

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

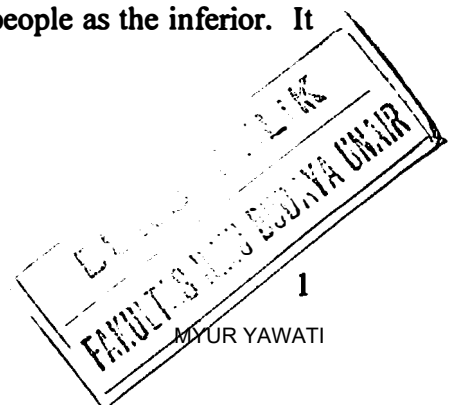
A. Background of the Study

He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his fooliness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart (166).

This quotation is taken from Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*. It signifies the beginning of colonization practices in *Umuofia*, a village in remote Africa. In early arrival, the colonizer peacefully comes, but then, they destruct the indigenous people society.

Colonization has contributed significant influences along the history of human civilization. Ashcroft in his book *the Empire Writes Back* mentions, "More than three-quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism (1)". It has influenced some aspects of human life; the way they speak, their behavior, social values, etc. Furthermore, colonization also results the economic, politic, and education systems in post-colonial nations.

Alina Helsloot in her thesis, *Reflection in Post-colonial Mirror*, mentions that colonialism commonly refers to the practice of domination of one people over another (1). This domination has been manifested in the form of stereotyping or labeling the colonizer as the superior and the colonized people as the inferior. It



operates on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer's culture, history, language, art, politic, and social values. The stereotype or label which is given by colonizer leads the discrimination which is manifested in the act of *othering*. It places the colonized people as *other*, different from the centre (European). The colonizer believes that only Anglo-European culture was civilized. Therefore the native people defined as savage, backward, undeveloped (Tyson 366).

The concept of *othering* is the important thing in colonial discourse. It is kind of legitimation for the authority of colonizer toward the colonized people. The *other* that refers to the colonized people is a tool constructed by the colonizers to disguise their anxiety in defining their identity among racial differences (Ashcroft, et al 103). After the colonizer gives the justification, it will be easier to take control toward the colonized people. So, they may completely take the beneficial of it.

The practice of *othering* which is done by colonizer might result identity crisis upon the colonized people. Ashcroft mentions that the state between the binarism will evidence the signs of extreme ambivalence manifested in mimicry, cultural schizophrenia, or various kinds of obsession with identity, or will put energy into confirming one or other side of the binarism (24). Thus, there are two probabilities of colonized people identity as the effect of *othering*. They are resistance and silence. On the one hand, for people who resisted, they still held their own tradition. On the other hand, people who were silence, they perceived the colonizer custom as well-appointed things. "Colonized people who did not resist colonial subjugation were taught to believe in British superiority and,

therefore, in their own inferiority (Tyson 368)". Many of these people tried to imitate the colonizers almost in every aspect such as dress, speech, behaviour, assumptions, institutions, and values. This phenomenon refers to mimicry. They did not resist toward colonial oppression, in opposite they imitated the colonial custom.

Nevertheless, in postcolonial criticism, it is mentioned that mimicry or imitating the colonizer custom is perceived as the resistance toward colonization (Bhabha 63). It is like self propagation and survival from the colonizer. This kind of phenomenon is called ambivalence. The colonized people imitate the colonizer custom but it is not truly the same. Sometimes they act like colonizer, but sometimes they hold their own tradition. The ambivalence is threatening for colonizer because it is possible to emerge subversive act of colonized people.

The problem of colonial practices is an interesting issue in colonial discourse. It is manifested in the act of *othering*. It also creates the reactions from the colonized people, the resistance and the silence. However, these reactions have their own meaning. For this reason, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is chosen as it presents the kind of problem.

Chinua Achebe is Nigerian novelist and poet. He is a member of Ibo people. He was born in a Christian family in what was then the British colony of Nigeria. As a child, he found himself drawn to the customs of his non-Christian neighbors. Achebe was educated at a government-run school. He came to love English literature but became increasingly disturbed by the distorted representation of Africans that he found in the literary works of English writers. His indignation

was directly responsible for his decision to become a writer. *Things Fall Apart* was his first novel (*Chinua Achebe Profile* par.3). This literary work showed on how the impact of Western influences on traditional Ibo African society was unbeneficial. Achebe describes a well-ordered and self-sufficient world where *things* only begin to *fall apart* with the arrival of the Europeans.

