

**NIGERIAN MIMICRY TOWARD BRITISH CULTURE  
IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE* :  
A POST - COLONIAL STUDIES**

THESIS

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## **ORIGINALITY STATEMENT**

“I hereby declare that this Thesis is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial propotions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the Thesis”

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**NIGERIAN MIMICRY TOWARDS BRITISH CULTURE  
IN ACHEBE'S *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*: A POST-COLONIAL STUDIES**

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**Abstract**

The research discussed Nigerian mimicry towards British culture reflected in Chinua Achebe's *A Man of The People*. The aim was to describe how Nigerian culture is reflected and the mimicry of the Nigerian toward British culture. To attain the aim, the research was held by applying post-colonialism theory with historical approach. The research used descriptive methods with close reading technique. The result of the research is the mimicry toward the British culture existed in Nigerian life in politic, belief, economy, education, and customs. In political aspect, Nigerian mimic the parliament system of British government. Therefore, they changed the traditional political system from democracy to the parliament. In the aspect of belief, some Nigerian mimic the belief in Christianity instead of the belief of polytheism and animism. In economy, some Nigerian mimic service industry as economic activity rather than choosing agriculture activity. In educational aspect, Nigerian mimic British education system. Mimicry in tradition appears, in which in one side the Nigerian live by applying the British system in house design, food, and common practice. In conclusion, Nigerian mimicry toward British culture through the novel appears in some aspects like politic, belief, economy, education and custom. Nigerian mimicry done among the intellectual in the society. The mimicry do not eliminate all Nigerian culture.

Keyword : Post-colonial, mimicry, culture, Nigeria

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Reason For Choosing The Topic

Nigeria is a country which located in Guinea, West Africa. Nigeria have 250 ethnic community which have different language, story and culture each others. The three biggest ethnic are Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo ( Ibo). Nigeria is a country which is rich in natural results. Nigeria has a mangrove swamp where dense. This country also has a river called niger river which is the third longest river in Africa. Niger river is the center of trade in Africa. africa natural resources include coal, iron, tin, and columbite, as well as tin, copper, and zinc, many of which are found in the hills and highlands. This country is also a producer of small amount of gold, silver, and diamonds that have been found in various places. Nigeria known as one of the biggest oil producers. petroleum has become one of the major commodity for the economy of Africa. But historically most of Nigerian rely on the agricultural sector. At the beginning Nigerian nation is a kingdom with the name Fulani kingdom. This kingdom lead Nigeria from the beginning of 19 century until British empire come to Nigeria.

English language is a formal language in Africa after their independence. But almost of Nigerian used their ethnic language in their community such as Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo (Ibo).Moeslim became a

religion which dominated the north of Nigeria. Christian dominated the west of Nigeria. 10 % of Nigerian indigenous still used their old and traditional religion.

The two largest colonial powers in Africa were France and Britain, both of which controlled two-thirds of Africa before World War I and more than 70 percent after the war . Its means that Britain is one of African colonies. British colonized Africa arround 19 century. Britain is one of the dominant colonial powers of the nineteenth century . There are three reason for Europeans exploration Africa continent. The first reason has to do with the need to gather scientific knowledge about the unknown. The second reason stemmed from European ethnocentrism or racism, itself rooted partly in Western Christianity. The third reason was based on imperialism, the desire by European patriots to contribute to their country's grandeur by laying claim to other countries in distant lands.

Nigeria got independence from England in 1962. The independence in post colonial usage is defined as the achievement by a colony of full self government in which the government has full power to govern and rule their nation by their own way. (Ashcroft et all ,128 ). Its means if a nation get an independence they are free from dependence and they are free to make their own nation rule.

For the colonizer, the independence of their ex-colonized nation affects them to find and born a new model of colonization as a replacement

of the old way of colonization. The ex-colonizing nation does not want to lose their ideology in their ex colonized nation and that is why they change the geographical colonialism as the old system of colonialism into the new way which is known as neo colonialism or neo imperialism. Kwame Nkrumah in his *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* stated that, neo colonialism describes the continued control of former colony. It continues to actively control the affairs of the newly independent state. Also it is more insidious and more difficult to detect and resist than the older over colonialism (6).

