

**MIMICRY, HIBRIDITY AND AMBIVALENCE
IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S AMERICANAH AND PURPLE HIBISCUS**

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ABSTRACT

Adichie's novels *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus* both narrate the clash between western and eastern culture. This qualitative thesis is intended to describe (1) mimicry and hybridity in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*, (2) the characters' ambivalence represented by their mimicry and hybridity. Homi K. Bhabha's noticeable concepts of *mimicry*, *hybridity* and *ambivalence* in his book entitled *The Location of Culture* are applied in the analysis of this study to describe the main characters mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*. This study reveals that; first, the main characters of *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus* perform mimicry, hybridity in their manners and actions. Second, ambivalence represented by the characters in both novels as a tug of war between resisting and accepting the western culture. In conclusion, the main characters' mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence in Adichie's *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus* are the results of culture clashes between western and eastern culture

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial literature is a form of writing which has been "influenced by the imperial process from colonization era to the present day" (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 2). It studies the "ideological forces that forced the colonized to adopt the colonizers' values, on the one hand, and promoted the resistance of colonized peoples against their oppressors, on the other hand" (Tyson, 2006: 418). Young (2001:69) argues that "postcolonial theory always deals with the positive and the negative effects of the mixing of peoples and cultures". Native people are always considered as the "other" by the colonizers. This clashing of culture will be the focus on analyzing Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels, *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*.

In *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*, the characters face difficulties in finding a place in society during or after the cultural change; that is, whether they try to become like the colonizers or how

they feel when someone else mimics the colonizers.

Bhabha's mimic men positively, even if unconsciously and unintentionally, deteriorate colonial authority. Bhabha also generated the concept of hybridity of cultures which refers to mixture or impurity of cultures knowing that no culture is really pure. Barry states that "hybridity is the situation whereby individuals and groups belong simultaneously to more than one culture (for instance, that of the colonizer, through a colonial school system, and that through local and oral traditions" (Barry 2002).

The concept of ambivalence sees culture as consisting of opposing perceptions and dimensions. For both the colonizer and colonized, mimicry produces ambiguous and contradictory effects that Bhabha stated as ambivalence. The ambivalence was triggered by the presence of love and hate of a stereotype.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, one of Nigerian young writers uses those three

concepts in her novels, *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*. The cultural changes in Nigeria which are depicted in both novels is caused by colonialism. Both novels which are based on the lives of Nigerian people, describe different ways used by the characters to cope with the change of their lives after the colonization of their countries.

Both novels show that the colonized find their identities alienated and do lose their supposed fixed identity. In this case, the colonized tried to resist the colonizer's culture. The process of resistance deals with mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence. A way to analyze those effects of colonialism to the characters' way of lives is to use postcolonial critical approach and it is possible to find out how each character reacts to those changes in their lives.

Based on the previous explanation, the study formulates the problems as follows, (1) how are mimicry and hybridity described in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*?, (2), how do the characters' mimicry and hybridity represent their ambivalence in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Postcolonial Theory

Post-colonialism is a term used to define critical analysis of history, culture, literature and method of communication that is particularly correlated to the former colonies of England, Spain, France, and other European imperial powers. Postcolonial studies have investigated especially on the Third World countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean islands, and South America. Sawant (2012) states that the concept of Post- colonialism (or often Postcolonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. According to Bertens, "postcolonial studies critically analyze the relationship between colonizers and colonized, from the earliest days of explorations and colonization"

(2007:174). In accordance with that, Bressler (1999:265) argues that postcolonialism is an approach to literary analysis that concerns itself particularly with literature written in English in formerly colonized countries. Tyson (2006: 418) claimed that post-colonialism investigates the "ideological powers that constrained the colonized to embrace the colonizers' values, from one viewpoint, and advanced the resistance of colonized people against their oppressors, on the other hand". Postcolonial criticism defines formerly colonized people as any population that has been subjected to the political domination of another population (Tyson, 2006:417). Colonialist ideology forced the colonized people to accept the concept of colonizers' superiority and their inferiority. This ideology resulted what is called colonial subject, colonized people who did not resist colonial subjugation (Tyson, 2006:421).

