

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EXPLORING THE VULNERABILITY OF THE EDUCATED
CHARACTER IN THREE SELECTED GHANAIAN LITERARY TEXTS

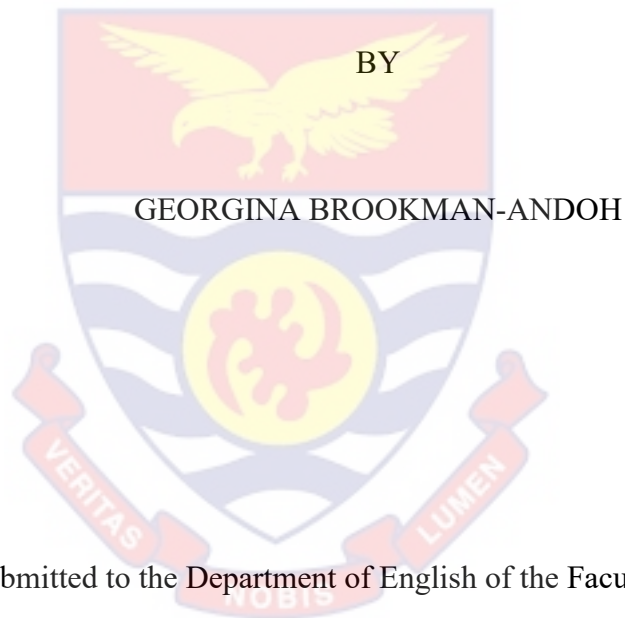


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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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CHARACTER IN THREE SELECTED GHANAIAN LITERARY TEXTS




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of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree
in Literature in English

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DECLARATION**DECLARATION****Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's signature:  Date: 15th Aug. 2025
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Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the vulnerability of the educated character in three selected Ghanaian literary texts: Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain*, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*. The primary aim of the study is to examine how this vulnerability is portrayed in fiction. A qualitative research approach was adopted. The study illustrates how the notion of genuine independence enables African development without necessarily attaching value to life as defined through other cultural lenses. A textual analysis was conducted, guided by postcolonial theoretical insights. The key findings suggest that domination is sustained through the standard or benchmark by which Africans measure and judge what is considered ideal, typically in relation to Western cultural norms—resulting in the perception that what is African is inherently inferior. The study further reveals that Africa's political independence is accompanied by both mental and physical fatigue. It concludes that this exhaustion constitutes a subtle form of domination, stemming from the ways in which the struggle for independence in the Gold Coast failed to fully affirm the value of true autonomy. Instead, it led to a mimicry of Western lifestyles, perpetuating colonial trauma and reinforcing conditions that render the educated African character vulnerable. Moreover, the study highlights how this persistent vulnerability has contributed to the shaping of an African identity entangled in underdevelopment. As a result, the educated character remains in a continual process of questioning the nature of the independence they possess—still yearning for a form of freedom that remains elusive, despite Africa's official attainment of independence.

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To all these individuals, I extend my heartfelt thanks. Nonetheless, any errors or shortcomings that remain in this thesis are entirely my own responsibility.

DEDICATION

To my children: Nana Kofi Sarfo Anyamesem, Akosua Tiwaa Sarfo Anyamesem, Afia Sarfo Anyamesem, Ama Attaa Sarfo Anyamesem, Snr. and
Jnr.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Since its emergence as a distinct field of study, African literature has served as both a mirror and a mediator of the continent's social, political, and cultural realities. From the early works of Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o to the contemporary writings of Chimamanda Adichie, etc., literature in Africa has taken up the burden of nationhood, memory, resistance, and reclamation. Much of the scholarly attention on African texts has, therefore, focused on thematic concerns that reflect the continent's postcolonial struggles: the legacy of colonialism, the failure of leadership, corruption, environmental degradation, the trauma of war, and the politics of gender and migration. Critical approaches such as postcolonial theory, feminist criticism, Marxist readings, ecocriticism, and trauma theory have all found fertile ground in African literary texts, offering varied lenses through which the continent's ongoing transformations can be interpreted.

However, amid this rich critical tradition, there exists a quieter, more intimate crisis, one that is often subsumed under broader political or historical critiques. It is the crisis of the *educated character*, whose encounter with Western-style education, while intended to liberate, has produced a peculiar and persistent post-colonial tension. This figure, often central in African fiction, stands at a crossroad: caught between inherited colonial ideologies and an often elusive indigenous authenticity. The irony is stark. Education, long seen as the tool of emancipation and modernity, becomes instead a source of alienation, mimicry, and dislocation.

This study turns a critical eye to that irony, examining how select Ghanaian female literary texts dramatise the contradictions that beset the educated character in the postcolonial world. Focusing on *Harmattan Rain* by Ayesha Harruna Attah, *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi, and *Ghana Must Go* by Taiye Selasi, the research explores how these authors use narrative form, character development, and historical framing to present the educated character as both a product of colonial ambition and a casualty of its aftermath. These characters, often highly mobile, articulate, and seemingly empowered, wrestle with fractured identities, dislocated loyalties, and the heavy burden of representation.

Drawing on Homi Bhabha's discussion of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence as concepts of postcolonial theory, the study introduces the theory of *Snailing*—a metaphor to describe Africa's hesitant, uneven journey toward true independence. This theory is grounded in the close reading of Gyasi's *Homegoing*, Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain*, and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*. It contributes to postcolonial theory by naming and framing a psychological and cultural phenomenon that has been existing and observed but has not been fully theorised in African studies. Through this lens, the study argues that the educated character of the contemporary Ghanaian society created in the selected texts assumes an identity that should not be perceived as an individual malaise but a structural irony: the result of a colonial educational system that promised enlightenment but delivered ambivalence. In simpler terms, the *Snailing* is used to analyse how characters struggle to detach from Western-imposed ideals, show moments of progress that are undermined by hesitation, nostalgia, or mimicry. Embody the tension between external success and internal dislocation.

Literature, therefore, becomes the space where this irony is laid bare, questioned, and, potentially, reimagined.

According to Amukowa and Ayuya (2013), an educated person is one who is mentally and physically balanced. An educated person is someone who has learned how to acquire, analyse, synthesise, evaluate, understand, and communicate knowledge and information. An educated person develops skills that respond to changing professional requirements and new challenges in society and the world at large. An educated person must be able to take skills previously gained from a serious study of one set of problems and apply them to another. He/she must be able to locate, understand, interpret, evaluate, and appropriately use information, and ultimately command his or her synthesis and understanding of that information clearly and accurately.

However, formal classroom instruction in the European-type school has received considerable criticism from African writers who claim to share deep sentiments, including the notion that formal classroom instruction in the European-type school is a cause of the alienation of the educated character of contemporary African society and Africa's current underdevelopment.

Nsamenang (2004) has observed that education in Africa has paradoxically deepened a sense of alienation in Africans. He adds that the educated African is a person whose knowledge reception is inadequate to usher him/her into a productive and hopeful way of life in Africa. Mimiko (2010) also points out that the Educated African has the kind of knowledge which is only suitable for foreign than national labour markets because his education offers mainly incoherent chunks of western knowledge and skills deficient in the context of local wisdom. Nyamnjoh (2012) argues that the educated African is

one whose knowledge places him /her on the periphery of development through the process of seasoning.

In this study, the educated African means two things. The first is the person who has received training from the European type of school instituted by the missionaries and the British Colonial government (Moswenyane, 2013). As earlier stated, the sophistication and pride associated with the concept of “educated” are what the study underscores to bring out its consequences on the character of contemporary Ghanaian society presented in the selected texts. The second meaning adopted as the educated African is the character of contemporary Ghanaian society, which incorporates indigenous traits and has also undergone formal training from European-type school established by missionaries and the British Colonial government. The focus of this study will be based mainly on the second meaning because it is central to the discussion, and will also consider the consequences of education on both characters, as explained to represent the data being used by this study.

Background to the Study

The contemporary African writer presents the practically observable situation around the educated African, which is evident in the physical as well as the mental and emotional consequences of the unconscious adoption of European constructs (from the European type of school) by Africans in their writings. These are tragically observable in the areas of language, religion, health, name, and taste. The result of this dislocation has been great confusion, disorientation, and self-destruction. These unconscious imitations result in emotional suppression, leading to practical compromises that also put the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society into a psychological and

existential condition of uncertainty and displacement. This condition arises from being caught between indigenous identity and Western cultural expectations. The study considers this position as enslavement, which is also a lingering postcolonial tension, a feeling of never being at home in either world.

According to Gyasi (2016), the education of Africans acknowledges their continuing position as historically oppressed people. The African intellectual, for example, who is placed among people within the privileged class as highly educated, receives the form of education described and prescribed by the Europeans. The instruction they receive is from the type of school curriculum designed to be consumed without considering the mental and cultural dispositions of Africans. The less privileged, who are also considered “uneducated”, are also generating this culture outside the mainstream, and many do not take into account this differentiation. Both the privileged and the less privileged have been taught by the dominant society how to speak, what to believe, how to look, and how to define success. Wa Thiong’o (1986, p. 7) emphasises that “the more the critical temper of the African is influenced by the Eurocentric critical tradition, the more gradual they become ‘Black Westerners’”. The painful aspect is that the Eurocentric influence has rather benefited the European coloniser and has caused anti-personal indoctrination among Africans. Examples of such anti-personal indoctrinations include elitism, which is characterised by social pride that fosters a negative self-complex, and capitalism. This system benefits few individuals in a neo-superiority sense, while disguising itself as neocolonialism and imperialism.

Uba (1980) observes that contemporary African writers often portray the educated character as a nameless protagonist whose existence is both obscured

by and contrasted with "others"—figures who possess names, significance, familial ties, and existential needs that root them in a clear cultural and historical context. This narrative approach reflects a broader phenomenon that Farnida (2020) describes as a postcolonial mimicry of the central figure in contemporary African society. The mimicry examined in this study signals an identity crisis, where the educated character appears to imitate a self that is fundamentally different from its authentic origin. Amina (2019) explains that mimicry, as a concept, captures the idea that colonial influence can unconsciously foster internal subversion. In such cases, the individual unknowingly contributes to the undermining of colonial authority by replicating its structures and ideals.

Martin (1976) provides insight into the educational systems that existed in Africa prior to colonialism. His account highlights that indigenous forms of instruction were deeply rooted in character formation and the cultivation of a strong, coherent African identity. According to Wiafe (2021), these traditional educational systems were predominantly informal and spiritual in orientation. Central to this worldview was a belief in a supreme God, the creator of humanity and the universe, with lesser gods regarded as divine messengers. Ancestors were revered as vital intermediaries between the living and the divine within the familial structure.

Mohammed and Mohammed (2013) expand on this, noting that indigenous African education encompassed vocational and professional training tailored to the needs of specific communities. Physical education also played a key role, with emphasis placed on endurance and strength-building through competitive activities. Additionally, the arts were integral to the learning

process. Skills such as carving, painting, modeling, singing, dancing, and masquerading were central to the community's creative and expressive life.

Kwamena-Poh (1975) further notes that intellectual training was embedded in these indigenous systems through activities like singing, arithmetic games, and environmental studies. Instruction also included the identification and classification of flora, fauna, and other elements of the natural world. Historical and cultural knowledge was preserved through oral traditions, including stories of gods and accounts of societal customs conveyed through folktales and folklore. All these forms of knowledge were instrumental in shaping the moral and ethical outlook of the African individual.

Holmes (1978), however, argues that the arrival of Christian missionaries marked a significant turning point. Even before the full establishment of European colonial rule, missionaries introduced Western-style education to parts of Africa. Holmes attributes many of the cultural and educational disruptions in African societies to these early missionary influences. Uba (2003) adds that the initial African response to this foreign educational model was largely negative. Nonetheless, attitudes gradually shifted as communities began to engage with what was perceived as a novel and virtuous system.

In the opening years of the twentieth century, colonial rule was well-established and became the main driving force in the educational process (Uba, 2003). According to Uba (2003), the Igbo society, as an example, had had an encounter with the new culture in the form of education. Adekunle (2019) adds that this form of education was seen as an avenue to white-collar jobs with government posts in the native authority system and positions in the British

administration itself. From the discussion above, it could be argued that the interests of the missions and the British colonial government were almost the same. Though the missionaries gained increasing momentum after the British abolished their slave trade in 1807, the missions needed educated Africans to serve as teachers, catechists, and interpreters. All schoolchildren were expected to become converts to the new religion sooner or later. For this reason, according to Martin (1976), the missions embarked on education not as an end in itself but as a means to an end. This is also supposed to mean that, as Bishop Shanahan, a well-known Irish minister, puts it, “these who hold the school, hold the country, hold its religion, hold its future”.