*A Man of The People* is a novel which pictured the story of Nigeria after independence. Achebe is a famous writer from Nigeria, he also known as post-colonial theorist. His novel already written in English language. In *A Man of The People* Achebe talked about two generation who contradictory in politic. The narrator and also known as the main character fight to against his ex teacher who used his power to enrich himself. His ex teacher not just used his power to enrich himself but also forced the women who the narrator love with her to married with him. This novel describe about Nigerian lifestyle which already adopted their ex colony culture. This story end with military coup. This story connected with an actual accident in Africa in 1966 which called African Revolution.

In conclusion, based on discussion above writer interest to analyze and criticizing postcolonial problem focus in Nigerian mimicry toward

British culture as reflected in Chinua Achebes “ *A Man of The People*” because according to Achebes novel *A Man of The People* is a novel that examine mimicry more deep than others. Mimicry become as a famous term in post-colonial in which mimicry is a strategy of colonized country to confront colonizer hegemony. This novel picture life of Nigerian society which influence by British empire. The influence caused citizen interesting to adapt the culture of British empire. Then this problem became a excuse which make a disagreement in society. Moreover this novel display a struggle of a man to against his country and the women he love with. From this novel we also learn that corruption can damage a nation and if someone get a power to lead people just use it in a good way.

## **1.2 The Objective and Scope of the Study**

The objective of this research is to describe about Nigerian mimicry toward British culture as reflected in Achebes *A Man of The People*. There are some specific purposes of doing this research. They are:

1. To find how is Nigerian culture reflected in *A Man of The People*
2. To find how is Nigerian mimicry toward British culture reflected in *A Man Of The People*.

The novel that becomes the object of the study is *A Man of The People* written by Chinua Achebe. In this research, the limitation of the research is focus on the Nigerian mimicry toward British culture as reflected in the novel in five element. The element are politic, belief, economic, education and custom.

### **1.3 The formulation of the Problem**

In analyzing the research, the writer has to identify problems of the study. To identify the problems, the writer formulates it in the form of research questions which can lead the writer to observe objects of this research:

1. How is Nigerian culture reflected in *A Man of The People* ?
2. How is Nigerian mimicry toward British culture reflected in *A Man Of The People* ?

### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

In analyze a literary work writer need a theory as a tool. Theory will guide writer to do a good analysis. At least theory has three important role in doing analysis, First as foundation of research, it will be tool to understand the topic. Second To help you in doing the research. And last as judgment of correctness of the research. Its means that a research belong to a theory. If a writer has a good theory it will be easy to do analysis. Based

on the topic of this research theory that will be applied is post-colonial theory. It also connected to historical approach to make a connection to history.

#### **1.4.1 Post-colonialism**

In analyzing this research the writer uses a post-colonialism theory. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms* Abrams states that:

The critical analysis of the history, culture, literature, and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France, and other European imperial powers. These studies have focused especially on the Third World countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean islands, and South America. (231)

Bressler also states in *An Introduction to Theory and Practice*:

Post-colonialism is defined as an approach to literary analysis which concerns itself particularly with literature which is written in English in formerly colonized countries. (265)

The words above strengthening the previous theory and explained that the literary product that produced by the writer from the colonized country that written in English belongs to the post-colonialism.

Mimicry is one of an important term in postcolonial as a tool in doing analysis in literary works. The term mimicry can not be separated from the well known theorist Homi K Bhabha. Bhabha explained the term mimicry in his *The Location of Culture*(1994).

Bhabha said in *The Location Of Culture*

If I may adapt Samuel Weber's formulation of marginalizing vision of castration, then colonial mimicry is the desire for reformed, recognizable. Others, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.(86)

In the key concept of *postcolonialism second edition* Ashcroft write

The term mimicry has been crucial in Homi Bhabha's view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. For him, the consequence of suggestions like Macaulay's is that mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite'(Bhabha 1994: 86).