From that explanations, it shows how postcolonial examines two different cultures meet at the beginning, one of them dominates another with their superiority and finally become new culture and civilization. Postcolonial theory is a way to critically discuss and analyze literature written by authors from countries that have been formerly colonized. It also discusses the problematic way in which the colonized people improving a sense of belonging with a strong national feeling. Young (2001:69) argues that postcolonial theory is always concerned with the positive and negative effects of the mixing of peoples and cultures. Along these lines, postcolonial criticism expects to comprehend the operations of colonialist and anti-colonialist ideologies, politically, socially, culturally and mentally.

Postcolonial literature is a type of works which has been "impacted by the imperial process from colonization era to the present day" (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 2). Postcolonial theory has been widely used in literary and cultural studies. Post-colonialism literary theory emerged in

the late 19th century and strengthened throughout the 20th century. Post-colonialism is a literary approach that gives a kind of psychological relief to the people (the colonized) for whom it was born. Said (1997:2) differentiated the procedures of cultural authority that predetermined non-Western people as the “Other”, a term used in ... post colonialism (the colonized) to mean “different from” and unimportant, that which is dominated. A decolonized people build up a postcolonial character from the social associations among the sorts of personality (social, national, and ethnic) and the social relations of sex, class, and rank; controlled by gender and race of the colonized individual; and the racism inherent to the structures of colonial society. In postcolonial literature, the anti-colonial narrative studies the identity politics that are the cultural and social viewpoints of the subaltern colonial subjects—their resistance to the way of life of the colonizer; how such cultural resistance confounded the set-up of a colonial society; how the colonizers built up their postcolonial character; and how neocolonialism effectively utilizes the Us-and-Them binary social connection to see the non-Western world as inhabited by The Other. From this statement, it can be inferred that postcolonial theory also deals with the tensions that happen inside colonial satellites the study also seek to realize how two different cultures become new culture in new civilization when one culture tries to dominate and combines another culture.

Mimicry

Bhabha accepted his undergraduate degree from Elphinstone College, Bombay University in 1970. He received a Master of Philosophy in 1974 and MA in 1977 and was followed by a PhD in 1990 from Oxford University. According to Bhat (2015:8), Bhabha is regarded as the third important critic of Postcolonial criticism who is greatly influenced by the great French theorist, Jacques Lacan. Jacques

Derrida, Frantz Fanon, Edward W. Said and Walter Benjamin are also major influences in his study.

Then again, Homi K. Bhabha is the focus of the present study since he is considered as one of the most popular contemporary theorist in postcolonial studies. Huddart (2006:1) argues that Homi K.Bhabha who was born in 1949 in Mumbai, India is one of the most important thinkers in the influential movement in cultural theory called post-colonial criticism. Bhabha's work compose a set of challenging concepts that are central to post- colonial theory: mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence. These concepts describe ways in which colonized peoples have struggled to resist the power of the colonizer, a power that is never as secure as it seems to be. This emphasis clarifies our recent situation, in a world signified by a paradoxical combination of fiercely proclaimed cultural difference and the complexly interconnected networks of globalization.

One of Bhabha's most important notions in Postcolonialism is mimicry. It is a part of a larger concept of visualizing the postcolonial situation. It is such kind of binary opposition between authority and oppression. Mimicry is the time when some person tries to copy someone else by one means or another and the result can end up being practically absurd. In general implication, mimicry refers to the imitation of one species by another (Kumar 2011:1). Under colonialism and with regard to immigration and displacement, mimicry is viewed as an unsuitable pattern of behavior. Every person imitates the person in authority because he/she hopes to have access to that same power himself/herself. In the process of copying the master, they have to intentionally overpower their own cultural identity, although sometimes they are already confused of their own cultures which are not pure anymore. Falakdin and Zarrinjooee (2014:525) argues that mimicry in colonial and postcolonial literature is most usually seen

when the colonized people imitate the language, dress, politics, or cultural posture of their colonizers.

Colonial mimicry, for Bhabha is the need for a reformed, recognizable “Other”, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite (Bhabha 1994: 122). Bhabha declares that mimicry does not only refer to imitation, nor just an assimilation to the dominant culture but it is also an exaggeration of imitating the ideas, language, manners, and culture of the dominant culture that differentiates it from only imitation: it is “repetition with difference”. To Bhabha, Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite, which means that the discourse of mimicry is created around an ambivalence (86). Bhabha calls this sort of mimicry a “sly civility” which he considers as a sense of mockery to mimicry that is based on “ambivalence”. In his essay “*Of Mimicry and Man*”: *The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*”, he locates “mimicry” as one of the most elusive and effective strategies in colonial discourse which centers on civilizing mission based on the notion of “human and not fully human”.

The colonizers consider the colonized as the “Other” and compel them to acknowledge the superiority of the colonizers as the natives are consistently taught that they have lots to learn from the white men and their culture. The colonizers in the novels attempt to force their language, their style of living and western education on the native people and in trying to create a copy of the colonizer a hybrid and distorted image is formed which serves to be a threat to the colonizers. In *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus* the characters have to choose between resisting and accepting western cultures. In order to accept the masters’ standards, the “Other” has to imitate the masters, which is called as the act of mimicry.

Mimicry concept is first conceived by Franz Fanon in his book entitled *Black*

Skin, White Mask that was published in 1952, which says that the people who colonized, which initially forced to abandon the traditional notion of identity and national identity, then start learning to adapt their identity to the identity of the colonizer. In Bhabha’s *Location of Culture*, Fanon argues that the “primary moment of such repetition of the self-lie in the desire of the look and the limits of language” (Bhabha, 1994: 45).

Lacan in Bhabha’s (1994:85) states that mimicry uncovers something in so far as it is unmistakable from what may be called an itself that is behind. Mimicry can make an effect of camouflage. It is not an issue of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of getting mottled-precisely like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare. By one means or another, mimicry, according to Bhabha (1994:86) is “a complex strategy of reform, rules, and discipline, which appropriate the “Other” as it visualizes power”. In line with that idea, Castle (2007:139) argues that mimicry is double edged; it is the sign of a colonial discourse that requires a “reformed, noticeable Other” but it is also means by which the colonized subjects encounters that discourse. It can be concluded that, mimicry in simple term, refers to the action of imitation of one by another. Here the study will be engaged upon the characters’ troubles in finding a place in the society amid or after the societal change; that is, whether they attempt to end up like the colonizers or how they feel when another person copies the colonizers.

Hybridity

Hybridity, one of Bhabha’s notion, is a key element of postcolonial identity which discusses about how cultural blends from its original tradition. Bhabha has developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the blending of culture and identity within condition of colonial antagonism and

inequity (Bhabha, 1994:34) which is produced by the pressure between the colonizer and the colonized. Hybridity, according to Bhabha, is depicted as a blending of cultures or traditions which in postcolonial discourse, it refers to the cross-cultural exchange. Bhabha also generated the concept that hybridity of cultures refers to mix or impurity of cultures knowing that no culture is really pure. He argues that cultures are produced by the hybridizing process, rather than existing before. He proves that the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized affects both of them. This clash of cultures creates a hybrid form. Neither the colonizer nor the colonized can claim to have a pure and fixed identity as a result of this encounter. He expresses his belief that postcolonial world ought to valorize spaces of mixing; spaces where truth and authenticity move aside for ambiguity. This space of hybridity offers the most significant challenge to colonialism (1994:113).

Hybridity is the complexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life (Bhabha, 1990: 314). Hybridity gets rid of the old conventions and way of lives and makes a blend of another one; something that bring a new way of life, ideology and traditions to the people. This concept is essential since it depicts the unstable environment that colonized people are compelled to either adjust to or work really hard to dismiss. The colonial power is solid and the possibility to end up as a member in a hybrid community is pretty much inescapable.

This notion of hybridity is closely related to mimicry, since they involve different cultures. This notion is important in helping us understand what will happen when two cultures are mixed. As we know that Nigeria was once colonized by British Empire, their culture are no longer pure, it is already mixed with British culture. It may affect their way of lives, languages, fashions and many other aspects.

According to Satoshi (2009:3-4), the word hybridity brings out blend of races or: miscegenation". However, the idea of hybridity as Bhabha defines it, doesn't concern the racial measurement of miscegenation.

