

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into five subchapters. The first subchapter is background of the study that deals with the basic description to conduct this research. The subsequent chapter includes the research questions, the objectives of the study, the scope and limitation, and the significance of the study. Each of them will be presented as follows:

1.1 Background of the Study

In his book, Emmanuel Akyeampong (2006, p.99-108) contends that European imperialism (Portuguese, Spanish, French, British, Dutch) entered the Africa continent in the 14th century for economic interest at first. However, British colonialist as the dominant colonizer among European imperialism dwell the Gold Coast or Ghana around the 17th century. In this coastal, British colonialist do the exploitation and domination to the native. They develop their social authority to expand their economic and political by cooperating with the African local chief. In spite of the exploitation and domination, the practice of imperialism is done through the native they subjugated. In addition, Ocheni and Nwanko (2012) claim that all of British's controlling is aimed to gain their maximal profit of supporting their political and economic power (p.47).

Otherwise, Tyson (2006, p.419-420) argues, British colonizer incept their ideology through the native that they are superior. The colonizer claims that their nation and culture are better than what indigenous people have. While they assume that the native as backward, undeveloped and inferior. This ideology is spread out through the educational system, in the colonial territory. The British colonizer undoubtedly spread their cultural values, language, religion, even their manner to the native. For the colonizer, it aims to control the colonized group. While for certain local people, they accept what the British colonizer have taught to them. Making them realizes their inferiority under the colonizer' superiority. Realizing this condition and within their desire, the colonized people attempt to imitate the colonizer's manner. It is their purpose to become a part of colonial society and at once as their strategic resistance. In the way the colonized people imitate the colonizer's manner, they do not completely imitate the colonizer's cultural aspects. The colonized group also aware with their own culture. At the same phase, their mimicry is resulting the moment of ambivalence. It is the condition where the colonized experience have to accept the colonial culture rather than resist. On the other hand, they have to make their origin culture exist, instead of imitating the colonizer.

Besides, European imperialism deal with the issue of enslavement trade across the Atlantic. They expand their slave trade in Africa and transport the African slaves to the New World or America. The number of exporting increased from several periods across the Atlantic. As the evidence, Emmanuel Akyeampong (2006, p.103) adds that African captives who are exported across

the Atlantic continuously arise from 4.000 per year in 1650 to 50.000 per year in 1800. This huge migration of slave is needed to America due to the plantation which is built by the European. In this New World, the African slaves become the minority and inferior among White people. According to Tehranian (2000, p.822-830) the White people is rooted from European, such as the British. The inferiority is built by the European when they establish the plantation in America and laborer the African slaves. Within this inferiority, the African minority have to face the kind of oppression from White people. To be accepted in the New World or America, the slaves or minorities have to diffuse themselves with American and let them do the mimicry. That is, they have to custom their life as White people. Trying to be as similar as the White man while they maintain their origin identity as the indigenous society. This copying of White denizen's culture bring the minorities into the ambivalence feeling.

Related to the case of mimicry and ambivalence which are experienced by the native and minorities, an African American author, Yaa Gyasi inscribes the historical fiction of colonization, slaves trading and the colonialism effect in her debut novel. The phenomenon of colonialism and its effects portray in her literary work entitle *Homegoing*. Additionally, Ainehi Odoro (2017) reports that the novel is published in 2016, a year ago. It becomes the New York Times and Washington Notable Book 2016. In its publishing, this novel also gets many awards, prizes, and honors. *Homegoing* is one of Oprah's 10 Favorite Novels of 2016 and categorizes as one of the Buzzfeed's Best Fiction Book of 2016. It is one among the sixteen winners of 2017 American Book Awards, following the 2017 National

Book Critic's Circle's John Leonard First Book Prize and 2017 Hemingway Award for debut fiction. Currently, this novel is chosen as a mandatory reading for Stanford fresher. The succession of her novel places Yaa Gyasi on Granta's Best of Young American Novelist 2017.

Yaa Gyasi jots down the historical issue greatly with its powerful language that leads the memory of captivity clearly engraves as the dark history of the nation in *Homegoing*. The novel itself depicts two separate half-sisters. One was born in Fante, Effia, married to a British officer and lived in the great Cape Coast Castle. Another, Esi was born in Asante land, captured in warfare and lived in a dungeon under the Cape Coast Castle as a slave before shipped to the New World. The novel, then, tells about their descendants. One in Africa continent who lived under British colonialism with its ruling of slaves trading and war. On the one hand, Esi's generation lived in America and got the racial discrimination from White People. The novel draws the problem faced by each character during the colonialism era, the effect of colonialism in Africa and the problem of African enslavement in America for several years.

Discussing the case of imperialism such as exploitation, domination and cultural imposition during the colonialism and the effect of imperialism, it will be related to the postcolonial perspective. One among experts, Homi K. Bhabha (1994, p.171) proposed that postcolonial perception comes as the voice of the colonized society toward the moment of colonialism and its impact. Postcolonial perspective discloses the issue such as cultural difference, social authority and discrimination. In this huge definition, postcolonialism is divided into several

theories, which is once as the mimicry. Homi K. Bhabha claims that mimicry is the imitating process which is conducted by the colonized group and minorities toward the colonizer's culture. They copy the British colonizer's education, religion, language, fashion, manner even the notion (p.86). Yet, discussing the mimicry is not fully equipped without discussing ambivalence. Mimicry is the trigger which is able to appear this theory. That, the emergence of ambivalence is always accompanied by the mimicry of postcolonialism. Bhabha argues that ambivalence emerges as colonized society's negotiation process to colonizer's culture rather than against them. This is the uncertain condition or mix feeling that encounters the colonized people and minorities in two cultural condition (p.22). Dealing with one culture of colonizer on one side, and holding their own culture on the other side. Those two branches of postcolonialism as though cause and effect in one situation. Thus, in this analysis, the writer applies both mimicry and ambivalence of postcolonialism by Homi K. Bhabha. It is applicable to the form of mimicry and ambivalence which is depicted by the certain characters in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*.

2.1 Research Questions

Concerning with the background of the study, the issue will be transforms into following questions:

1. What are the character's mimicry disclosed in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*?
2. How are the characters' ambivalences portrayed in *Homegoing* novel by Yaa Gyasi?

3.1 Objective of the Study

Dealing with the previous research questions, this study will attempt to analyze:

1. The practice of mimicry disclosed by the characters in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*.
2. The form of ambivalences depicted by the characters in *Homegoing* novel by Yaa Gyasi.

4.1 The Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is concerned with the postcolonialism in theory of mimicry and ambivalence proposed by Homi K. Bhabha. This research limits on the topic in analyzing the narrator's utterances and characters' utterances, which elaborate the form of mimicry in Effia Otcher, Quey Collins, Akua Collins, and Yaw Agyekum. Moreover, it seeks the ambivalence which is experienced by Quey Collins, Ma Aku, Akua Collins, and Marjorie that exist in *Homegoing* novel.

5.1 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give the involvement both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, it is expected to give an understanding to the readers about postcolonial theory, specifically the mimicry and ambivalence of postcolonialism and its applying in the literary work. Furthermore, this study can

be the development to the previous study and the ground work to the following researcher.

Practically, this study aims to provide an understanding to the readers about the African historical fact, how the imperialism era becomes the great phenomenon in the society and correlates the issue to postcolonial study.