More complete Bhabha explain in *The location of culture*

The copying of the colonizing culture, behaviour, manners and values by the colonized contains both mockery and a certain 'menace', 'so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace'(86).



So, mimicry is one of postcolonial term that has been used to examine about desire of colonized country to confront the colonial hegemony. The desire come from the colonized because they want to be a different subject and recognized in the world. The effort to be equal with the colony done by adopting the colonizer subject. The imitation also contained of ridicule.

More complete Bill Ashcroft in *The Key Concepts Second edition* said that :

Mimicry An increasingly important term in post-colonial theory, because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to ‘mimic’ the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer’s cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits(124).

Based on the discussion above mimicry is a desire to rebuild the east and became a difference subject, the built purpose is to make the others equal with the Europeans. The effort to make them equal with the colony is adopting the colonizing culture almost the same but not quite. The east adopted their colonies culture to show that they are also have a power and identity. But the copying of colonization culture also can damage the others because mimicry contains of mockery and manace.

If we speak about mimicry it means we also speak about culture. To understand mimicry we need to understand culture. E.B Taylor's define in *Primitive Culture* "That complex whole which include knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and habits acquired by man ( humanity ) as a member of society". Based on the definition of culture writer make focus for this research in five element of culture. They are politic, belief, economic, education, and custom.

#### **1.4.2 Historical Approach**

To do this analysis writer connected the postcolonial theory with historical approach. According to Johnson in *British Imperialism* (40:2003) states that, there are three approaches can be discerned in the historical debate. The first is the 'metropolitan' interpretation where the motivations and policies of the British are examined with particular reference to economic forces and political decisions emanating from Britain. The second approach focuses on the 'periphery', taking account of the indigenous peoples and their reactions to the British, but also noting the role played by the 'man on the spot': missionaries, traders, local administrators and soldiers. The third approach is to place the British expansion in a European and global context, looking at Great Power rivalry when diplomacy had reached a critical stage in the late nineteenth century.

According to Busha in *Research Methods in Librarianship*:

*Techniques and Interpretations*, states that:

Historical approach values the aspects which can be considered as history, such as information, documentations, and also images which have happened in a society or nation. In this approach, not all experiences happened in the past are considered as history, only those historical experiences which relate to the creation of the literary work can be considered as supported history. ( 91 )

Moreover Busha in *Research Methods in Librarianship: Techniques and Interpretations*, states that: states “historical approach reveals relationship between the literary work and cultural aspects and ideology which affect and create human history. It is also suggests that to criticize the literary work, it should be based on era in which the literary work is written” (91).

Generally, the historical approach concerns with some concepts, they are time, nation, and natural surroundings. Time concept is about analyzing a literary work according on the era in which it is written. National concept also emphasizes what the nation that born the literary work itself, and natural concept explains that the literary work does not appear because of nothing, there are some factors which encourage it, such as social, politic, education, economic, cultural, and believe or religion factors and etc.

### **1.5 Method Of Research**

The novel will be analyzed by using descriptive method. The research is to hold study about Mimicry in Nigerian society by using postcolonialism theory. Method which is using to analyze this novel is close reading technique. According to Jacobus in *Literature an Introduction to Critical Reading* states that, close reading requires that you take the text seriously enough to study it, to read and read it, search for detail that might otherwise go unobserved, examine the text for special words and term and refer to the dictionary to be sure of their meaning when necessary (122). According to Jacobus we can conclude that close reading is a technique to analyze a literary works by reading seriously, writing, and observed quietly with questioning the works.

So there are three steps that writer apply to do this analysis. First of all is that the writer conducts the literary research about post-colonialism. In this step writer finds the definitions and concept of post-colonialism. Second, the writer applies close reading technique as the way of analyzing the novel based on post-colonialism approach. Third, the writer analyzes the novel through the characters and all elements that can take trough characters will be linked back to the problems about British imperialism based on the post-colonialism approach.