Ambivalence

The effect of mimicry is "profound and disturbing". It delivers an ambiguation in colonized live that receives double articulations that takes them into a maze. For both the colonizer and colonized, mimicry produces ambiguous and contradictory effects that Bhabha stated as "ambivalence". Ashcroft (2006:10) argues that ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. It portrays the way in which colonized people are feeling conflicted between accepting or rejecting a culture, it may happen when both cultures have the same effect towards the people.

Shojaan (2013:16) argues that ambivalence is adapted into colonial discourse theory from psychoanalysis theory by Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that portrays the relationship amongst colonizer and colonized. The ambivalence is triggered by the presence of love and hate of a stereotype. Bhabha also reveals that the colonial presence is always ambivalent, torn between presenting himself as an original and authoritative with its articulation that shows repetition and difference. In other words, it is not stable colonial identity, doubt, and always split. Ambivalence, one of his idea, is characterized as an idea created in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation to portray a constant fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (Bhabha, 1994: 80). This notion is the effects of mimicry and hybridity. While

mimicking the masters, the colonized people will feel the guilt of putting their own culture aside. This concept will be used to analyze the characters' mixed feeling in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*.

RESEARCH METHOD

Type of the Research

This study is a qualitative research applying Postcolonial theory proposed by Homi K Bhabha. In this case, this study intended to focus on analyzing the postcolonial effect in the form of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence in both Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels; *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*.

Data and Sources of Data

The data employed in the present study were the dialogue and description in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus* novels which presented Bhabha's mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence.

Techniques of Data Collection

The main data were compiled from those two novels. Furthermore, the collecting data method included several steps, intensive close reading, noting the data, highlighting, extracting data from the novels.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, Bhabha's theory on process of identification was applied. First, the characters' *otherness* were analyzed to identify their inferiority. When this inferiority emerged, the desire to occupy the masters' place was analyzed to reveal the characters' action of mimicry and hybridity. Then, to reveal the characters' ambivalence, their demand and desire were analyzed by comparing the stereotype and the action of mimicry.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Description of Mimicry in *Americanah*

As stated by Bhabha that mimicry is an act when someone tries to copy someone else in some way and the result may become almost ridiculous: "a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994:86). Adichie describe her main female character in *Americanah*, Ifemelu as a person who mimics the white society in her struggle to find her place in that society. Ifemelu is a Nigerian student who continues her study in America. As a black person in white society, Ifemelu always feels *othered* and *stereotyped*.

Nigeria is a place where black people are all the same, she does not feel the difference between black and white, she does not feel as the second class or *othered* until she comes to America. However, when she comes to America, she feels the difference; she is aware of her "*blackness*" which makes her become the second or third class, no matter what or who she is.

Fanon argues that when black people uses colonizer's language; it is regarded as predatory, and not transformative, which in turn may create insecurity in the black's consciousness (Fanon, 1986:11). Ifemelu must learn to perform recognized American accent that grant acceptance into American society as shown in this quotation: "And in the following weeks, as autumn's coolness descended, she began to practice an American accent", (Adichie, 2014: 134).

After spending some time living in America, Ifemelu learns that braided hair is considered unprofessional. Following and advice from her friend, Ruth, before attending a job interview in Baltimore, Ifemelu decides to undo her braids and ends up scalding herself in the process of getting her hair relaxed in order to attend a job interview. "My only advice? Lose the braids and straighten your hair. Nobody says this kind of thing but it matters. We want you to get that job", (Adichie, 2014:202). However, the justification used is simply that because she was not in the country that is her own, you do "what you

have to do if you want to succeed” even if this is stripping of your natural beauty (Adichie, 2014:146). The standard of beauty in America and Nigeria are different and she has to mimic it to blend in.

In relation to beauty standard, Ifemelu decides to lose her braids and straighten the hair because she also thinks that her American white partner will prefer her in straight hair than in her natural kinky hair. Moreover, this feeling of inferiority leads to unbelongingness, a feeling that pushes her to do what is needed to be like the white. As a result of this society’s attitude towards her black color and kinky hair, out of desperation to fit she budes to pressure and straightens her kinky hair. Although she loves her natural kinky hair, the white society dictates that her natural hair is ugly. She learns an idea that adapting to whiteness is the only option and anything white should be universally embraced because whiteness is superior and should be fully embraced in order to be included in to their society.