Things Fall Apart brings the issue of colonial practices toward indigenous people, the Ibo clan. In their early life, they lived peacefully with their oral tradition. The destruction begins when the British colonizer came to the Clan. They came as missionaries, people who spread out Christian religion. Then, they slowly converted the belief of the clan's members as well as influence the way the clan's life such as in the aspects of social, economic and education aspects.

Considering the issues elaborated previously, this paper will analyze the colonial practices toward Ibo clan. Furthermore, as the result of colonial practices, the reaction of Ibo clan as the colonized people will also be taken into the analysis. In conducting the analysis, postcolonial theories in a sense of mimicry is employed as it suits the issues presented. However, prior to the mentioned theory above, it is necessary to look through the colonial practices by using colonial discourse theory.

B. Statement of the Problems

After reading the novel and determining the topic as it has already been explained above, there are two questions that could be raised. It is expected to make easier process of arranging the analysis, thus, it will be a systematic and coherent study. The questions are:

1. How are colonial practices toward Ibo clan described in the text?
2. In facing such colonization, does Ibo clan attempt to decolonize?

C. Objective of the Study

In organizing this research, there are several objectives to be achieved. The objectives of the study are intended to answer the questions which are mentioned in the statement of the problems. The objectives that are supposed to be reached are:

1. This study intends to explain clearly about the colonial practices toward Ibo clan which is described in the novel, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.
2. This study aims to know whether Ibo clan attempt to decolonize toward the colonization.

D. Significance of the Study

This study aims to present a reading in postcolonial literature that shows the colonial practices and the reaction toward the colonization. It gives reference on how the early arrival of the colonizer and the colonial practices toward Ibo people. It also examines the effort of colonized people to decolonize from the oppression of colonization. Furthermore, it is expected that this research gives benefits for the English Department student in comprehending their literary review about postcolonial readings.

E. Scope and Limitation

There are many issues that could be raised in *Things Fall Apart* novel written by Chinua Achebe. It can be analyzed through various perspectives. Some among those issues are conflict of gender issue, religious issue, and etc. In order to avoid wide-ranging analysis, this study must have a clear scope and limitation issue. The scope of this study is the Ibo clan customs itself as the object of colonization. The discussion is limited mainly on the colonial practices toward Ibo clan, including the reaction toward colonization.

F. Theoretical Background

Since the setting, plot and conflict in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe are linked to postcolonial literature, this paper uses postcolonial theory suggested by Bill Ashcroft and Homi K. Bhabha. In literature, the term postcolonial criticism is used to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the

moment of colonization to the present day (Ashcroft, et al 2). Moreover, as a theoretical framework, postcolonial criticism seeks to understand the operations-politically, socially, culturally, and psychologically-of colonialist and anti colonialist ideologies (Tyson 365).

This study uses colonial discourse to see the colonial practices toward Ibo people. In order to make deep analysis, it employs the concept of *othering* which is linked to the practice of colonization. However, this paper also uses postcolonial theory to see the attempt of colonized people to decolonize toward colonization. It presents the concept of mimicry suggested by Homi K. Bhabha. These concepts will be useful to see the reaction of Ibo clan upon the colonization. It will be used to see whether Ibo clan attempt to decolonize.

G. Method of the Study

This study uses library research method. Komarudin via Puryanti says that a library research is a process of finding information which is useful in helping the writer to direct the research (8). This research is done by collecting data from various books, articles, encyclopedias, critics, reviews, commentaries, dictionaries, and other printed materials from both library and internet which are needed to support the analysis. The data needed are the novel and other supporting information about the novel itself such as author, background, history, and everything related to *Things Fall Apart*.

In analyzing the data, this study uses descriptive analysis as the method. Komarudin via Puryanti asserts that the descriptive analysis is the descriptive

explanation of the problems through dialogues, event, and actions. This method is applied based on the work itself and supported by other information about this work (8). This method is considered appropriate to be applied in the analysis because it supports properly the description of the problems which are going to be analyzed. The next step is drawing the conclusion, so that the study is completed based on the academic research scheme.

H. Definition of Key Terms

In this study there are some important terms used several times later in the analysis. Therefore, this definition of key terms section provided to help the readers to understand the analysis in this thesis. Therefore, some reliable sources to define the terms are fetched in order to get an accurate meaning.

Colonialism : The practice of domination over another which is done by a discourse to legitimate the authority.

Colonial Discourse : A system of statement which examines the ways colonizer operated as an instrument of power.

Decolonization : Revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all forms.

Resistance : Action of resisting toward oppression.

Mimicry : Imitate as much as possible, in dress, speech, behavior, and lifestyle, but it never be truly the same.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW