goes on portraying the failure as a result of Okonkwo’s disobedience to his *chi*. The downfall of Okonkwo begins when he disobeyed his *chi* while performing misconducts such as beating his wife during the week of peace, killing Ikemefuna and when in one of the meeting he calls one of the clansmen “a woman”. The narrator in the novel says: “But like the little bird nza who so far forgot himself after a heavy meal that he challenged his *chi*, Okonkwo began to lose fame through arrogance and brusqueness in dealing with less successful men” (Achebe, 1957:22). His *chi* used to guide him with wisdom in dealing with situation; the character that not only brought him the material success but also societal recognition.

Just like Okonkwo, the complications of life of Kehinde began when she started to disobey her *chi*. This stresses that, Nigerian writers with Igbo origin are highly influenced by their societal beliefs to the extent that one might picture an Igbo society of the time as “highly organized and deeply religious, a society which valued bravery, hard work, material wealth as well as eloquence and dignity - a society that possess an enviable culture” (Ngara, 1986: 111). To acknowledge this notion, I see the need to analyze Emecheta’s *Kehinde* from the Igbo cosmology when dealing with the hybrid space.

#### **4.0 *Chi* as a Technique for Creation of The Third Space in *Kehinde***

*Chi* in *Kehinde* is seen through the historical birth of the main character Kehinde. In the novel, Kehinde had her twin sister who passed away together with her mother during their birth. This analysis is an attempt to show how the portrayal of the interconnectedness of twins through the Igbo belief on *chi* is a determining factor for the positive way of accommodating cultural hybridity, which in my case, the character Kehinde has played a big role in siding with Nigerian, Igbo culture while her *chi* was weighing out between the good things from Nigerian culture and the others from Western, London in guiding Kehinde. Having known that, *chi* is the

determinant of one's destiny and Taiwo, the dead twin being the *chi* of Kehinde, it evokes the idea of the creation of the space in between the traditional African and the Western which Homi Bhabha termed The Third Space.

The Third Space is the theory which explains cultural negotiation resulting from cultural hybridity. By Hybrid, it means not only a mixture of cultures but also implies that in the course of dealing with a mixed culture, an individual's tendency of finding balance between the two especially within a colonial and postcolonial context. Bhabha views this cultural balance as a space for negotiation of the binaries of the two cultures, hence termed it The Third Space. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that, The Third Space; "is this in between space whereby new cultural identities are formed, reformed and are constantly in a state of becoming" (Bhabha, 2004:56).

Therefore, I will centre my discussion on the symbolic representation of The Third Space through the relationship between the character Kehinde and her dead twin. I will later on show the places where Kehinde needs to suppress the cultural differences and abide by the notion of cultural diversity in order to open her mind for acceptance of new attitudes and philosophies which are much more reflected in the novel as acculturation aspects essential for the cultural change.

#### **4.1 The Allegory of the Birth of a Hybrid Culture and Identity of Kehinde**

To begin with, in *Kehinde* there is a relationship between the representation of the birth of twins, Kehinde and Taiwo, the death of their mother and the survival of Kehinde. Kehinde is trying to show her escape from the womb due to the limited space which can be associated with her escape from mother country, Nigeria, to find a better place after finding herself failing to comply with Nigerian norms related to marriage and polygamy. This history reveals the way she acquires the *chi* of her twin and becomes more powerful Kehinde. In the novel, Kehinde narrates:

Taiwo: the one who preceded me into the world. There were two of us in our mother's womb. We had no will of our own. We followed the rhythm of everything around us. Our food came from mother's blood. Soon we started running short of the water of life. Everything was becoming short and cramped. At length, we started to talk to each other, sharing as best we could for survival, becoming weaker and weaker by the day together. Nonetheless we managed to survive for months, touching and kissing and making the space available (Emecheta, 1994:17-18).

This narration introduces the reader to the symbolic portrayal of the birth of hybrid culture through the birth of the twins. The shared mother womb represents Nigeria,



mother country in which twins had no will of their own following all the traditions confined to the Igbo community. Depending on food from their mother blood can be associated with their close link to the ways of living stipulated by their community traditions and beliefs.