The Description of Mimicry in *Purple Hibiscus*

Bhabha declares that mimicry does not only refer to imitation , nor just an assimilation to the dominant culture but it is also an exaggeration of imitating the ideas, language, manners, and culture of the dominant culture that differentiates it from only imitation: it is “repetition with difference”.

Eugene Achike, the main male character in *Purple Hibiscus* has a rigid view of religion. His mimicry cannot be separated from his education. He was educated by Christian missionaries in Christian school. Through this education, he learns Western religion and believes that it is superior compared to his old religion. The missionary tradition in which Eugene has been raised encouraged mimicry of all things European, because these possessed a particular power to invoke the true God. It brings up his inferiority which makes him believe that the only way to redeem the sins

is by following the colonizers way, not Nigerian way. The colonizers are considered saviors of the colonized nations. Not only are saviors but also these snakes in grass who speak in “a tongue that is forked” tend to produce mimic men that “emerge as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (Bhabha, 85).

Worshipping the Savior who looks as if in the guise of a white man has impressed upon him a great hatred of everything that is native-his religion, his language, his culture and even his father. Therefore, Eugene prefers his father in law to his father which is shown by his admiration to his father in law as narrated by Kambili that “He did things the right way, the way the white people did, not what our people do now!” (Adichie, 2003: 68). The right way for him is the white way. His father in law is also a mimic man who adopts the Western religion in his daily lives; he does exactly the same as the colonizer though the result is not quite the same.

The childhood punishments he received at the hands of missionaries lead him to adopt similar measures of control inside his household. Unconsciously, he has adopt the idea that self-punishment is the only way in which guilt can be forgiven. Thus every time someone derailed from his prescribed track of the ‘desired’ behavior, Eugene takes it upon himself to punish the guilty person and purge him of the sin he has committed. Only, in trying to become the ‘ideal’ Christian, he returns to savage ways which the colonizers associate with the natives.

Since he is shaped by the colonizing powers, he tries to ensure that his children become his mirror image. He tries to replace the indigenous culture with colonial culture because the western’s culture is superior and the ideal culture for the natives to imitate. Because the colonizers used violence to divide and conquer as well as suppress the natives, Eugene imitates their way to show his power to his family. In this

case, he decides the minutest details of his children's lives and controls them without sparing the rod. He even only gives his children 15 minutes to visit their grandfather every Christmas and not allow him to come into his compound since he is a "heathen". Father Benedict endorses these actions, supporting Eugene as he rejects his African family members. After Kambili tells Father Benedict she enjoyed seeing the *mmuo*, or a masquerade of spirits, he tells her that "it is wrong to take joy in pagan rituals, because it breaks the first commandment. Pagan rituals are misinformed superstition, and they are the gateway to Hell" (106).

Eugene also adopts English language in his daily life especially when he talks to white people, as narrated by Kambili: "Papa liked it when the villagers made an effort to speak English around him. He said 'it showed they had good sense'" (Adichie, 2003: 60). Refusing to speak Igbo doesn't distance Eugene enough from other Nigerian figures, though. He also needs to conform to British speech patterns by "sounding British" instead of Nigerian (46) when he speaks to Father Benedict. In these parts, then, Eugene chooses to distance his Christian practice from Nigerian experience. He follows Father Benedict's example and disregards Igbo influence to favor foreign customs and punishes his family to push them towards a Christian God who is completely removed from African bodies, language, and culture.

Eugene is a figure who symbolizes repressive patriarchy, imported Western religion, or colonial mimicry and denies his Igbo tradition. Eugene ludicrously imitates the regulations of his colonial religion. One very ironic example is his disapproval to Father Amadi for singing in Igbo during his sermon. Eugene reminds his family that using Igbo in the sermon is not the right way.

In his quest to mimic white people, Eugene drives a Mercedes, plays Monopoly with his children, and hardly ever speaks in Igbo, even at home. Most of the objects in

Eugene's home reflect his obsession to white culture, from the tea he drinks every day from a "china tea set with pink flowers on the edges" (Adichie, 2003: 8) to the TV and satellite dish he owns but rarely allows his family members to use. Even his factory produces "wafers and cream biscuits and bottled juice and banana chips" (Adichie, 2003: 12), all with "the same faded-looking labels" (Adichie, 2003:12). He modifies local foods into sellable Western-style goods that enable him to buy even more Western objects that further signify his high status in the community. Eugene's attempts at British mimicry and his enormous wealth, which he uses to single-handedly finance his local church, endear him to his white local priest, Father Benedict.

The Description of Hybridity in *Americanah*

Homi Bhabha describes hybridity as a "force...that disturbs the visibility of the colonial presence and makes the recognition of its authority problematic" (1994: 159). For Bhabha, hybridity is a weapon for fighting against colonial power: hybrids create a space that is in-between the fixed identities of the colonial and pre-colonial subjects, and reject the notion of a single sense of identity. There is muscle that lies within this rejection: "Hybridity is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal" (159). Thus the power that is found in hybridity is that hybrids take the dominant culture and mutilate it to create something of their own; hybrids can turn dominance into difference, enabling their own agency and empowering themselves. This allows the hybrid space—what Bhabha calls the Third Space, the space in-between—to be the best for an artist to succeed: "It is from this hybrid location of cultural value—the transnational as the translational—that the postcolonial intellectual attempts to elaborate a historical and literary project" (248).

Hybridity is described as cultural mixing in general does not help us

explicitly account for the many different paths by which someone can come to embody a mix of eastern and western attributes, nor does it differentiate between people who have consciously striven to achieve a mixed or balanced identity and those who accidentally reflect it. There are many types of hybridity such as racial hybridity, linguistic hybridity can refer to elements from foreign languages that enter into a given language, literary hybridity, cultural hybridity and religious hybridity.

Bhabha has developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the blending of culture and identity within condition of colonial antagonism and inequity (Bhabha, 1994:34) which is produced by the pressure between the colonizer and the colonized. In the novel overall, Ifemelu emerges herself in the American culture, just in slightly different ways. She has no interest in reading American books with difficult dialect because she doesn't need it in order to win a game of scrabble. "And by the way, I still win when we play Scrabble, Mr. Read Proper Books" (Adichie, 2014: 81).

Ifemelu shows linguistic hybridity as her American English is not perfect and there is a mix of eastern and western languages. When Ifemelu goes back to Nigeria she has an American accent and is caught between not being American in America and not being Nigerian in Nigeria, it makes her become a hybrid.

Similarly, at her first African Students Association meeting, the African students are forewarned that they would soon start to adopt an American accent because they would not want people to keep asking them to repeat whatever they had said (Adichie, 2014). However, she finally decides to stop faking her American accent and start to use her African accent because she thinks that practicing American accent is so tiring. "Ifemelu decided to stop faking an American accent on a sunlit day in July, the same day she met Blaine. It was convincing, the accent. (Adichie, 2014: 173).

In her quest to understand and learn her new American culture she has moments when she would interpret what is being said differently from what it actually meant in America. For example, when Americans said "we're getting a bite to eat, come with us!" they mean let us all go but everyone will be responsible for paying their own account, which is not the practice back in Nigeria because it sounded like an invitation for which somebody else is going to pay (Adichie, 2014).

Ifemelu is adopting American culture for herself, especially with her hair situation. In Nigeria their hair is looked at as a sign of their identity. At the middle of the story, Ifemelu tries to straighten her hair to be look like American. The idea combining African-type hair to make it look like European style hair is like trying to change a person's racial background is impossible, so she decides to get her natural hair back and is happy with that. It is a proof that he is accepting herself as a hybrid in America.

Ifemelu is an example of a happy cultural hybrid who adopts American eating habits, living a healthy lifestyle and drinking a lot of water.

When Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, she has joined a group who called themselves the Nigeropolitans, who are returnees from America with whom she shares the same experiences and they can "list the things they missed about America" (Adichie, 2014: 408). Ifemelu misses "fresh green salads and steamed still-firm vegetables" (Adichie, 2014: 409) that she get used to eating in America, but she also "loved eating all the things she had missed while away, jollof rice cooked with a lot of oil, fried plantains, boiled yams" (Adichie, 2014: 409). This by far is the most explicit description of Ifemelu's cultural hybridity that she is both African and Nigerian.

The description of Hybridity in *Purple Hibiscus*

Homi Bhabha states that cultural hybridity can take place due to the cultural

blend. Hybridity is the complexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life (Bhabha, 1990: 314). *Purple Hibiscus* not only creates a case for the new religion but also builds a character who indulges in the Christianity religion, namely Eugene, who is seen as imposing a rigid kind of Christianity on his family, at the expense of personal loyalty or familial love. But the novel argues that it is possible to be a “religious hybrid,” as shown by Ifeoma, that is to say, an African Christian, without giving up entirely on what makes one uniquely African, or in this case, Nigerian. The essence of this type of depiction is to present a situation where Christianity though foreign has become part and parcel of the lives of Nigerians. Religion is thus presented symbolically as a culture and a way of life of a people.

Besides showing religious hybridity, Eugene also shows linguistic hybridity when he has doubleness toward the language he uses Igbo language and English in turns when he is angry. He is automatically does it because he cannot show his anger in English, regarding his belief that English is a civilized language and it will be considered rude to use as when he is angry. He believes that he is more civilized and has the same class as white people, he becomes a hybrid. “Papa changed his accent when he spoke, sounding British, just as he did when he spoke to Father Benedict. (Adichie, 2003: 26).

The Representation of the Characters’ Ambivalence in *Americanah*

Mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence are inter related and according to Bhabha “the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (Bhabha 1994: 86).

Though, Ifemelu imitates or mimics the Western culture, she has ambivalent attitudes towards it. Ambivalence generally refers to a state of being in between and

within the postcolonial context; it is seen as the characteristic predicament of the colonized subject’s double attitude of both attraction and repulsion towards the colonizers. Essentially, Adichie describes Ifemelu’s feeling to fully being American, but she wants to be black as well. Since she cannot fully feel like both at the same time, she feels not whole. She feels split from herself, which causes his double consciousness. The self has to split because it is not considered good enough by white society. It then has to produce another self, a supposed better version, a whiter version.

Ifemelu’s action of mimicry and hybridity result ambivalent feeling inside her. She wants to be accepted in her new community, she imitates the masters (colonizers) but she also feels the urge to resist it and keep her indigenous culture. When she learns that American people tip their waiters, she feel that it is not right, it seems like “bribing, a forced and efficient bribing system”, (Adichie, 2014: 129) for her. Because Ifemelu in the white culture identifies with an immigrant identity, she moves in-between the boundaries of heritage and white culture without aligning herself with any of them. Due to the ambivalence which comes with inhabiting the third space, she has a thorough insight into both of the groups and their relation to the culturally dominant one.

Non-white people are usually very happy when their struggle to be accepted in white society is praised. This acceptance is felt by Ifemelu when a person tells her that she sounds so America. Sounding American is the result of her mimicry and hybridity, but, after thanking him, she feels confused. Something happens in her mind, a tug of war between resisting and accepting American culture. She has won indeed, but her triumph is full of air as finally she resolves to stop faking the American accent (Adichie, 2014: 175).

“You sound totally American.” “Thank you.” Only after she hung up did she begin to feel the stain of a burgeoning shame spreading all over

her, for thanking him, for crafting his words “You sound American” into a garland that she hung around her own neck. Why was it a compliment, an accomplishment, to sound American?”, (Adichie, 2014: 175).

Living in America in a quite long time grows her feeling towards it. She feels America as her second home. Though she loves America and wants to have her place in the country, she admits that she doesn’t really like American culture. Sometimes she connects with communities of African Americans, other times she distances from them. She sees the American culture as good in some aspects but lacking in certain others in comparison to her indigenous culture. Since Ifemelu is a hybrid, this feeling leads to ambivalence that can be seen in the quotation below:

“They were talking about American politics once when she said, “I like America. It’s really the only place else where I could live apart from here. But one day a bunch of Blaine’s friends and I were talking about kids and I realized that if I ever have children, I don’t want them to have American childhoods. I don’t want them to say ‘Hi’ to adults, I want them to say ‘Good morning’ and ‘Good afternoon.’”, (Adichie, 2014: 458).

Returning to Nigeria, she is seen by others as ‘Americanah’. This makes Bhabha’s view that social and individual understanding of identity is constructed in a perpetual process of mirroring relevant, continually asking for some form of translation or mimicry. Throughout *Americanah* Ifemelu gets stereotyped almost everywhere she goes. She gets generalized and marginalized because of the way she looks and speaks. Even though Ifemelu seems to adapt to white norms at first by relaxing her hair and attaining an American accent, thereby mimicking those norms, she realizes, and decides eventually

to go against them. She reclaims agency by doing so.

The Representation of Ambivalence in *Purple Hibiscus*

Bhabha reveals that the colonial presence is always ambivalent, torn between presenting himself as an original and authoritative and presenting its articulation that shows repetition and difference. In other words, it is not stable colonial identity, doubt, and always split. Ambivalence, one of his idea, is characterized as an idea created in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation to portray a constant fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (Bhabha, 1994: 80).

Eugene ambivalence is a result of his mimicry and hybridity. He pretends to be a benevolent, knowledgeable and patient in front of his coworkers and other people. However, he is not the same person with his family members to whom he gives “tough love.” Eugene is a conflicted person not only because of his inability to harmonize western and indigenous culture but also because he fails to resolve the conflict of conscience within him which dictates to him whether or not he is doing the right thing.

Although he genuinely loves his family and sincerely fights for the political freedom of the Nigerian people, he hypocritically rules his family with rigid religiosities and brutal violence. His violent behavior is the result of the violence he suffered as a child at the hand of the Roman Catholic priests who raised him, but his social and political activism, on the contrary, also flows from his religious beliefs. Such contradictions serve to render any simple reading of his character problematic. This is seen especially in his violent behavior towards his family members. He cries when scolding Kambili’s feet suggesting confusion and an

unwillingness to hurt her even though he continues. He tells her:

“Kambili, you are precious...you should strive for perfection...he poured the hot water on (her) feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying...” (Adichie, 2003: 201).

This suggests a sick mind, unresolved and consumed by ignorant fanaticism mixed with wickedness. When Jaja refuses to take communion and on the same day leaves the dining table before he does, Eugene seems resigned and tired of fighting to instill discipline in the boy. Consequently, he does not achieve self-realization as he loses control of his wife and children and does not come to a full knowledge of himself.

“Tell me, why you think your father doesn’t want you here? ”I don’t know,” Jaja said. I sucked my tongue to unfreeze it, tasting the gritty dust. “Because Papa-Nnukwu is a pagan.” Papa would be proud that I had said that.” (Adichie, 2003: 43).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This study reveals mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence presented by the main characters of *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*. Concerning with the first research question, it can be concluded that mimicry and hybridity are described in the novels through the actions and the manners of the main characters. The first conclusion that can be drawn is that the main characters in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus* imitate western culture through their appearances and manners. Dealing with hybridity, the characters show it by mixing and combining two different cultures, Eastern and Western cultures. In *Americanah*, Ifemelu combine American culture and Nigerian culture. In line with that, Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus* also

blends and combines two different cultures namely British and Nigerian culture.

The second conclusion is dealing with representation of the characters' ambivalence as the result of their mimicry and hybridity in *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus*. The main characters in both novels feel ambivalence as the result of their mimicry and hybridity. They feel the urge to imitate western culture in order to occupy a place in western society but at the same time, they also have the feeling to resist that urge. From the explanation above, we can therefore arrive at the conclusion that Adichie's *Americanah* and *Purple Hibiscus* can be categorized as works that deals with the postcolonial condition, especially about mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence.

Suggestion

Hopefully, this thesis can be used as an alternative material for teaching learning process since teachers need to broaden and improve their knowledge and one way to do that is by reading literary works. In line with that, by reading the novels, readers may also learn some aspects of lives such as moral values of the novels, learning language features and improving their ability in reading.

Since Bhabha's theory of post colonialism can be applied not only to the ex-colonized country but also to non-colonized country since the study focuses on mental behavior or manners of the characters, it is suggested that further investigation about these notions need to be applied to other form of literature such as poems or song lyrics.

As ex-colonized people, the characters in the novels experience difficulties in forming their identity. As the theme of identity formation is found in the novels, they can be further investigated by using psychoanalysis theory.

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