It should be emphasised that though the missionaries helped the government produce low-level manpower for their needs, the overriding objective was proselytisation. The colonial government condoned the educational objectives of the missionaries, even though its main interest was to maintain law and order. The colonial government introduced rules that seemed to empower local people to oversee the establishment and endorsement of a school. The local chiefs were to instil in the local people a desire for a school, which in turn needed support from the local administration before its endorsement and establishment. The aim of the colonial government in doing this was to bring about competition among the various missionaries who had managed to introduce Christianity among the local African people.

Pinto (2019) outlines many of the obstacles that these school children face. According to Pinto (2019), school children were uninformed about the affairs of their communities because they lost a great deal, which could have been acquired through more intimate association with their parents and other

elders. Using the Nigerian setting as an example, Uba (2003) intimates that Igbo elders always distinguished between natural or real and “bookish” intelligence, implying that, however brilliant a boy was at school, he was, in another sense, quite ignorant. This ignorance might not merely be embarrassing but also costly to the family. Pinto adds that the boy will never know how to plant or harvest yams and cocoyam, and will not know when others encroach on his father’s land because he is never available to study the boundaries. Ignoring the local family system and attaching oneself to the European system of thinking could be argued to have been what drew the African child away from the African way of life. This situation could be considered the means through which the value of African civilisation got lost.

Another clear obstacle presented by Pinto was the schoolmaster’s cane. The missionary teachers believed in the power of the cane in the educational process. They were notorious for the amount of corporal punishment and other types of punishments that they freely administered to pupils at the slightest provocation. Some were known to have mercilessly flogged children out of vengeance for favours denied them or omissions committed by their parents, guardians and their relatives. The brutalities of the school masters and the helplessness of the pupils made many parents unwilling to send their beloved children to school to be butchered.

Hughes (2021), a neurobiologist, tells us that learning is an emotional matter. The success with which new information will be processed depends on the emotional state of the learner. When we are in a state of panic, the brain is in fight or flight mode. It cannot integrate information deeply, let alone allow for intellectual expansion into higher-order thinking such as synthesis,

creativity, or evaluation. It could be argued that the European missionaries intentionally used this as a tool to disintegrate the mental faculty of the Africans to succeed in their future dominance. It is then not surprising to find the contemporary African in a state of anxiety, just as B.F. Skinner explains in his theory of operant conditioning that punishable actions are not learning. However, behavioural regulation causes more and more physical and mental damage.

There was again a problem created by the association of education with evangelism. The missionaries did not see education as an end but as an aid to the spreading of the gospel. Every school child was expected to become a convert to Christianity, but many parents were opposed to their first sons abandoning the religion of their ancestors and so refused to send them to school. Pinto (2019) contends again that by the process of proselytization, as has been observed from the message given through the activities of the Christian missionaries and the British colonial government, the kind of education received during the period of colonial rule aimed at character training and civilization, which has resulted in cultural disposition and religious and linguistic hegemony. In other words, the British colonial government and the European missionaries used schooling to impose their knowledge, language, and culture on the people of Africa.

Holms (1978) traces the historical background of Africa's underdevelopment through this Western type of education in the Ghanaian experience. Holms writes that the western form of education dates back to the 15th century, when both the missionaries and the British colonial government had succeeded in spreading and Christianizing the people of Ghana. The full

Christianization continued through the 20th century, when Ghana, the then Gold Coast, was captured by most of the indigenous elite, who aligned themselves with the new culture, values, and worldview of the coloniser. Though Gold Coast gained its independence in 1957, the education system of modern-day Ghana is still based on Western structure, perspective, goals, and values, and this is associated with the creation of a Western urban, white-collar elite whose worldview is similar to “the educated” in the West through European formal education. Now, Western cultures are manifest in the everyday lives of Africans and Ghanaians in particular. The attitude and behaviour of colonialism are taught in schools and passed on to subsequent generations.

It appears that contemporary African writings showcase some emerging consciousness about a means of rejecting the involvement of Western powers in Africa’s internal affairs and the resistance to Western intrusion in the affairs of Africa. In their fictiveness, they emphasise issues of identity, education and cultural awareness. In addition, African literature offers different perspectives on educating the African child and making contemporary African education relevant to the contemporary African child. African writers advocate for how Africans can believe in themselves by concentrating on their abilities and cultures. Their remedies are found in how education and sensitisation campaigns aim at eradicating the stench that colonialism left on them. Some suggest a revision of the educational system. Ayi Kwei Armah’s novels, for example, serve as “politically engaged novels that are seen as an apt canvas for pragmatic interactions of contending ideas and social forces (Armah, 1995, p. 213). Others, like Wa Thiong’o (1986), state in their fiction and non-fictional

writings that the educational system should be revised to focus on new developments to make it relevant to Africans.

Contemporary discussions on issues like this make it clear that Africans have now identified their problems and are struggling to make a headway. However, the issue remains that, though people are aware of the current confusion, most of them pretend that all is well and keep their fury within. Others are also of the conviction that they are fine in their neo-superiority complex state. This is in line with Armah's assertion that "to live well now means to develop as highly as possible the ability to do one thing while saying and preferably also, thinking another thing entirely" (1972, p. 14).

The emergence of a new consciousness has been possible because African literary art, oral or written, is capable of generating the necessary stimuli for change. (Mbiti, 1991). African literature is traditionally an informal evening fireside school in which elders and parents teach children ethics, morality and the culture of the community. How literature is related to morality is demonstrated through various poetic traditions in Africa. An example is the telling of folktales among Africans, where parents and elders of the land sit with children in the evenings by the fireside and teach the children about ethics, morality, the cultures of their land, and the deities who protect and aid human existence. The African writer in the modern day has assumed the role of the conscience of society to remind readers and society of the high cultural ethos that must be followed and maintained for the betterment of both the people and society. Due to the role of the African writer as the conscience of society, many writers now produce literary works to satirise the ills of modern-day society, including the corruption of modern-day government (Irele, 1981).

Although these writers have shown this predicament as a form of slavery, it is not fully unpacked. This study brings to light a seldom theorised emotional and psychological theory that moves beyond just political and economic dimensions by contributing to a more effective reading of postcolonial forms of slavery.

According to Chukuemeka (2022), slavery involves “control exercised in such a manner as to significantly deprive a person of his or her liberty.” This form of control typically begins with physical violence and may later manifest as threats or coercion. While chattel slavery has been legally abolished in many countries, modern forms of enslavement persist through unlawful control exercised for the benefit of the oppressor. These forms often include child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, forced marriages, coerced criminal activity, among others. Contemporary literature such as Darko’s *Faceless*, Agyiri’s *Unexpected Joy at Dawn*, and several other postcolonial works depict these realities of modern slavery.

In this study, slavery means something different. It is a mental and cultural dependence on Western standards. The educated character strives for self-definition, but often uses a Western framework to do so, creating a paradox where the very tools of liberation reinforce slavery. This feeling causes a feeling of both success and daily challenge in terms of identity. The consequence of this is the unconscious imitative representations of Western values and constructs by Africans that bring along a state of emotional suppression, leading to practical compromises.

Using a postcolonial theoretical framework for this analysis, it has become clear that the education introduced by the colonial system is what has

caused the unconscious imitative representations of Western values and thus has not benefited the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society presented in the selected texts. According to the message received from the selected texts, this type of education has not served the indigenous Ghanaian populace well. It has largely deprived, denationalised and robbed Ghanaians of their dignity and the meaning of life. The postcolonial theoretical framework is used because the term concerns itself with the situation of culture after the period of colonialism until today. It questions the legal acceptability of the assumption that the coloniser's culture is better than the colonised culture and offers an essential way of revealing the realities of the colonised people. The study discusses postcolonialism in the light of Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry and man. This phenomenon is understood to explore the effects that colonialism has had on Africa and the character of African society through the issue of the "educated" as a critical response to the plight of the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society depicted in the selected texts. The idea is used in connection with the study of literature, specifically three Ghanaian female texts, which involve various aspects affected by Western influence through the colonial type of education introduced into Africa.

It is upon this basis that the study focuses on using Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain* (2008), Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2018) to consider the representation of mimicry in the three selected texts as expressions of a form of enslavement. How these are showcased can be ascertained through the characters' imitation of the European style of life in the form of language, religion, health, name, taste, lifestyle, attitude, and thinking.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the existing literature, Wawrzinek and Makokha (2011), Rushton (2017) and Asempasah et al. (2022) reviewed the three selected texts about their treatment of the representation of mimicry, suggesting a preoccupation with thematic issues. In their various discussions, Fletcher (2013), Alozie and Nkemjika (2017), Nwoye (2015), Cloninger (2008), Crown (2010), and Smith (2008), among others, explain the adverse effects of colonialism in Africa. These studies describe how the effects are manifest in the daily lives of Africans living in a post-colonial society. From their diverse presentations, the manifestations are found in the sets of attitudes and behaviour patterns that reproduce the effects of colonialism, and these are learned from the institution of schools by the Christian missionaries and the British colonial government. As pointed out earlier, the main aim of this system of education by the missionaries and the British colonial government was specifically to serve the purpose of dominance. These manifestations are practically observable situations evident in the physical, mental, and emotional consequences of the unconscious adoption of European constructs by Africans.

The unconscious constructs are tragically observable in the areas of language, religion, health, name, and taste, and these do not encourage real independence, even though independence is believed to have been achieved by almost all the African countries existing in the postcolonial world. Examples are illustrated in how African languages are distorted as dialects resulting from the learning environment encountered within the European-type school (Owuwie, 2006). There is the showcasing of the notion that the religion of the African amounts to the practice of sorcery, paganism and evil (Alozie &

Nkemjika, 2017). Again, there is the illustration of taste such that there is the unconscious adoption of European aesthetics with Africans, modifying their original physical appearances and their environment to conform to the European model. Regarding health, there is a prevailing belief that orthodox medicine is a clean and refined means of curing illnesses.

What has been established from the critical perspectives (Gehrmann, 2016; Hidalgo, 2020 Phiri, 2017; Olson & Hergenham, 2010; Friedman & Schustack, 2011; Ryckman, 2008; Feist, 2009; Schultz, 2009; Christopher et al, 2014; Adu Boaheng, 1990; Akpabaro, 2012) among others, is that there seems to be a growing awareness of the issue of the representation of mimicry in modern literature. Most of these works (Shaana, 2016; Hollie, 2020; Broida, 2016; Adu Boaheng, 1990) argue that Africa's independence is pointless and not valuable. However, these discussions fail to point out clearly that it is the unconscious imitative tendencies to copy others that hinder the idea of real independence in the educated character. This particular situation is what places the character of contemporary Ghanaian society within the parameters of a slave.

Scholarships on the three selected texts for analysis, (Sangretha, 2019; Miller, 2016; Wawrzinek & Makokha, 2011; List & Lauer, 2016; Hollie, 2020; Broida, 2016), among others, have examined other issues like black identity, Afropolitanism constructs, negro education, diasporic generational issues, issues of freedom and independence, transplantation and threat, issue of identity and immigrant acculturation. Although these practical issues are generally examined as important for contemporary discussion. the lingering postcolonial tension, marked by a psychological and existential condition of uncertainty and

displacement has not received adequate attention. This tension arising from how the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society, who is caught between indigenous identity and western expectations (a condition this study describes as enslavement) is clearly portrayed in the three selected texts as a distinct consciousness.

Again, contemporary African writings highlight that the African intellectual whose mind remains vulnerable to this form of mental enslavement (psychological and existential condition of uncertainty and displacement) is unconsciously placed in a position that forces compromise and results in emotional suppression. Even though some critics have made attempts to discuss this form of enslavement (psychological and existential condition of uncertainty and displacement), presentations appear on the surface. Such discussions do not show the essence of the symbolic interactions of these characters, whose unconscious exhibitions indicate this postcolonial tension, which in turn causes the educated character of the contemporary Ghanaian society depicted in the texts to continuously yearn for freedom.

The study examines the clear signs of consciousness in the three selected texts as a lingering postcolonial tension that renders the educated character vulnerable. It explores these tendencies as examples of enslavement.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate how this kind of enslavement has been represented in fiction and what insight into the subject contemporary creative writings, such as Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2018), Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain* (2008), and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016) offer.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, and Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain* to ascertain how domination in the British Colonial Administration system is represented in the three selected texts.
2. Undertake a comparative analysis of the three selected texts to find out the forms that the imitative representations take.
3. Investigate the movement of self-knowledge and real independence in the three selected texts.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the analysis:

1. How is domination in the missionaries and the British Colonial Administration system represented in the three selected texts?
2. What forms do the imitative representations take in the three selected texts?
3. How do the texts represent the movement of self-knowledge and real independence?