But then, the narrator shows that, under this situation, they “twins” managed to survive for months, communicating well hence making the space available. My interpretation of this is that, the “touching and kissing” that Emecheta put forward here may be viewed from the postcolonial eye as a positive cultural integration between African and Western culture where together forms a hybrid one essential for the survival of the two, together as one. The phrase “making the space available” is what Homi Bhabha insists on the survival and better effect of the cultural hybrid as the creation of “The Third Space.” The narrator goes on saying that:

Together we fought against the skin that kept us captive. We wanted to burst out and escape into the open. We did not know what lay out there in the world, but anything, anywhere was better than where we are. We communicated with each other by the touch and by the sounds. Sounds which only we could understand (Emecheta, 1994:18).

The quotation symbolically summarizes the toughness on surviving with double visions in a world which accommodates multicultural thoughts. From this quotation I argue, it is almost better for the twins to comply with the new and unknown ways of life that might bring better life than feeling exhausted with a syncretic situation. This suggestion is operating like a quest for the opening of the minds as a great requirement towards acquisition of new ways of living from the different cultures and strongly challenges the rigidity of individuals towards learning the new ways of life fearing what they do not know.

As a common notion, in a hybrid culture formed by the developing and the Capitalist nations, there is a tendency of abjection and feeling that, the Superior one is going to swallow the weaker to the extent of deteriorating it. My focus being to show the acculturation and its positive impacts on the livelihood of people, in my case Africa as represented by Nigeria, I still see the death of Taiwo, who is a twin and a *chi* to Kehinde, immediately during their birth, suggests the suppression of one culture which is especially the most influential to the other. Taiwo being operating as a *chi* reveals its indirect control to the weaker one hence their combination reveals an acceptance of the new forms for the formation of a unique blended culture. Thereafter, I will elaborate the indirect control of Taiwo, the *chi* and the representative of the one-pro to change as shown in *Kehinde*.

Kehinde further narrates the way she acquires wisdom from her twin as she considered Taiwo with “a wisened head” (Emecheta, 1994:18) and talks about the limited space in their mother’s womb that made Taiwo’s wetness from her body begin to flow into her, hence died. And she insists that: “I did not eat my sister as they said I did. There was only life enough for one of us” (Emecheta, 1994:18). Kehinde’s denial of being eating her Taiwo from a critical observation which should be drawn from postcolonial theory tells the denial of suppression of one culture in cultural integration and provokes that, the one which survives does not authentically stand by itself but rather reflects the combination of the two. For this case, therefore, the image of Kehinde is a combination of the two mind sets, the Kehinde’s and Taiwo’s thoughts reflected through Kehinde’s denial of eating her twin sister.

The wetness of Taiwo which begins to flow into Kehinde is a metaphorical image of the acquisition of thoughts through the interaction of Kehinde and her Taiwo as a *chi* to her and the influence of her thinking towards the attained destiny. Having said that her Taiwo was wise and coming first is accepting the views of Western as the one which was a little bit advanced before the civilization of Africa. This is justified when outlining the disappearance of Taiwo’s voice while Kehinde goes back to Nigeria following Albert. When coming back to England after failing to cope with Albert’s decision of a polygamous marriage, Kehinde is warmly welcome by the voice of Taiwo which she could not suppress no matter how hard she tried. Then: “A voice inside her sang out, ‘Home sweet home!’ Taiwo, who had not spoken to her since she had gone to Nigeria, was back. Kehinde rebuked the voice: ‘This is not my home. Nigeria is my home’. As she said it, she knew she was deceiving herself, and Taiwo would not let her get away with it. “We make our own choices as we go along, came the voice. ‘This is yours. There’s nothing to be ashamed of in that” (Emecheta, 1994:108).

#### **4.2 The Third Space for Cultural Negotiation in *Kehinde***

This novel reflects the author’s tendency of being against the abjection of a hybrid culture and entails the importance of hybridity for better survival of individuals in the world with multiculturalism. The suppression of the voice of Kehinde’s *chi* is the reflection of the cultural limbo which resulted from the syncretic state that one achieves by weighing out the situation via the cultural orientation of her mother country and that of the new nation especially when the decision to be made is not confined to the cultural framework of the mother country.

The essence behind using the *chi* who is the twin to Kehinde reflects the Nigerian belief which has been symbolically coined to the discussion of the cultural hybridity in order to solve the cultural limbo that might arise through the invention of the new modes of conducts. Emecheta manipulates well the positive cultural aspects from the Western in the representation of The Third Space achieved by the character Kehinde. Having attributed Kehinde's *chi* to the acceptance of London home, including the liking of London homage makes a strong influence on the departure from the traditions which resist the positive cultural exchange to Africans. Emecheta's creativity of inventing the belief in *chi* which is regarded to be very robust among the Nigerian Igbo and bracketing Kehinde's *chi* with some Eurocentric thoughts is what colours *Kehinde* as the best novel in dealing with cultural resolution.

The destiny of Kehinde is a symbolic depiction of The Third Space due upon my observation from the novel. Emecheta is coining the two cultural world views via Kehinde's interaction with her *chi*, the voice of Taiwo. There are some areas where Taiwo stands for African world view and other places where she guides her twin on the Western civilization. In places where Taiwo's voice is ignored by Kehinde, there is a purposeful symbolic portrayal which the writer wants to put forward. Later on Kehinde after either abiding or ignoring the voice of her Taiwo the result is nonliterally screening the accomplishment of acculturation. Finally, Kehinde adheres to Taiwo's voice as her "permanent part of her consciousness" (Emecheta, 1994:135). The statement which typically sounds African by its nature as Taiwo is her *chi* but its impact in the novel can be weighed as a balance of two world views, Nigerian and the Western thought.

The use of the Igbo cosmological term *chi* in *Kehinde* also gives it a Nigerian rhythm and evokes the voices of the diaspora people as epitomized by the character Kehinde, one among the fictitious displaced people in London. As a diasporan Igbo woman, Kehinde relationship with her *chi* entails her identity and destiny. *Chi* influences Kehinde on accepting and resisting as well as interpreting particular events that resulted from her being an immigrant Igbo woman in London.

Given that Taiwo's "*chi* constitutes the foundation of Igbo intelligence, providing a satisfactory explanatory model for the diversity of human personality and the broad category of causation" (Chukwukere, 1983:519) Kehinde's *chi* does the same. Then, in some areas one can see Kehinde is influenced by either performing or resisting some actions, thoughts and situations either by listening to Taiwo's voice or by communicating with her through dreams. All these communicative events are structured from the symbolic event of their birth as

elaborated earlier. In one of her conversations, Kehinde wonders why everything that she wants to do from herself is associated with her birth (Emecheta, 1994:103).

The influence is seen in her personality and this personality is a symbol of the strength of a hybrid culture as well. Even characters Albert and Rike once are warned by church prophets goes by a traditional name the *wolis* that, Albert's first wife is possessed with two spirits and they are told to never intervene with her decisions. Once they try to do so, the lady might bring harm to them. Albert and Rike were told so many things by the *wolis* with regard to their life success and hence the prophethood goes on:

The woman, Albert's first wife had two spirits working in her. We don't know if she is a twin or not, but there are two forces inside her. She is destined to live very long, having two lives in one. Such people are like fire. Anybody who crosses their path is licked out of existence. Finally, the warning come: Rike and Albert should beware and not interfere with her hold on the house in England (Emecheta, 1994:118).

Here the *chi* influences Kehinde's financial betterment as the belief in having two spirits makes her stronger in African, Nigerian context. The *chi* beliefs here, when contextualized in Africa become much more influential in important decisions to one's destiny. Contrary to Europe where Kehinde says: "this is a country where people think if you talk to your *chi* that you are talking to yourself, and if you talk to yourself, you must be mad" (Emecheta, 1994:108). The discrepancy made by the author at the level of the context entails the cultural difference in which the two worlds are operating. The acceptance cultural diversity is reflected in the consciousness that Kehinde is having towards the existence of the two world views operating differently over a particular entity and her ability to comply with either of the two where there is a needful reason as presented from scenario of one talking to her *chi*.

#### **4.3 Chi: Identity and Destiny of Kehinde**

In Igbo belief "a man's abilities, faults or misfortunes are ascribed to his *chi*" (Chukwukere, 1983:77). This is grounded in the belief in the connection between one's destiny and his/her relationship with her *chi*. For them "*chi* is a sort of spirit double or guardian genius associated with the person from the moment of conception" (Chukwukere, 1983:77). My observation on twin conception from Igbo cosmology instigates me to put forward the causality of *chi* to the personality of

Kehinde. Under this section, the identity of Kehinde will be viewed from the postcolonial term, hybridity to achieve the creation of The Third Space.

Given that the *chi* is the controller of one's thoughts and action, I see the need to link Kehinde's identity from childhood with the adulthood as guided by her *chi*. My discussion will be centred on Kehinde's personal identity, her marriage handling and the values on community ethical conducts. Kehinde's *chi* made her recognize that she is born a twin, and her strong personality is ascribed by an author as resulted from being possessed with two spirits. In the course of conceptualizing a hybrid identity here, I see the construction of Kehinde and Taiwo being born by the same mother as the symbolic portrayal of the formation of a hybrid identity of Kehinde, which itself is a step towards forming The Third Space. Putting together Kehinde and Taiwo affirms Bhabha's idea of togetherness in rejecting cultural differences when he says "there is no 'in itself' or for 'itself' within cultures because they are always subject to intrinsic forms of translation" (Bhabha, 2004:210).

Kehinde's identity as an Igbo woman restricts her from doing abortion due to the belief in the reincarnation of the soul. Although she knows that abortion is evil, while in Europe Kehinde is influenced by her husband to do so for the betterment of the family because she is the one who is earning good income and her being pregnant might make her not perform well as she is promoted to a post of a bank manager. Though agreed with her husband, Taiwo's voice came to intervene. Kehinde says: "My husband will kill me if I don't. But really, inside me, I'm confused. Part of me doesn't want any more children; another part wants to keep this one, just this one. I think it's because I was born one of twins I always have to weigh things this way and that before I make decision" (Emecheta, 1994:26).

As an African woman, Kehinde's *chi* guides her to the good ways of living from the Nigerian belief where she could find the importance of having many children and the sinful practicing of abortion. Though she refused to obey her *chi*, when she was in hospital she saw the image of her Taiwo and mother advising her not to abort a child. Then without their concern, she aborted. Later on she regrets telling Moriammo "the child I just flashed away was my father's *chi*, visiting me again. But I refused to allow him to stay in my body" (Emecheta, 1994:32). Therefore, Kehinde's regret reveals her understanding of the reincarnation of the spirit of the ancestor to a newly born child. She is also aware that when a spirit reincarnates, his *chi* "is assigned to the individual by God at conception" (Chukwukere, 1983:77).

The concept of childbearing is what reveals Kehinde's closeness to the Igbo tradition and the knowledge on *chi* and reincarnation is what gives her the identity of an Igbo woman. The three *chis* here are put forward: her *chi* who is her Taiwo as well, the *chi* of her mother coming together with her Taiwo to remind her on changing her decision concerning abortion as well as the *chi* of his father which reincarnates. She believes the view of her *chi* and her mother's *chi* after finding that the baby she was flashed is a baby boy (32).

The scene is also culturally explained as Kehinde while in hospital had a dream on women wearing white shifts then she was able to recognize the woman that come closer to her together with a little girl as her mother. Kehinde had no chance to live with her father as she was taken to Lagos by aunt Nnebogo soon after the death of her mother when giving birth. The woman comes and tells her that, the spirit of her father reincarnates to be taking care of her. Kehinde says:

The woman whose face I cannot see comes towards me. She holds her palm frond across my path to stop me. She has with her a little girl whom I immediately recognize, My Taiwo. 'No,' she says, 'go back. I have this one'. The woman indicates the little girl, who does not smile. Your father was coming to you, but you sent him back. He was coming to look after you because he feels guilty about not looking after you last time. But you refused to receive him. He wants you with him, but you have to go back. You have to learn to live without him (Emecheta, 1994:32).

The extract above reveals the influence of African conception of the contacts between the living and the dead which affects the message of cultural integration. The visiting of Kehinde's mother together with her dead twin implies her reflection of her origin while she is in the new worlds. The mother of twin being with one and of the twins, Taiwo and the action of rejecting Kehinde to come with her until its time symbolizes giving space to her for the attainment of growth that is the hybrid culture. As shown in the ideas of Taiwo, she has already acquired the wisdom of handling the two cultures in one.

The influence of Taiwo in decisions concerning Kehinde's going back to Nigeria to serve her marriage reflects the understanding of African men from African world view drawn from her Igbo traditions. Taiwo used to call upon Kehinde to go back to Nigeria knowing that there is a possibility that Albert might have marriage affairs with another woman and begin a new family. Though Kehinde became much defensive in this regardless of being reminded by the inner voice of Taiwo, finally when going back to Nigeria she proved what she ignored happened (1994:45-47). Kehinde miscilenearly overlooked her internalization of

English cultures on marriage with the contextual influence that might happen to Albert while in Nigeria.

Moriammo as well advises Kehinde on the behaviour of some Nigerian girls toward a man returning from abroad questioning her on what might lead to their breakup. Moriammo says: “Then why do you no go to Lagos, go join Alby? I tell you say, the girls there are crazy for any man just return from England” (Emecheta, 1994:51). Here, the novel challenges Kehinde on her Western conception without reflecting the Nigerian context. She believed in a Christian marriage which is against polygamy to the extent that she becomes unaware of the context. Homi Bhabha in the creation of *The Third Space* insists on the balancing of the two cultures for better.

The novel also shows the destiny of Kehinde as a free person to make her own decisions guided by her *chi*. In one of their discussions, Ifeyinwa tells Kehinde “you are a twin, and you must do what your *chi* tells you. Twins are difficult to predict” (Emecheta, 1994:106). She is reminded to follow her *chi*, Taiwo for her own betterment. On decisions regarding her love affairs with Mr. Gibson, Taiwo’s voice supported strongly by saying: “So what if he is five years junior? So what if your children notice the relationship when they return? After all, are you hurting anybody?” (Emecheta, 1994:136). Kehinde considers a lot of factors in engaging with Mr. Gibson due to her African conception of marriage that only African men are allowed to have many wives and it is accepted in their communities. It is also an evil practice for one having married under the Christian rules to engage in extramarital affairs. So, dilemma comes in while she cannot get relief on her psychological limbo in neither of the two parts, African and Christian rules regarding marriage and hence finds solace from the voice of Taiwo symbolically presented as a free mind created her own space for the better survival.

Kehinde finds herself at a point of realization when listening to the voice of her Taiwo with regard to the provocation she enters with her son, Joshua. Once Albert found himself like losing control over his wife, Kehinde, he tricks their first born, Joshua to go back to England to claim the ownership of the house telling him that it is a men’s mission” (Emecheta, 1994:140). After going into quarrel with Joshua, who claims to have been given a house by his father and making sure it goes by his name, she remembered the voice of “her Taiwo, who never allowed her to accept humiliation” (Emecheta, 1994:128). Kehinde’s final decision was based on the fact that she is the one who earned more at work and the mortgage for the house goes by her name. She finally argues that: “claiming my right does not make

me less of a human. If anything makes me more human,” she murmured to her Taiwo (Emecheta, 1994:141).

## 5.0 Conclusion

The portrayal of twins and the knowledge of *chi* in Emecheta’s *Kehinde* is a symbolic representation of the formation of a hybrid culture whereby Kehinde is attributed to real and observable person who tries to weigh out the situations she encounters from the two world views, the Igbo and Western conceptualization. The allegory of the birth of twins entails the freedom of life choices as presented through twins’ action of breaking the skin that masks them together. The death of Taiwo implies the suppression of the hybrid culture which survives behind the scene while her influence as Kehinde’s *chi* symbolizes the acculturation necessary for the attainment of the creation of The Third Space. The death of their mother can also be attributed to the suppression of the views of the past generation which were later on replaced by the hybrid one. The presence of twins in the womb is viewed in this paper as the cultural limbo caused by one’s confinement to one world view in which it denies a space for new and unknown thoughts which might be influential and practical to real life.

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