Scope of the Study

The study is particularly focused on exploring the vulnerability of the “educated” character in selected Ghanaian literary texts, using insight from postcolonialism as a theory. Three selected texts, Ayesha Harruna Attah’s *Harmattan Rain* (2008), Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* (2016) and Taiye Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go* (2018), were used to consider the representations of mimicry in the three selected texts and how they showcase a form of enslavement.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach is employed to examine how the character of contemporary Ghanaian society, as portrayed in the selected texts, can perceive real independence that allows a re-dignity for the Ghanaian without attaching relevance to life in the light of other cultures. A textual analysis is done using insights from postcolonial theory. To achieve this, three selected texts were used as data to explain how the character of contemporary African society exhibits this Psychological and existential condition of uncertainty and displacement that arise from being caught between indigenous identity and western cultural expectations; a lingering postcolonial tension that describes a

feeling of not being at home in either world. Their actions, attitude, language use, and their perception of taste and name are analysed to find out the extent to which the imitative representation of these characters dislocates as well as alienates them from their original identity. In the analysis chapters, a close reading is done to identify and describe how literary tools are used to show how domination is perceived from the education received from the European-type school. Postcolonial theory is used as a lens to showcase how the effects are manifest. Analysis again expresses how the dislocation and alienation of the character of contemporary African society affect growth and development in Africa, especially in how education from the European-type school disorients the mental and physical outlook of this character. A close reading of the three selected texts is further used to describe how the characters compromise their situation and become vulnerable. From the discussion of the three selected texts, there is further evidence of how advocacy for a pathway to real independence is described. The description is done by identifying and showcasing the various perspectives of presentations by the authors, using insight from postcolonial theory.

Significance of the Study

The study aims to contribute to the field of literary research and add to the ongoing scholarship on the writings of Ayesha Harruna Attah, Taiye Selasi, and Yaa Gyasi from the perspectives of postcolonialism. It further exposes readers' attention to how the character of the contemporary Ghanaian society exemplified in the selected texts yearns for real independence when this character attaches relevance to life concerning other cultures. It creates awareness that it is the imitative representations of the character of

contemporary African society that have been impeding growth and development in Africa. There is therefore a need to focus on real independence by reviewing the current educational system in Africa.

The study again contributes to the understanding of post-colonialism, especially Homi Bhabha's idea of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence as theoretical concepts.

Furthermore, the study is valuable on the fact that these selected texts have not received significant critical attention. This is especially true in the case of Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* and Ayesha Harunna Attah's *Harmattan Rain*. On *Ghana Must Go*, scholars have focused on immigration and acculturation, Afropolitanism, the anxiety of the return, and the quest for home (Rushton, 2017). On *Harmattan Rain*, history replays itself and reviews the desire for freedom (Abdulai, 2009; Darkoah, 2014). Surprisingly, none of these studies has been able to explain why the character of contemporary African society still desires independence, despite the belief that independence has already been obtained in Africa.

The study aims to serve as a useful tool and eye-opener for education policy draftsmen, the Ministry of Education, education managers, and the broader education community, highlighting how the curriculum continues to suppress Africanism, particularly in areas such as language, family, religion, name, and taste.

Justification

This study finds justification in the fact that although some researchers have discussed the imitative representations of the educated character, much has not been done from the literary perspective of viewing the imitative

representations as a form of psychological and existential condition of uncertainty and displacement for the educated character. The important part of this feeling is that it is barely perceptible, such that the individual does it unconsciously without realising it is a form of enslavement until it is exhibited, especially in the sense where the current form of independence in Africa lacks value and therefore has rendered the educated character vulnerable. This study considers the link between the forms of the imitative representations exhibited by the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society created in the three selected texts and value independence from postcolonialism in the light of Homi Bhabha's mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence. It discusses in detail the diverse techniques employed by the three selected Ghanaian women writers in exposing a current consciousness of the position of the educated character as "independent" within a mindset and physique that still views aesthetics in the light of other cultures and still yearns for freedom. Although the issue of the imitative representation of the educated character is a longstanding one, its existence captures fully the frustrations, traumas and betrayals experienced by the character of the contemporary Ghanaian society created in the three selected texts.

The choice of these texts was purposely selected based on five criteria. First, their thematic depictions are similarly focused on Black identity and Africa's rich legacy, including the Africans' liberation movements in today's post-liberation era. Second, the authors converge in their representation/portrayal of characters who struggle with cultural duality and identity conflict. Third, they share a Ghanaian descendant context, allowing a controlled exploration of postcolonial tension within a specific national and

diasporic lineage. Fourth, although grounded more in the Ghanaian context, the texts reflect broader pan African and diasporic concerns, particularly the negotiation of African identity in global space; their resonance with postcolonial struggles across Africa justifies a more expansive reading. Fifth, the study foregrounds the voices of Ghanaian women writers not to exclude male perspectives, but to examine how postcolonial anxieties, particularly around identity, education, and independence, are articulated by those whose experiences have often been doubly marginalised, both by colonial structures and patriarchal norms.

Outline of the Study

The study is organised into six chapters. Chapter One discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, justification of the study, and methodology employed in conducting the research. Chapter Two, which focuses on the literature review, is divided into three main parts. The first two parts deal with a critical and empirical review of the three selected texts. The critical and empirical review is discussed based on the following themes: The form of education received through the European-type school (where there is an emphasis on Africa's current education system and issues around the educated character) and the description of the Ghanaian as an imitative character. The review of these themes is done in the order in which they follow. The two main headings are discussed based on the emphasis of how slavery manifests in the areas of religion, language, health, taste, and name. These particular ideas are placed in the discussion for proper understanding of the first part of the chapter. The second part of this chapter discusses the theoretical framework within

which the work is grounded. Literature that explores the concept of mimicry as a prominent post-liberation theme fundamental to this study is analysed.

Chapter Three presents a comparative analysis of how literary tools are employed to examine the exercise of domination through education, as received through missionary activities and the British Colonial Administration, in the three selected texts. Chapter Four investigates the forms that the imitative representations take and how they are exhibited through the characters in the three selected texts.

Chapter Five considers the path taken by the characters towards self-knowledge and real independence in the three selected texts. Chapter Six discusses the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The review has been divided into three parts: a critical review, an empirical review, and a theoretical review. The critical review is analysed on two main themes. Western education and the character of contemporary African society (where the situation of Africa's current education system and the educated African is reviewed), and the description of the character of contemporary African society as an imitative character. The review of these two themes is done in the order in which they follow. The two main themes are discussed with emphasis on how slavery predominantly manifests in the areas of religion, language, health, taste, and name. These particular ideas are pointed out for proper outlining of the first part of the chapter. An empirical review evaluates what critics have done with the three selected texts. The various issues considered by the research under the critical review have been evaluated concerning the selected texts to uncover the gaps, convergence, and conflicts that can help identify and describe the main problem at hand. The theoretical framework discusses the main theory that grounds the understanding of the study. Postcolonialism is the main theory analysed.

Critical Review

The critical review examines how African countries have been dribbled by ideological blocks and the African quest for an ideal path through education for development. The various blocks have been discussed under the following subheadings: Western education and the character of contemporary African society. In the discussion, the situation of Africa's current education system and

the African intellectual is captured. The following heading talks about the description of the character of contemporary African society as an imitative character. The review of these themes is done in the order in which they follow. Issues of religion, education, language, name, and health are emphasised under the two broad headings.

Western Education and the Character of Contemporary African Society

Lang and Dawson (2009) have suggested that colonialism is deeply implicated in the disempowerment of its subjects. They offer a working definition that frames colonialism as “valuing, enhancing and exploiting the natural resources of foreign territories.” Similarly, Thomas (2006) has characterised colonialism as the promotion of values that uphold and enrich its political authority, thereby legitimising the extraction of material and human resources as well as the imposition of political control. These definitions by well-regarded scholars could be seen to support the argument that Africa should approach Britain’s colonial legacy with critical awareness rather than unqualified condemnation. It is often contended, for example, that Britain helped to end internecine warfare, abolished certain traditional practices, established churches, schools, and hospitals, and developed infrastructure such as railways and harbours. These developments have been cited as attempts to reduce poverty and support local administration through monetary and material contributions, including the service of civil servants.

However, Tregonning (1960) presents a counterpoint, arguing that such colonial contributions may obscure the fact that taxation imposed on colonised peoples was often redirected to serve the goals of the colonial power. This observation shifts the focus from stated developmental intentions to a more

critical view of colonialism as a system designed primarily for domination and resource extraction. From this standpoint, colonies could be interpreted as being systematically restructured for the strategic benefit of the colonial powers. The belief in the superiority of colonial systems often justified forced control, resulting in significant transformations in resource use, labour systems, political structures, and cultural norms. Adu-Boaheng (1987) notes that colonisers saw these impositions as necessary tools in the pursuit of modernisation, evangelisation, and civilisation.

It has been observed that colonisers frequently defended their mission by highlighting the perceived benefits of their culture, which served to legitimise their dominance and obscure the exploitative nature of their actions. Johnson (2013) argues that colonialism was framed as a civilising mission intended to introduce Western Europe's cultural and societal ideals. This view, according to Johnson, was prevalent in late 19th-century Britain, where imperialism was often associated with enlightenment. However, scholars such as Achebe (1973) have pointed out that many African societies already possessed complex cultural and political systems that were overlooked or dismissed by colonial narratives.

Contrary to the assumption that African societies required external civilisation, West Africa, for instance, had established histories of commerce, diplomacy, and governance. Ghana, by 800 AD, had developed into a significant trading hub and by 1070 AD was considered one of the most powerful empires in the world due to its wealth and military organisation (Adu-Boaheng, 1987). He further suggests that some parts of Europe may have once been subjected to domination by civilisations that were arguably more

advanced. This counters the dominant narrative that it was European civilisation that brought peace to Africa. Instead, it may be argued that European involvement introduced new forms of conflict, as evidenced by the conscription of Africans into European wars such as the First World War (1914–1918), in which many Africans lost their lives fighting for causes that were not originally their own.

Examples such as the bombardment of coastal towns in Ghana in response to anti-taxation protests and the military campaigns against inland groups like the Asantes underscore the coercive aspects of colonial rule (Anquandah, 2007). It may be argued that European colonisation, rather than unifying or pacifying African societies, introduced foreign motives that resulted in prolonged disruption and devastation. According to Anquandah (2007), contemporary tensions between certain ethnic groups in Ghana, particularly between the Southern and the Northern regions, can arguably be traced to colonial policies and uneven development strategies.

One of the most enduring legacies of colonialism is the arbitrary partitioning of Africa, which has arguably contributed to ethnic tensions and political instability. In some cases, ethnic groups that were split across borders have been involved in political uprisings or conflicts. For example, it has been suggested that the Ewe population in Togo supported the 1979 coup in Ghana led by Jerry Rawlings due to historical grievances. Furthermore, poorly demarcated borders are believed to have sparked disputes such as those between Mali and Burkina Faso. Colonial classification of certain ethnic groups as either administrative or labour classes, such as the designation of Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, has also been cited as a root of enduring social division.

Falola (2014) maintains that colonial administration was often in the hands of a small group of European officials, who seldom consulted local populations in policy implementation. This limited representation arguably helped justify the imposition of European systems of governance and social organisation. The view that colonialism legitimised itself through educational and cultural institutions is supported by observations that remnants of the “civilising mission” continue to shape curricula and social attitudes in postcolonial African societies.

Harber (2014) highlights the transformative potential of education in democratic societies, stating that democracy cannot thrive unless citizens are adequately informed. Education, he argues, is essential for shaping values and cultivating skills needed for societal progress. While this perspective is widely shared, other scholars have questioned the appropriateness of Western education models in non-Western contexts. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995) contend that Western-style education, although central to modernisation efforts, often fails to account for local traditions, cultures, and lived realities.

Western education often prioritises structured, formal learning and a hierarchical teacher-student dynamic, which can contrast sharply with indigenous educational traditions. Azumrana (2013) contends that the imposition of such systems may lead to alienation and identity crises, especially for Africans navigating the tension between indigenous and Western value systems. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin critique education as a subtle mechanism of imperial control—not through coercion, but through the cultivation of ideological consent. This aligns with Gramsci’s theory of cultural

hegemony, which suggests that colonial dominance was perpetuated through the educational system and language policies.

Wa Thiong'o (1986) challenges the persistence of Anglocentric literary traditions in African higher education, arguing that they contribute to the emergence of "Black Westerners." His call for the dismantling of English departments and the promotion of Afrocentric curricula reflects a broader struggle for cultural identity and intellectual autonomy. Similarly, Kincaid (1995) observes that colonial education often served to erase indigenous histories while celebrating colonial powers. Tiffin (1996) reinforces this view, noting that canonical texts functioned to entrench imperial ideologies, leading colonised peoples to internalise their marginalisation. Parry (2009) further suggests that colonial systems of knowledge production forced African subjects to adopt externally imposed identities. As some scholars argue, this process has produced an elite class that, while formally educated, remains disconnected from local realities and aligned with colonial governance structures.

Akpabarow notes that this disjunction may have influenced a political ethos in which power is perceived more as a private possession than a public responsibility. Conversely, Pimpong (2006) cautions against the dangers of educational inadequacy, asserting that without proper education, communities may lack the capacity to enhance agriculture, control disease, and maximise local resources. Thus, education must be context-sensitive to truly support development.

Concerns have also been raised about the tendency of highly educated individuals to avoid certain types of employment, deeming them beneath their social standing. This can result in the underutilisation of human capital and may,

according to some critics, reflect a prioritisation of personal advancement over national progress, thereby worsening social inequalities. Such trends are sometimes interpreted as manifestations of neocolonial dependency.

Kwame Nkrumah recognised the transformative potential of education, viewing literacy as foundational to national development. Grounded in Kantian ethics, he affirmed the inherent dignity of every individual, in opposition to colonial frameworks that reduced people to mere instruments of production. Nkrumah sought to reorient Ghana's educational system toward national imperatives, insisting that research and academic institutions serve the collective interest. Yet, his efforts faced significant limitations, given the complexity and protracted nature of decolonisation. As a postcolonial leader, he had to balance rapid national development with the broader vision of pan-African unity. His educational reforms aimed to produce a skilled labour force in line with the objectives of the seven-year development plan. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) describe his initiatives as encompassing both reactive (corrective) and proactive (constructive) aspects. According to Fuller (2014), Nkrumah also used education as a tool to reduce tribal divisions and encourage allegiance to the nation-state, contributing to a unified national identity. Bush and Saltarelli further argue that nationalism is vital for establishing the moral and civic foundations of society. From this standpoint, education transcends its economic utility, serving as a critical medium for cultivating shared values and fostering societal cohesion.

.Kincaid (1995) similarly notes that colonial education was often used to erase local histories and promote the glorification of colonial powers. Tiffin (1996) adds that canonical texts reinforced imperial ideologies, often leading

the colonised to internalise the logic of their own marginalisation. Parry (2009) supports this, suggesting that colonial knowledge systems compelled African subjects to adopt identities crafted by their colonisers. The result, as some critics argue, is the production of elites who, although formally educated, remain detached from indigenous realities and aligned with colonial structures of governance.

Akpabarow argues that this disconnection may have contributed to a political culture where power is viewed as a personal asset rather than a public trust. On the other hand, Pimpong (2006) warns of the dangers of inadequate education, suggesting that without it, communities may lack the tools to improve agriculture, prevent disease, and fully harness available resources. Therefore, education must be tailored to local needs to foster development truly.

There is concern that highly educated individuals sometimes avoid certain jobs, perceiving them as beneath their status, which may lead to underutilisation of national resources. Some critics argue that such individuals may prioritise personal gain over national development, exacerbating social inequality. This dynamic could be interpreted as a new form of dependency or neocolonial entrapment.

Kwame Nkrumah recognised the transformative power of education and regarded literacy as central to national development. Drawing on Kantian ethics, he asserted the intrinsic value of each individual, countering colonial views that reduced people to economic tools. Nkrumah sought to realign Ghanaian education with national priorities and demanded that research and academic institutions contribute to the collective good. Nevertheless, his efforts were short-lived, as the process of decolonisation, by its nature, is complex and long-

term. Nkrumah faced the challenge of rapidly developing a postcolonial nation while advocating for African unity. His educational policies were geared toward creating a skilled workforce to support ambitious development goals, as outlined in the seven-year development plan. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) note that these efforts reflected both reactive (negative) and proactive (positive) dimensions of his educational philosophy. According to Fuller (2014), Nkrumah also attempted to reduce tribalism through education by fostering loyalty to the nation-state over local affiliations. This strategy was part of a broader effort to construct a unified Ghanaian identity. Bush and Saltarelli add that nationalism plays a crucial role in shaping the moral and civic foundations of society. From this perspective, education is not merely a tool for economic development but a vital means of cultivating shared values and social cohesion.

This study thus aims to examine how these postcolonial dynamics, particularly the legacy of colonial education and the imagination of African identity, are represented and explored in contemporary African fiction.

The Situation of Africa's Current Education System

Wiafe (2021) asserts that the form of education introduced to Ghana, then known as the Gold Coast, in the 16th century may be considered the beginning of formal education in the Western sense. The use of "formal" by Wiafe is intended to denote instruction within a European-style school system. This observation suggests that prior educational structures in the Gold Coast are often overlooked, and Wiafe's clarification seeks to correct the common misconception that precolonial Africa was devoid of educational systems.

Mosweunyane (2013) describes the impact of colonialism as involving a significant imposition of Western knowledge systems. He argues that these systems may have obstructed and devalued indigenous African knowledge traditions, potentially dampening Africans' enthusiasm for self-driven modernisation. This redirection of developmental priorities arguably led to the reimagining of African societies through the lens of European ideals. Onwauchi (1972) supports this view by noting that cultural diversity has long existed across Africa, with ancient Egypt serving as an example of advanced civilisation during a period when much of Europe remained in what is often described as the Dark Ages. This suggests that some of the intellectual and material foundations of Western civilisation may have originated in African territories.

It could be said that the cultural disruptions introduced by Western civilisation have created challenges around cultural adaptation and the integration of foreign customs into existing social structures. Since culture encompasses the totality of a people's way of life, including social, economic, and emotional practices, any alteration may result in broader societal transformations.

Charry (2012) argues that culture is learned rather than inherited biologically and is transmitted across generations. Each person, shaped by their cultural upbringing, is likely to act and think in accordance with that culture. Boateng (1985) further notes that values are central to cultural identity, and it is through the pursuit of culturally defined values that individuals derive meaning in life. From this standpoint, critics have raised concerns about the influence of Western education on Africa's development. Some argue that key African virtues such as honesty, humility, hard work, and respect may have been undermined by foreign systems of instruction. Diop (1991), for instance, claims that these virtues are increasingly seen as archaic, with materialism gaining prominence as a new standard of success.

Emeagwali (2006) argues that Western educational systems have, in many cases, failed to integrate African cultural values. Instead of transmitting cultural heritage, such systems may have contributed to a growing sense of alienation. According to Emeagwali, this cultural disconnect may have significantly transformed the educated character.

Based on these insights, it can be inferred that Western education, as introduced in the Gold Coast, may not have adequately served the people's broader sociocultural interests. Ampadu (2009) attributes challenges in Ghanaian students' academic performance to the inadequacy of educational methods that neglect creativity and critical thinking. These pedagogical approaches centred on memorisation and rigid curricula may restrict problem-solving skills and individual innovation. In addition, the apparent lack of social commitment embedded in educational content arguably contributes to socioeconomic inequality. This inequality may, in turn, act as a catalyst for

social unrest and frustration. Ampadu suggests that education should prioritise social solidarity and creativity to foster development that benefits all members of society, rather than reproducing elite privilege.

Despite Ghana's independence, its educational system arguably retains the foundational structures established by colonial powers. As a result, Ghana's contemporary curriculum continues to reflect European worldviews, a situation that, some argue, perpetuates cultural imperialism and neocolonialism (Ampadu, 2009). Educational policies during the colonial period may have been shaped to produce African functionaries to serve the colonial economy. The emphasis on "civilising" Africans through education arguably contributed to cultural displacement and linguistic domination.

Language, a critical element of culture, has also been affected. Okpilike (2012) highlights how language has played a central role in cultural erosion. Fanon (1967) posits that language is not only about communication but also about identity and cultural belonging. According to Johnson (2013), British missionaries deliberately promoted English as a tool of cultural integration and control, with language policy functioning as a subtle means of colonisation. Although local languages were initially used at the primary level, English was adopted as the language of instruction at higher levels of education, contributing to the emergence of a class of elites suited for colonial administration (Thomas, 2007). In contemporary Ghana, this linguistic legacy persists, and while policies have encouraged mother tongue instruction at the early stages of education, implementation remains inconsistent (Owu-Ewie, 2019). The coexistence of English and local languages has introduced complex dynamics, particularly in multilingual societies. Edu-Buandoh (2016) observes that this duality has

contributed to the formation of class-based identities, with English proficiency often associated with elitism and social mobility. Some scholars argue that this linguistic hegemony supports a form of neocolonialism by widening the gap between dominant and marginalised groups. Anderson and Dzahene-Quashie (2009) note that this shift toward English has coincided with a decline in indigenous language fluency across generations, posing a threat to linguistic and cultural diversity. Tchindjang, Bopda, and Ngamgn (2008) describe this phenomenon as a paradox: while African cultural products enrich Western literary and cultural institutions, African languages themselves face growing irrelevance and potential extinction. Omoniyi (2003) calls attention to this irony, suggesting that linguistic imperialism marginalises indigenous African languages and limits opportunities for those who do not master the dominant colonial language. The effects of linguistic and cultural marginalisation are further compounded by economic and educational policies shaped by international institutions. Ghana, for example, may experience forms of indirect control through development aid, structural adjustment programs, and educational reforms influenced by global powers. These dynamics raise concerns about the extent to which postcolonial states like Ghana exercise genuine sovereignty in their internal affairs.

Weriebor (2005) contends that colonial histories have often distorted the narrative of African agency. He suggests that historical records produced during and after colonial rule may have minimised African resistance and instead emphasised loyalty to imperial powers. This pattern, according to Coe (2002), persisted even when African intellectuals advocated for the inclusion of African histories in school curricula. European gatekeepers often determined what was

acceptable, leading to a portrayal of the African subject as dependent and culturally inferior.

Porteus (2001) asserts that colonialism imprisoned the Africans' social agency, constraining the ability to reshape society through individual or collective action. This constraint may help explain why the postcolonial subject often continues to struggle for autonomy and cultural affirmation. Abbali (2005) emphasises that colonialism not only repressed material life but also dismantled indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, some of which may now be nearing extinction.

The erasure of cultural identity is also reflected in naming practices. Okpilike (2012) observes that names with indigenous spiritual significance were replaced with Christian or Western names, often without cultural context. Fitzpatrick (2012) supports this, stating that names are deeply embedded in personal and cultural identity. The colonial imposition of Western names, therefore, may have served as a symbolic act of control and cultural transformation. Gyasi (2016) offers a more nuanced view, suggesting that African names and identity may have survived, adapted, and even flourished in diaspora through creative resistance.

Still, the broader effect of Western education, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995) argue, may be described metaphorically as a weapon of empire. Even if the military metaphor is somewhat contested, the underlying point remains: education, as a cultural instrument, arguably facilitated consent to colonial dominance through what was taught and how it was internalised by the colonised.

Given the centrality of education in shaping modern societies, scholars such as Harber (2014) call for a re-evaluation of African curricula. If education is to be a force for positive social change, it must move beyond imported models and instead reflect the values, problems, and aspirations of local communities. Okpilike (2012) concludes that knowledge production must ultimately serve the interests of the societies that nurture it.

Said (1968) suggests that education equips individuals with knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits—tools that can potentially foster personal growth and societal transformation. However, thinkers like Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995)—cited by Okpilike (2012)—cast doubt on the uncritical valorisation of Western education in developing countries.

Wiafe (2021) identifies the introduction of Western-style education to the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in the 16th century as marking the beginning of formal education in the Western sense. His use of the term "formal" refers to structured learning within European-style institutions. This clarification challenges the widespread misconception that precolonial African societies lacked educational systems, drawing attention to the often-overlooked indigenous frameworks that preceded colonial schooling.

Mosweunyane (2013) describes colonialism as an intrusive force that imposed Western epistemologies, often at the expense of indigenous African knowledge systems. He contends that this imposition may have stifled Africa's indigenous developmental pathways by devaluing local knowledge and dampening the drive for autonomous modernisation. Onwauchi (1972) supports this perspective, highlighting the continent's long-standing cultural diversity and citing ancient Egypt as a centre of advanced civilisation during a time when

much of Europe remained in what is commonly referred to as the Dark Ages. Such examples suggest that key intellectual and material foundations of Western civilisation may, in fact, have African roots.

The cultural disruption caused by Western civilisation arguably created challenges in terms of cultural adaptation, as foreign practices were introduced into established African social structures. Given that culture encompasses a society's entire way of life—its social, economic, and emotional practices—alterations in this domain often lead to broader societal transformation.

Charry (2012) asserts that culture is not inherited biologically but is learned and transmitted across generations. Individuals, shaped by their cultural environments, are inclined to act and think in ways consistent with their upbringing. Similarly, Boateng (1985) emphasises the centrality of values in constructing cultural identity, noting that people derive meaning through the pursuit of values defined by their culture. In this context, critics have expressed concern about the influence of Western education on African development. Some argue that key virtues such as humility, honesty, diligence, and respect may have been diminished under foreign pedagogical frameworks. Diop (1991) laments that these traditional values are increasingly regarded as outdated, while materialism is promoted as a new measure of success.

Emeagwali (2006) further critiques Western education for its frequent failure to incorporate African cultural values. Rather than transmitting cultural heritage, such systems often foster a sense of alienation. According to Emeagwali, this cultural disconnection has played a significant role in reshaping the identity of the educated African.

Drawing on these insights, one might conclude that Western education, as introduced to the Gold Coast, was ill-suited to the sociocultural context of its people. Ampadu (2009) attributes educational underperformance among Ghanaian students to methods that neglect creativity and critical thinking. Rote learning and rigid curricula, he argues, limit students' problem-solving abilities and stifle innovation. Moreover, the lack of socially conscious content within the curriculum may contribute to socioeconomic inequality, which, in turn, can fuel frustration and unrest. For Ampadu, education must promote creativity and social solidarity if it is to support inclusive development rather than reinforce elite privilege.

Despite Ghana's independence, the educational system retains structures inherited from the colonial era. Some scholars argue that the present-day curriculum continues to reflect Eurocentric worldviews, perpetuating both cultural imperialism and neocolonial influences (Ampadu, 2009). Colonial education policies were often designed to produce African intermediaries to serve colonial economic interests. The emphasis on "civilising" African subjects through education arguably led to cultural displacement and the marginalisation of indigenous languages and traditions.

Language, as a core component of culture, has also been significantly affected. Okpilike (2012) observes that colonialism led to the erosion of indigenous languages. Fanon (1967) asserts that language is not merely a tool of communication but also a critical marker of identity and belonging. Johnson (2013) explains that British missionaries promoted English as a vehicle for cultural assimilation and control, with language policy functioning as a subtle instrument of colonialism. Although local languages were initially used at the

primary level, English quickly became the main medium of instruction at higher levels, facilitating the rise of a Western-educated elite class (Thomas, 2007). In present-day Ghana, this linguistic legacy endures. While language policies encourage the use of mother tongues in early education, implementation remains inconsistent (Owu-Ewie, 2019). This coexistence of English and local languages introduces complex dynamics in multilingual contexts. Edu-Buandoh (2016) notes that English proficiency is often equated with elitism and upward mobility, thereby contributing to class-based identity formation. Some scholars suggest that this linguistic dominance reinforces neocolonial structures by deepening social divides. Anderson and Dzahene-Quashie (2009) point to declining fluency in indigenous languages across generations as a threat to both cultural and linguistic diversity. Tchindjang, Bopda, and Ngamgn (2008) describe this situation as paradoxical: while African cultural expressions enrich global institutions, African languages face increasing marginalisation. Omoniyi (2003) captures this irony by arguing that linguistic imperialism marginalises native languages and limits opportunities for individuals who are not fluent in colonial tongues.

These patterns of marginalisation are further reinforced by global economic and educational policies. Ghana's dependence on international development aid, structural adjustment programs, and donor-influenced educational reforms raises concerns about the degree of sovereignty postcolonial states exercise over their internal affairs.

Weriebor (2005) contends that colonial histories often distort African agency, suggesting that historical records from the colonial and postcolonial periods have downplayed African resistance in favour of narratives emphasising

loyalty to empire. Coe (2002) adds that even efforts by African intellectuals to introduce African perspectives into school curricula were often subject to the approval of European authorities, resulting in the continued portrayal of Africans as culturally inferior and dependent.

Porteus (2001) argues that colonialism constrained African social agency, inhibiting both individual and collective efforts to reshape society. This suppression may help explain why postcolonial subjects often continue to struggle for cultural autonomy. Abbali (2005) highlights that colonialism not only disrupted material life but also dismantled indigenous epistemologies and worldviews—many of which are now at risk of extinction.

This cultural erosion is also evident in naming practices. Okpilike (2012) observes that indigenous names imbued with spiritual and cultural meaning were frequently replaced by Christian or Western names, often without cultural relevance. Fitzpatrick (2012) reinforces this point by noting that names are deeply tied to identity and culture. The imposition of Western names thus becomes a symbolic act of cultural domination. However, Gyasi (2016) offers a more complex interpretation, suggesting that African names and identities have endured particularly in the diaspora through acts of creative resistance. Still, the broader influence of Western education, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995) argue, can be metaphorically understood as a weapon of empire. While the militaristic imagery may be debated, the core argument stands: education, as a cultural mechanism, played a significant role in fostering ideological compliance with colonial rule.

In light of education's critical role in shaping society, scholars such as Harber (2014) call for a rethinking of African curricula. For education to

become a catalyst for positive transformation, it must transcend imported models and engage with the lived realities, values, and aspirations of local communities. As Okpilike (2012) concludes, the production of knowledge must ultimately serve the needs and interests of the societies that cultivate it.

Said (1968) maintains that education equips individuals with knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits—tools that can enable personal and societal progress. Nevertheless, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995) cited in Okpilike (2012) remind us, the uncritical embrace of Western education in formerly colonised societies deserves continued scrutiny.

Educational aims in Africa, including Ghana, are often presented as fostering individual fulfilment, moral development, and economic and technological independence. Nevertheless, the missionary-introduced model may have prioritised religious conversion over local needs. As a result, schooling in many African contexts appears to remain aligned with objectives set by colonial authorities, reinforcing continued dependency on foreign aid. Ukege (1976) notably observed that this system produced “students who are African in blood but English in opinion, morals, and intellect.” Azumrana (2013) adds that Western classrooms often simulate a miniature European society, complete with desks, fixed roles, and formal norms, potentially inculcating a sense of cultural alienation. Such structures, according to Azumrana, may facilitate what she terms a “negative complex,” where learners distance themselves from their indigenous identity.

Kincaid (1995) contends that colonial schools and libraries often erased African history in favour of glorifying the coloniser, while Tiffin (1996) argues that Western canonical texts were integral to maintaining imperial discourse.

Through these institutions, Western education may have repeatedly reaffirmed narratives that marginalise African identities and normalise cultural subordination.

Parry (2004) posits that this cultural conditioning can produce internalised self-doubt among learners. Under this view, the adoption of Western lifestyles can resonate as a form of psychological dependence reminiscent of past enslavement. Your study seeks to explore how African fiction imaginatively represents this kind of disidentification.

Turning to psychology, Ladejo (2021) uses behavioural learning theory to explore how environments are conditioned via reinforcement and punishment shape behaviour. This framework could help explain why European models of schooling may not align with African social values, resulting in behavioural dislocation rather than harmonious integration. While Skinner (mid-20th century) emphasised the observable aspects of behaviour and conditioning, critics argue that this model overlooks internal cognitive and emotional dimensions. This omission may contribute to structural and psychological misalignment in educational contexts.

Waghid (2004) underscores that educational philosophies shape thought and action. From this angle, Western educational models may produce conflicting mental frameworks when applied to African societies, contributing to a tension between imported curricula and lived realities.

In response, an African philosophy of education has been proposed—one reflective of local experiences and rational traditions. Wiredu (2004), for example, draws on Akan concepts of education, where an “educated person” is characterised by polish, logic, proverbs, and respectful listening. Hountondji

(2002) emphasises conscious rationality, urging curricula to question external concerns and address indigenous problems. Gyekye (1988) adds that African rationality expressed in folktales and traditional narratives demonstrates critical thinking rooted in local culture, though it may differ from Western norms.

This educational ideology emphasises moral refinement—honesty, empathy, and civic duty, as outcomes of learning. Waghid links this to Deweyan organic pedagogy, where teachers and students engage in collaborative inquiry, model humility, tolerate confusion, and treat mistakes as opportunities for exploration and collective growth.

Adu Boahen (1987) suggests that decolonising education begins with identifying continuities from colonial curricula, which often reproduce oppressive worldviews. Rogoff (2003) argues that education is inherently ideological either reproducing hegemony or reclaiming the dignity of the oppressed. Without deliberate reform, education may continue to serve neocolonial interests by preparing students to reinforce existing power structures.

This concern echoes Nkrumah's (mid-20th century) critique of neo-colonialism, an external control of independent states masked by formal sovereignty. He warned that without economic and institutional transformation, real independence remains illusory. Indeed, Bertocchi and Canova (2002) argue that colonialism drained African human capital, preventing the accumulation of indigenous resources. Despite attaining independence during the mid-20th century, many African states found themselves economically vulnerable, often dependent on former colonial powers long after political self-rule was established (Moyo, 2009).

Today, vestiges of Western legal systems, dress codes, and social customs arguably continue to validate the colonial narrative of African inadequacy. Handianto (2007) suggests that cultural “adjustment” under colonial rule prioritised European norms over local identities. Haddour (2000) characterises this adjustment not as a proper integration but as cultural displacement. In this view, colonial ideologies may have sought not coexistence but the replacement of indigenous norms with those of the coloniser.

The African Intellectual as an Imitative Character and Forms of enslavement

Postcolonial literature and its broader temporal framework frequently engage with questions of identity, which arguably constitute one of the most contentious issues in postcolonial discourse. The complex circumstances surrounding the post-independence moment and the evolving challenges faced by newly sovereign nations continue to underscore the intricacies of self-definition and cultural reconstruction. The so-called "crisis" of identity—often discussed in relation to the enduring legacies of colonial disruption—may be seen as a consequence of historical processes that destabilised pre-existing cultural frameworks. Bill Ashcroft and his colleagues (1989), in *The Empire Writes Back*, suggest that the lives of many across the globe have been shaped, in profound and often conflicting ways, by the colonial encounter.

A key concern emerging from their work relates to the traces of trauma and fragmentation that continue to persist, arguably due to the gap between the colonial past and postcolonial aspirations. Ashcroft et al. (1994) maintain that despite the formal end of colonial rule, many societies may still find themselves entangled in structures of power and knowledge that bear strong resemblances

to those of the colonial era (Ashcroft et al., 1994). This is framed not as a simple continuation of the past, but rather as a form of subtle neo-colonialism that operates under different guises.

According to their analysis, postcolonial societies often grapple with processes of migration, cultural dislocation, and resistance—phenomena that complicate identity formation and national cohesion. These challenges are further compounded by the residual policies and structural transformations introduced during colonial rule, many of which were designed to weaken or fragment indigenous socio-political institutions. As such, the postcolonial condition may be marked by an ongoing struggle for cultural, political, and psychological coherence, even as nations assert their independence.

Within postcolonial literature, questions of identity often recur with particular urgency. This is arguably due to the enduring hybridity and ambivalence that characterise postcolonial subjectivity. Writers and theorists invested in this field frequently position their work as an effort to reclaim or rearticulate identities that were either suppressed or distorted under colonial regimes. Edward Said, for instance, describes this dynamic in terms of a nationalist response—a kind of cultural reconstitution that seeks to assert indigenous narratives and epistemologies in the face of continued Western dominance (Said, 1993, p. 21).

Said also emphasises the inherent complexity of identity in postcolonial contexts. Identity, he argues, is constructed concerning “otherness,” a process through which the self is often defined against what it is not. This dynamic of differentiation wherein the colonised subject is continually framed through the values and discourses of the coloniser—can result in what Stuart Hall (1989)

refers to as a profound sense of dislocation. For Hall, identity is not a fixed or stable category but rather a contested and evolving construct shaped by intersecting historical, cultural, and ideological forces.

In this light, some scholars have argued that the type of education received in many postcolonial African contexts has not adequately supported the kind of critical engagement necessary for genuine self-articulation. Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019), for instance, maintains that high-quality education is integral to human capital development and societal advancement. However, she also suggests that the Western models of education introduced during colonialism and largely retained in postcolonial states have often marginalised indigenous knowledge systems. This marginalisation, she contends, may have contributed to a broader epistemic disorientation, wherein local knowledge and cultural practices are undervalued or dismissed.

This perspective is echoed by Segell (2019), who asserts that material conditions in many African countries have deteriorated relative to earlier post-independence periods. He attributes this, in part, to the continued influence of international financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, which he argues have helped to institutionalise neo-colonial dependencies through economic and educational frameworks. While this claim is subject to ongoing debate, it raises important questions about the relationship between global economic structures and local autonomy.

Similarly, Arowolo (2010) and Mwakigile (2009) raise concerns about how international policy frameworks may perpetuate unequal trade relations and restrict the policy space available to African nations. Davis (1993) further expands on this critique by suggesting that neo-colonialism operates not only in

the economic domain but also through cultural, ideological, and religious institutions. He advocates for a re-examination of the curriculum as a site where these subtle forms of control may be reproduced.

Delavignette (1994) offers a historical account of the role played by Christian missionaries in colonial Africa, highlighting how religious institutions were sometimes aligned with imperial ambitions. Warner (2012) adds that religion, in some cases, has continued to function as a vehicle for foreign influence in African politics and society, thereby complicating efforts at genuine self-determination.

From this vantage point, the critique of Western-style education centres not only on its content but also on its implicit assumptions. According to MacLaren (2009), education systems often transmit a “hidden curriculum”—a set of tacit values and expectations that reflect the interests of dominant social groups. Without critical scrutiny, these hidden elements may contribute to the reproduction of existing inequalities. Darder (2023) similarly argues that curricular content, structure, and pedagogy are rarely neutral; they are shaped by social, political, and economic imperatives that prioritise particular worldviews over others.

Consequently, scholars such as Trifonas (2003) argue for a more critical and reflexive approach to curriculum design—one that takes into account the historical context of internal colonialism and the enduring effects of epistemic domination. This approach would require educators and policymakers to interrogate not only the content of what is taught but also the broader institutional arrangements that structure teaching and learning.

Freire's (1968) notion of critical pedagogy offers one potential framework for such a reimagining. He contends that education must move beyond the passive transmission of knowledge and instead empower learners to engage critically with their social realities. In postcolonial contexts, this may involve re-centring indigenous epistemologies and fostering a sense of agency among learners who have historically been positioned as objects rather than subjects of knowledge.

The literary texts analysed in this study arguably participate in this broader critique. By drawing attention to the tensions between imposed curricular frameworks and local cultural realities, they call for a reassessment of what counts as legitimate knowledge and who gets to define it. Wa Thiong'o's (1986) concept of decolonisation—both cultural and pedagogical resonates strongly with these concerns. He argues that reclaiming African languages, narratives, and epistemologies is essential to the broader project of liberation.

Trifonas (2003) maintains that real educational transformation requires changes not only to curriculum content but also to pedagogical practices and evaluative criteria. Freire's call for education rooted in the lived experiences of learners reinforces this position, emphasising the importance of contextually grounded and dialogic learning processes.

Ultimately, the argument here is not to dismiss all aspects of Western education but to critically interrogate its assumptions, implications, and continued relevance in postcolonial African societies. A reimagined curriculum—one that is inclusive of African philosophies, histories, and

knowledge systems—may provide a more empowering educational experience and help to address the lingering effects of cultural dislocation.

The Imitative Tendencies of the Educated African and the Issue of Slavery

On account of the colonial origins and the imported contents of the curriculum of higher education in almost all countries in postcolonial Africa, Nwoye (2015) argues that young Africans have become conditioned to perceive the world, including the world of scholarship, through the eyes of Euro-American culture and the Eurocentric framework of scholarship. However, Nkemjika (2017) intimates that this state of affairs needs to be resisted because it is what leads young Africans to unconsciously learn to see themselves in foreign norms and images and our specific African experiences as insignificant elements for academic scholarship (Cloninger, 2008; Hogar & Smith, 2008; John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008; Ryckman, 2008; Feist, 2009; Schultz, 2009; Crown, 2010; Olson & Hergenhalim, 2010; Friedman & Schustack, 2011).

The reason why it has to be resisted is that the moral vision that each culture places at the disposal of each member of the community in this process tends to differ from culture to culture (Christopher et al., 2014). On the other hand, Christopher et al. (2014) admit that what is uniform for all cultures is the process of transitioning from culture to vision and personhood, and this can be mainly possible through the dialogical character of human beings. He goes on to explain that the dialogue, through the moral vision of a culture, is transmitted by its social teachers through stories, proverbs, and myths that go into the making of the person, and this is what becomes realisable. According to Alozie & Nkemjika (2017), African dislocation can be apprehended in a great variety of areas. It is easily observable, for example, in the adoption of European

aesthetics, with Africans attempting to modify their original physical appearance to conform to the European model. Michael Jackson's tragic example immediately comes to mind. However, although the singer may represent the extreme example of such an attempt at physical distortion, that example is in no way the only one. Countless African people all over the world continue to rely on surgery and dangerous chemicals to alter the texture of their hair and the colour of their skin.

Alozie and Nkemjika (2017) explain again that dislocation can also be seen in embracing a self-reliant and possessive ethos that is characterised by the prevailing European tradition. It is obvious in the incorporation of European theories and other scholarly constructs by African intellectuals and writers. Most African scholars and writers, for instance, proceed to cite to Africa's underdevelopment and African languages as dialects, while unwaveringly arguing that philosophers were not existing in Africa until Africans began to research into European philosophy in Europe. This kind of discussion ruminates a gullible and possibly a subconscious acceptance by Africans of European treaties on Africa. Some African novelists have gone to the extent of making their fictional characters glow, thus clumping whiteness as the implied form that acquaints their writing.

This cultural dislocation is perhaps most tragically evident in the domain of religion. European colonisers succeeded in promoting the idea that African religions equated to witchcraft, paganism, and malevolence. As a result, many Africans have come to reject their ancestral deities and spiritual systems, losing touch with their own cultural realities. Instead of viewing themselves as inherently sacred and spiritually significant, numerous individuals now believe

that divine access is only possible through Christian or Islamic intermediaries. This alienation has led to widespread confusion, disorientation, and in some cases, self-destructive tendencies. Alarming, these dislocated individuals often distance themselves from their cultural heritage, engaging in actions contrary to the collective interests of African communities. They may deride their ancestors who endured great suffering to preserve their existence, displaying disdain and ingratitude toward those who laid the foundation of their identity. Such individuals are often referred to, in a derogatory sense, as “negroes.”

Nwauwa (2005) asserts that European colonisation was never intended to uplift Africa but rather to serve Europe’s interests. The colonisers’ primary goal was to enhance their own humanity before God, not to improve African lives. For instance, hospitals were constructed not for the African populace, but to protect the health of European settlers, primarily in urban centres (Adu-Boahen, 1987). Despite such biased motives, the colonisers equated African conversions to Christianity with the cessation of human sacrifice and the end of so-called “witch doctor” practices. Yet, Christianity itself, as Falola (2005, p. 4) provocatively notes, is rooted in the symbolic act of human sacrifice. The Eucharist ritual—eating bread and wine as representations of Christ’s body and blood was taught by missionaries who, at the same time, condemned analogous African rituals as barbaric. Nwauwa (2005) further contends that African religions often possess nuanced and sophisticated approaches to existential and moral questions—sometimes surpassing the philosophical depth of more globally recognised religions. This critique challenges the colonial narrative that associated European religion with justice and enlightenment.

A critical realisation, therefore, is that racism within colonial discourse often stemmed from a fundamental misunderstanding of African cultures. The dislocation caused by colonialism has not simply resulted in partial or full assimilation but, more profoundly, in internalised self-contempt. For many dislocated Africans, distancing themselves from African culture has become as vital as aligning with European standards not merely for cultural or economic mobility, but as a means to assert their own humanity in the eyes of the West.

Nkemjika (2017) refers to such dislocated individuals as “evil African Americans” and categorises them into two types: those with a European aesthetic and those with an African aesthetic. The former are overt defenders of white supremacy, often at the expense of their own communities. Clarence Thomas, the African American Supreme Court Justice appointed by President George H. W. Bush, who opposed affirmative action, is cited as an example of this category. The latter group—malevolent negroes with an African appearance are described as more insidious. Although they present themselves as authentically African and avoid openly supporting white authority, they covertly and consistently sabotage African institutions and values. Their betrayal, Nkemjika argues, has caused significant harm to African progress over the decades and is often rewarded by Western institutions.

Alongside these groups, Nkemjika identifies another category: the benevolent negroes. While generally well-intentioned and sympathetic to African causes, they remain dislocated in identity. Viewing Africa through a European lens, they often implement initiatives that, though seemingly designed to benefit the continent, are rooted in Eurocentric frameworks. Such individuals, both from the diaspora and the continent frequently perceive Africa as a land in

need of “civilisation” and “development.” Consequently, they champion projects under the banner of “Africanisation” which, in effect, further entrench Western paradigms. Even educational institutions established for Black students, ostensibly aimed at preparing them to succeed, may inadvertently continue the intellectual and cultural alienation of African children. As Adu-Boahen (1990, p. 9) notes, these efforts represent unconscious imitations of European values and contribute to the gradual erosion of traditional African cultures.

This phenomenon, characterised by cultural estrangement, mimicry, and internalised colonial logic is interpreted in this study as a form of psychological and intellectual enslavement. These themes are symbolically represented in the fictional identities of characters in the three selected literary texts.

It is noteworthy that Western-style education has primarily produced African elites who are most useful within a colonial system of governance rooted in individualism. This system imposed on Africans the ideologies of individualism, self-interest, and authoritarianism (Akparobaro, 2012). Such emphasis on individual moral worth undermines collective governance and facilitates the continuation of colonial dominance under the guise of personal freedom. Akparobaro (2012) further argues that following independence, the political elite that emerged—shaped by colonial influence, viewed power as a tool for personal enrichment rather than public service. This power structure, which Nkrumah and Fanon cautioned against, operates as hegemony—either through coercive force or institutional control within and between societies. Thus, the internal dynamics of African governance are largely a result of

exposure to Western civilization, leading to forms of neocolonialism (Akparobaro, 2012).

Nkrumah and Fanon are central figures in articulating the concept of neocolonialism. Nkrumah (1965) defines neocolonialism as the exertion of influence over developing countries through capitalism, globalization, and cultural imperialism, rather than direct military or political control. He highlights the paradox of Africa's vast resource wealth—accounting for over half of the world's industrial minerals, being exploited primarily for the development of external powers (Nkrumah, 1965).

To counter this, Nkrumah proposed non-alignment during the Cold War and advocated for African unity as a strategy to resist neocolonialism. He argued that fragmented national interests and isolated economies weakened the continent's global negotiating power. His vision was that independence would be meaningless unless tied to the total liberation of Africa, a unifying political and economic front to resist foreign dependency.

Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), complements Nkrumah's argument but places greater blame on the African bourgeoisie, who assumed power post-independence. He contends that these elites were selected by colonial powers to ensure a seamless transition into neocolonialism. Benefiting from colonial structures, they upheld exploitative systems at the expense of the masses. Fanon advocates for a transformation of national consciousness into a political and social one, enabling the masses to challenge the exploitative practices of their own governments. This exploitation, interpreted here as a modern form of slavery, continues to be explored in subsequent empirical discussions.

Empirical Review

This section examines scholarly analyses of three literary texts in relation to two overarching themes: Western education's impact and the formation of contemporary African character. The review focuses predominantly on Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, due to the limited scholarship on Attah's *Harmattan Rain*. Key concerns include education, language, naming, and religion.

The Educated African Character and Forms of Enslavement

Contemporary Africa is arguably in a worse condition today due to the mental colonisation of its people. Colonialism persists mentally, influencing identity and governance (Gyasi, 2016). Shaana (2016), commenting on *Homegoing*, argues that trauma has merely transformed, not disappeared, and that Africa's longing for return is plagued by fear. Sangretha (2019) elaborates that *Homegoing* spans seven generations, highlighting how legal freedom failed to restore true liberty.

The novel illustrates how slavery disrupted African identity and heritage. Marcus's research into his ancestry uncovers how generational trauma and cultural loss continue to affect African descendants. The denial of native languages, as shown in Kojo's parenting, and the enduring effects of slavery, both physical and psychological—reveal deep societal fractures (Sangretha, 2019). Slavery's residual effects manifest in race, complexion, religion, and language.

Miller (2016) remarks that Gyasi portrays a learned yet psychologically burdened African-American identity through characters like Sonny, whose drug addiction and involvement in Harlem's jazz culture reflect internalized trauma.

Hollie (2020) interprets Gyasi's novel as a call to return to African ideals, while Broida (2016) suggests that colonial trauma has instilled a neocolonial mindset in Africa's elite.

Omolewa highlights how colonial education pushed Eurocentric ideals that were ill-suited to African contexts, fostering values like arrogance, competition, and alienation. Welnhofner (2017) likens the brutality of slavery to Hell, exemplified in Ness's story, where Gyasi uses intense imagery to depict slave life as torment under the control of devil-like masters (Gyasi, 2016, p. 74). Welnhofner also notes the hypocrisy of colonisers enforcing Christianity while embodying cruelty.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that the colonial education system has bred African elites alienated from their cultures. Akparobaro (2012) sees these elites as exploiters of power for personal gain. This is consistent with Gramsci's notion of hegemony, where control operates through coercion and consent embedded in institutions. Sangretha (2019) describes liberation as personal sovereignty—"everyone belongs to themselves."

Gehrmann (2016) observes in Selasi's novel a sense of internal exile among Africans who feel disconnected from their roots. Ede (2016) criticizes the celebration of hybridity in *Ghana Must Go* as reinforcing collective self-negation. Kweku and Fola's abandonment of their children mirrors their own orphaned pasts, repeating generational trauma. Olu's fear of intimacy and inferiority complex reflect the psychological legacies of colonial disruption.

In *Harmattan Rain*, Hidalgo (2020) argues that vulnerability in African societies stems from the internalization of Western education and values. Attah portrays characters like Lizzie who idealise European lifestyles, a result of

societal conditioning. Foucault's theories of body discipline support this interpretation—when individuals are most vulnerable, they become dehumanised and commodified. This study therefore identifies vulnerability as a modern form of enslavement.

The African as an Imitative Character

Leiton (2019) discusses *Homegoing* as a narrative of return—symbolic of postcolonial anxiety and the longing to reconnect with one's origins. Effia's story illustrates solitude, abandonment, and the metaphorical erasure of self—“nothing can grow from nothing.” Gyasi's characters experience profound alienation and loss of identity, especially children of mixed heritage, whose names become markers of estrangement.

Helen's change of name from Mary to Amani illustrates a reclaiming of African identity, though her hesitance—“It ain't ours anymore” (Gyasi, 2016, p. 255)—expresses uncertainty about belonging. Leiton links this to language, which can be both a tool of self-expression and alienation. In Majorie's vision, ancestral voices call out across the waters, symbolizing the spiritual and cultural dislocation of the African diaspora (Gyasi, 2016, p. 268).

Armah's *Osiris Rising* similarly addresses Africa's postcolonial confusion and identity loss. Characters seek understanding of their disrupted histories. Kehinde in *Ghana Must Go*, as Phiri (2017) explains, grapples with identity due to his mixed race and migration experience. Selasi's narrative underscores the psychological effects of African migration, particularly within the racial frameworks of the United States, where pre-migration ethnic identities are overwritten by imposed Blackness (Stenport, 2020). African immigrants

must renegotiate their identities in a complex racialized environment, expanding the meaning of Blackness through their lived experiences.

Stenport (2020) proposes a model of African immigrant acculturation, which expands on Oberg's cultural shock and Berry's acculturation models, that more closely targets the intricacies of African immigrant life. Wawrzinek and Makokha (2011) explain that the experience has been traumatic and painful, both emotionally and physically. Phiri (2017) adds further that the idea of wanting to be white, rather than black, explains the case of imitation as perceived by Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*:

You will know us by our funny blends of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic success. Some of us are ethnic mixes. For example, Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss, others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos”.

The crossing of borders with its significant impact explains why Stenport emphasises the first and second generation who freely move from the African continent to the West and sometimes back again. The depiction of these immigrants crossing borders describes the transnational subject's views of themselves. And in the trop of mobility, these immigrants feel alienated and depict a feeling of anxiety. Stenport adds that *Ghana Must Go* depicts estrangement from the perspectives of home and belonging. The novel again depicts how the crossing of political borders places the immigrants in physical and psychological effects of alienation and dislocation, and their impact on the body.

The dilemma of both physical and psychological dislocation experienced by the educated African character has been a central concern for scholars across diverse intellectual traditions. For example, List and Lauer

(2007) describe Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* as a narrative of exile that traverses from the East Coast to the West Coast of the United States. The novel engages with the theme of dislocation and the possible alienation of individuals from both traditional norms and the new settings of home, family, nation, culture, and language regardless of whether their displacement results from voluntary migration or involuntary exile. Wallenger explores how characters such as Olu, Taiwo, Kehinde, and Sadie transition between identities, constantly engaged in processes of loss, departure, search, and recovery of belonging as they navigate cultural and national tensions. This dislocation is further complicated by the paradox of return: while deeply desired, return is also feared. Immigrants in the diaspora long to reconnect with their roots yet remain anxious about not fitting in due to racial or cultural differences. Similarly, Africans who remain on the continent may yearn to reconnect with traditional values while fearing the stigma of appearing uncivilized. Rushton (2017) highlights how colonial legacies have distorted the very concept of return, referencing Selasi's idea of the "Afropolitan" as a form of identity marked by dislocation—a phenomenon she likens to a modern form of slavery.

Asemphasah et al. (2022) argue that both colonisation and slavery have left enduring scars on the physical and cultural landscape of the former Gold Coast, now Ghana. According to their analysis, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* explores the complexities of African diasporic identities and how the past continues to shape contemporary and future African identity. The novel's intergenerational structure mirrors Gyasi's thematic preoccupation with colonial legacies and the interconnected histories of the enslaved. This concern aligns with Sackeyfio and Sackeyfio's (2007) reading of Aidoo's portrayal of

African women who, despite historical oppression and gendered marginalisation, resist victimization and strive to reclaim agency amidst adversity.

Miller (2016) observes that Gyasi employs recurring symbols such as a stone pendant to create a narrative continuity, allowing characters to trace their lineage and connect the past with the present lives often bereft of self-directed narrative and instead shaped by external institutions and historical forces. Motahane (2021) notes that the notion of return is especially painful for Africans, as individuals are frequently met with the term *Obruni* (stranger), reinforcing their outsider status. The slave, universally understood as a stranger, becomes a symbol of internalized cultural alienation—a condition exacerbated by the continued encroachment of foreign cultures and the erosion of indigenous African traditions, religions, and educational systems. This dynamic, rooted in colonial religious practices, is seen to persist through contemporary neocolonial influences.

Gyasi's artistic objective, according to Broida (2016), is to trace the institutional origins of slavery and, through the restoration of Akan cultural elements, illustrate how cultural imitation often leads to self-destruction. Landry (2018) affirms that *Homegoing* reveals how the historical quest for “civilization” in Africa and the African American experience in the diaspora continues to shape evolving Black identities. Phiri (2017) extends this view by suggesting that these historical traumas are embedded both physically and psychologically in the characters. For instance, the “othering” of African women through the stigmatization of genital self-image, physical appearance, and bodily practices is starkly visible in their encounters with Western medical and

cultural norms (Landry, 2018). This includes markers such as accents, hairstyles, headscarves, clothing, religious rituals, and female genital cutting (FGC), all of which reinforce their perceived deviation from dominant norms.

Ucham (2015) describes how Selasi presents a composite figure in the African intellectual: one who is both rooted in African identity and cosmopolitan in outlook, having traversed multiple nations and cultures. Selasi herself reportedly adopted the term "Afropolitan" to express her dissatisfaction with conventional labels of identity. Within the novel, she articulates how diasporic and transnational experiences foster hybridity and creolisation. As Owu-Ewie (2006) notes, this linguistic and cultural hybridity has contributed to evolving dialects and language practices born out of transnational encounters. *Ghana Must Go* explores the experiences of individuals who leave their countries of origin in pursuit of self-realisation—whether through education or employment—while also addressing the concerns of those born in the West to African parents, whose identities are shaped by the creolisation of African and Western cultures (Ucham, 2015).

Onuono (2022) stands out as a notable critic of Yaa Gyasi, presenting identity as a multifaceted construct and a social portrayal of the emerging African identity that is fraught with cultural dilemmas. This identity demands a negotiation between inherited traditions and contemporary cultural dynamics, resulting in hybrid sensibilities. The current study aims to draw leadership attention to these cultural tensions. Identity, as Hall (2015) articulates, involves both the assumption of a particular state and the ongoing process of transformation, shaped by one's historical legacy and future aspirations. The struggle to reconcile conflicting aspects of the self during the process of

becoming “other” may culminate in a crisis of identity. This tension is especially evident within the African diaspora, where the friction between differing selves is prominently experienced.

To illustrate this, Onuono (2022) uses a lab experiment metaphor to explain the internal conflict that arises from adopting new identities following migration. The competing selves, in their effort to coexist within a temporary setting, clash against one another. African migrants often attempt to separate these selves to avoid further inner turmoil. Yet, the confrontation between opposing cultural experiences frequently leads to a fragmentation of the self. In such moments of cultural contestation, an individual may find themselves shedding one cultural identity while taking on another, leaving them in a state of disorientation and identity crisis—what Bhabha refers to as the “duality of consciousness.” The inevitability of this transformation leaves the immigrant grappling with a new reality from which there is no escape. The fear of this uncertain identity often restricts the choices available to African immigrants, pushing them into cycles of compromise, exposure to discrimination, racism, and systemic humiliation.

Although Africans in the diaspora demonstrate an awareness of their condition, many appear reluctant to confront the dominant cultural narratives. This reluctance renders them symbolically immobile—unable to fully integrate or resist—and therefore victims of inaction. As Onuono (2022) notes, Gyasi portrays this struggle through characters who turn to narcotics as a way to cope with their disintegrating sense of self. Drug use is thus depicted as a consequence of internal cultural conflict where competing values undermine emotional balance and overall mental well-being. In metaphorical terms, this

condition is likened to a mutation in the genetic code of the organism, symbolising a fundamental alteration of identity.

In exploring the divergent experiences of racism and identity among Africans and African Americans, Gyasi's narrative presents intergenerational stories of two family branches, thereby offering contrasting views of inherited trauma. Onuono (2022) observes that Gyasi underscores deep distinctions in the historical wounds borne by Africans and African Americans. Chude Sokei (2014) similarly posits that individuals in traditional African societies tend to respond to identity-related trauma with emotional restraint, while their diasporic counterparts often exhibit more pronounced, violent reactions. These differing responses create contrasting socio-economic realities within the postcolonial African society depicted in *Homegoing*.

A significant argument here is that these status distinctions become generational. For example, the lineage of Effia not only preserves cultural identity but also reflects how Asante and Fante clans collaborated with slave traders. Ness, though born into slavery, manages to liberate her son, Kojo. However, Kojo's wife, Anna, is later abducted and re-enslaved under the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. Despite Kojo's status as a free man, his bloodline ultimately returns to servitude by the Civil War's end. H, Kojo's son, is born into slavery but gains his freedom at thirteen, only to be subjected once again to forced labor—a system that effectively replaces slavery in form and function.

The chapter-by-chapter structure of the novel, organized by generations, reflects the enduring impact of racial discrimination (Gyasi, 2016, p. 284). The repercussions of slavery's legacy become evident through Marcus's deep-rooted anxiety about the historical and ongoing white aggression experienced

by his family. This intergenerational trauma is portrayed as a consequence unfolding over time. Drawing on Quayson's (2013) perspective, diasporic literature often relies on genealogical exploration—examining ancestry, ethnicity, tradition, and culture to establish interconnected identities, where the fate of one is inherently linked to that of others. *Homegoing* aligns with this framework by centering on the transmission of trauma linked to slavery's history. The characters Marjorie and Marcus embark on a journey of genealogical discovery, though their search culminates not in concrete historical truths but in emotional and psychological reconciliation. In spite of the irreparable pain and suffering of the past, the novel suggests the possibility of healing through the reconnection of African immigrants and African Americans.

Winters (2018) notes that the concept of "home," while often intangible, can carry a destructive dimension. Although typically associated with comfort, warmth, and security, "home" is frequently perceived as a natural, pre-existing space—an organic community or innate emotional state that appears to offer stability and belonging. In this sense, it becomes an idealized experience vulnerable to disruption by external threats. However, in the context of physical and social mobility, the idea of home has also been critically re-evaluated. It is sometimes viewed as a dangerous illusion, where radical homelessness and nomadic subjectivity emerge as forms of resistance against fixed identities and state-imposed boundaries. This tension introduces a binary opposition that has complicated scholarly debates around the notion of home.

Morley (2017) addresses this complexity by examining the inherent tensions in the desire for home. According to Morley, home is commonly linked

to notions of community, family, birthplace, and origin, and serves as a vital connection to one's identity, memories, and loved ones. For Africans, this idea extends to spirituality and worship, which are deeply rooted in the self and intricately tied to ancestry, origin, and cultural identity.

Worship plays a significant role in shaping identity. As Alozie and Nkemjika (2017) point out, this aspect of identity has also been subject to conformity with European aesthetic values—a trend that carries a tragic dimension. Gyasi's *Homegoing*, as discussed by Motahane et al. (2021), illustrates the experience of Africans who navigate dual cultural identities due to their status as immigrants. Their differing encounters with Blackness in a world still influenced by colonial legacies and white supremacy continue to inspire contemporary African writers committed to narrating the ongoing struggle for liberation.

According to Motahane et al. (2021), *Homegoing* is a work of historical fiction that spans centuries from the era of the transatlantic slave trade to modern times. The novel traces two distinct family lines over seven generations. One lineage, represented by Esi, chronicles the African American experience in the United States, while the other, through Effia, captures Ghana's historical trajectory from intertribal warfare to British colonization, and eventually, the pursuit and achievement of independence.

Beyond its focus on slavery and colonialism, *Homegoing* also confronts the uneasy role of religion in these histories. Gyasi highlights how Christianity, in particular, was used to justify the slave trade and the institution of slavery, with biblical scriptures often employed to support these practices.

The novel explores the contrast between traditional African spiritual beliefs and Christianity introduced by Europeans. Notably, Gyasi refrains from making a direct judgment about either belief system. Instead, she presents both religions with their inherent contradictions and uncomfortable truths. Each doctrine contains elements of both good and evil, but the narrative does not suggest that religious affiliation alone determines moral character. Drawing on Wilderson (2020), the idea emerges that individuals use religion primarily to justify their actions as either good or bad. For instance, what Westerners might label as “superstition” results in the tragic death of a white traveler, while Christian doctrines are similarly used to justify slavery, racial segregation, and physical abuse.

Wilderson (2020) argues that *Homegoing* also addresses the complex issue of forgiveness. The novel critiques how the teachings of Christ, particularly those concerning grace and forgiveness have been distorted beyond recognition and used to uphold systems of oppression. While forgiveness is frequently preached, those who advocate for it often continue to inflict harm, silencing victims of injustice, including those subjected to police violence and sexual exploitation by powerful men. Forgiveness, the novel suggests, should occur only when the wrongdoings have truly ceased. Evangelical Christians are implicitly criticized for failing to acknowledge their complicity in slavery, and genuine forgiveness is framed as conditional: it requires acknowledgment of harm, repentance (in the biblical sense of a complete turning away from wrongdoing), and a meaningful effort to repair the damage.

In the context of healing, *Homegoing* suggests through the lens of Motahane et al. (2021) that as Africans seek to move beyond the traumatic

legacy of slavery, they must avoid letting past losses cloud their understanding of present realities. Instead, they are encouraged to reframe old ideas and confront persistent psychological remnants of the past. Motahane et al. (2021) argue that African identity is built upon layered, complex, and diverse experiences that resist oversimplification. They emphasize that to be African is to carry a history that continues to shape lived experience. Therefore, expanding the definition of what it means to be African, including the effort to rename and reinterpret inherited traumas can help reclaim the path toward genuine liberation.

Laundry (2018) explores the dynamics of religious conversion in Gyasi's *Homegoing*, asserting that religion often serves as a mechanism for enacting violence upon a prior condition of being typically mortality. In this view, conversion signifies a movement from death to life, or at least the hope of life, through the destruction or rejection of a former state. Conversion thus entails a form of rupture, an often violent displacement of established customs or beliefs to make room for something entirely new. Typically, this transformation is triggered by a powerful revelatory moment. Referencing the biblical story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, Chude-Sokei (2014) emphasizes how conversion narratives are often presented with persuasive intensity. Although the internal process may seem peaceful, they frequently overlook a crucial aspect: the obliteration—whether voluntary or coerced—of previous identities and belief systems. *Homegoing*, Chude-Sokei (2014) argues, underscores this dimension of conversion by illustrating how such transformations are inextricably linked to destruction.

This concept is further connected to the legacy of European colonialism, where religious conversion, especially through Christian missionary efforts can be seen as a continued form of cultural imperialism. This theme is embodied in the character of Akua in *Homegoing*. As Winters (2018) observes, Akua is the daughter of Abena, who, while pregnant, leaves her village and eventually settles with a group of white missionaries (Gyasi, 2016, p. 314). After Abena's death, Akua is raised among these missionaries and finds herself caught between indigenous religious traditions and European Christianity. The religious tension is dramatized through the contrast between a local fetish priest and the Christian missionaries.

The fetish priest is the first to link the missionaries to harmful behavior. When Akua is six years old, she hears another child refer to the missionary as *obroni*, which she initially understands simply as "white man." However, the fetish priest explains that *obroni* may derive from the expression *abro ni*, meaning "wicked man." This redefinition prompts Akua to rethink her view of the missionaries. According to Winters (2018), this dual meaning is not uncommon among the Ewe people of southeastern Ghana, *obroni* is associated with a deceptive dog: one who appears friendly but ultimately attacks. This perception of the white man as dangerous leaves a lasting psychological impression on Akua.

Her doubts intensify after a disturbing encounter with a missionary. During a private session, the missionary pulls Akua by the hand into his office, not to nurture her faith, but to threaten her into compliance. Brandishing a switch near her face, he declares that she, her mother, and all of Africa are sinners and heathens. This act of religious instruction through fear and violence

starkly contrasts with the spiritual insights offered by the fetish priest. For Akua, the missionary's coercive tactics confirm the destructive nature of his faith, shaping her perception of religious authority and deepening her inner conflict.

After he told her to stand up, after he lashed her five times and commanded her to repent her sins and repeat "God bless the queen", after she was permitted to leave, after she finally threw the fear up, the only word that popped into her head was "hungry" The missionary looked hungry, like if he could, he would devour her. (Gyasi, 2016, p. 314).

From the missionary's perspective, Akua must first identify herself as a pre-Christian sinner who must renounce her former, so-called sinful state without the benefit of rational argument or divine revelation. Conversion, in this context, is not achieved through spiritual awakening but through coercion—violence becomes the primary method employed by the missionaries. This use of force is again evident when Akua chooses to marry Asamoah, a local tradesman. The missionary responds violently, throwing a switch at her that strikes her shoulder. Akua's reaction—watching the object fall and then calmly walking away (Gyasi, 2016, p. 314) is a significant moment. It illustrates her realization that Christianity, as she has experienced it, is rooted in destruction and domination. Her composed exit signals that the missionary's power to intimidate and convert her has been broken.

Chude-Sokei (2014) notes that Gyasi uses such scenes to highlight the violent nature often embedded within Christian missionary work, the same religion historically linked to the justification of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In *Homegoing*, the theme of violence is not only tied to slavery itself but also to the process of religious conversion, which becomes another tool of control and subjugation.

Destruction also occurs in how the missionaries prevent Akua from exiting the room, and explain that this limits her ability to have an option, or at least attempts to limit the options available to her. Through the idea of conversion in the Christian religious concept of the African, the African is violently limited by the British colonial government and the missionary activities. Chude-Sokei (2014) adds that destruction occurs when the limitation or the attempt of it sends the African into alienation. Winters (2018) calls this form of transfer of identity a destructive action against Africans through religion. The concept of religion in Motehane et al's (2021) discussion of Gyasi can be compared to Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, where Eugene, as a character, is used to describe the tyranny attached to strict Catholicism and religious extremism and a means of classifying all those who observe their faith in the traditional form of religion, including his own father, as a heathen. His quest to move his children from the traditional system of worship lands his wife and children into timidity and their ultimate living within their spirit and in themselves, which amounts to slavery.

The idea of religious conversion, in its most tangible sense, symbolizes a movement from death to life for the born-again Christian. However, when this process is viewed through the lens of African traditional religion and its encounter with European missionary Christianity, it reveals a more troubling reality—one where conversion contributes to the African's alienation and even destruction. As Wilderson (2020) explains, baptism, understood as a symbolic rebirth, is meant to represent a transition from sin and death into a new life. Yet, this process is laden with violence, as seen in the case of Akua's mother, Abena, whose conversion and baptism mark the beginning of her demise.

Even under seemingly sincere circumstances, conversion requires surrendering oneself to the will and power of another. In *Homegoing*, this is exemplified by the missionary's attempt to rescue Abena from what he sees as a sinful state, ultimately resulting in her death (Knutson et al., 2019). Wilderson (2020) argues that in the novel, conversion is not simply an act of disrupting an existing cultural or spiritual practice it carries literal consequences, including death. The transformation from one spiritual or existential condition to another is thus portrayed as a deeply damaging process, one that inflicts real, irreversible harm on the individual's sense of self and being.

Creative writing often serves as a medium for expressing deeper truths about life, aiming to reveal social realities through fictional narratives. According to Temidayo (2023), the theme of religious conversion has recently garnered significant attention in literature. Central to this thematic exploration is the dual concept of exile and home. Temidayo (2023) raises critical questions about the definition of "home", whether it refers to a tangible, physical structure or something more abstract. Exile, on the other hand, is described both as a geographical displacement to a foreign land and as a metaphorical state reflected in emotional estrangement between individuals. It is also interpreted as a paradoxical condition, simultaneously a source of creativity and a form of confinement.

The meaning of home is further explored through the lens of exile. Temidayo (2023) argues that Africans, due to their historical and cultural experiences, cannot escape hybridity. He suggests that this hybridity should not be viewed solely as loss or displacement but can be embraced within the

framework of globalization, where home and exile become interconnected rather than oppositional.

Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* encapsulates this theme. The novel's title evokes not only the historical event of the 1983 expulsion of Ghanaians from Lagos but also serves as a metaphor for the persistent sense of displacement and yearning for belonging experienced by many Ghanaians. It becomes an immigrant narrative that delves into the complex questions of home and exile.

Beyond charting the journey from childhood to death, exile is portrayed as the forced removal from one's natural or native environment into a foreign space where the individual is often subjected to unjust treatment. Such treatment varies across cultures—some societies are welcoming to immigrants, while others respond with hostility. It is within these hostile settings that immigrants often experience identity crises. In more subtle forms of assimilation, immigrants may not immediately feel alienated, but where hostility is overt, the effort to define "home" is accompanied by a deep sense of otherness. Legal and social barriers in the host society frequently restrict immigrants' freedoms and access to rights, reinforcing their alienation and shaping their evolving identities.

Alienation is not limited to those living in the diaspora or in foreign environments; it can also occur within one's native land. As Kamuzu Banda and Micere Mugo (1997), as well as Nuruddin Farah (1990), have argued, individuals may experience deep disconnection even in familiar, indigenous settings. This is evident in the character of Kweku Sai in *Ghana Must Go*, who is unable to withstand the psychological toll of alienation and discrimination in the diaspora. His withdrawal from his family, leaving them without a guiding

presence mirrors the broader struggles of identity in exile. Kweku abandons his successful surgical career in the United States and returns to Ghana, a move that reflects his emotional collapse. In contrast, his son Olu manages to navigate the pressures of exile more successfully, yet he ultimately replicates his father's failure in marriage.

This duality presents two symbolic interpretations: Kweku's retreat suggests the sentiment behind *Ghana Must Go*, while his children's accomplishments abroad suggest a counterpoint—*Ghana cannot go*. The latter expresses the resilience and adaptation of a new generation despite the dislocations of exile (Kamuzu Banda & Micere Mugo, 1997).

Temidayo (2023) traces these struggles of identity and alienation to the legacy of Western occupation in Africa, which introduced a master-slave dynamic that still shapes contemporary African realities. He describes this as a form of enslavement, in which individuals were forcibly uprooted from their cultural base and displaced, resulting in profound identity crises (Okigbo, 2017). During colonial expansion, many Africans were sent abroad, often on scholarships as part of a civilizing mission meant to "educate the savage mind." This relationship of domination, however, was largely accepted at the time.

Africans who migrated in the 1960s and 1970s, as Taiye Selasi classifies them, were part of the "Afropolitan" wave—willful, career-driven immigrants seeking security and opportunity in the West. While slavery predated colonialism, Okigbo (2017) emphasizes that African societies were traditionally grounded in familial and communal structures—birth, death, marriage, festivals, and rites of passage—that reinforced cohesion and cultural identity.

Ilori (2017) and Okigbo (2017) suggest that *Ghana Must Go* explores death not only as a moment of grief but also as a unifying force that reconnects a fragmented family. The novel contrasts the rupture caused by Western education and diasporic displacement with the spiritual and cultural grounding of African traditions. Though Kweku's children are materially successful, they remain disjointed in time and space. Their journey toward wholeness begins only after Kweku's death, when they are compelled to rediscover and reclaim their roots—a symbolic act of resistance against the alienation that has defined their lives.

The issue of Home becomes a very important feature of postcolonial literature when place and displacement also feature a crisis in this instance. The issue of crisis connects the concern of development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place. In this case, dislocation becomes an active self-sense due to migration caused by Western incursion, its resultant enslavement, and the subsequent alienation/transformation and removal of self in a search for independence. Although independence in Africa is believed to have been achieved since 1956 onwards, this process remains ongoing. Being at “home” is the consciousness of searching for that sense of belonging and a place to call home. As argued by Ucham (2015), Selasi's perspective in *Ghana Must Go* suggests that home is not necessarily a physical space, but rather a figurative sense in which Africans find their home. As illustrated, Olu realises his mistake by pushing Ling away, which helps him to reflect that “everything rounded and destructible and self is Home.” Kweku also regrets leaving his wife, Fola, and realises, just as his son did, that his home was with her (Fola). By incorporating culturally specific descriptions of the

Ghanaian, Nigerian origins of the Sais, Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* conscientizes readers about the importance and the relevance of the search for the African culture, by exploring "Ghana cannot go" through the success explained with the sense in Afropolitanism, Selasi advocates for a special understanding of hybridity. In other words, cultural influence and integration, plus other factors discussed in the text, explain that home could be enjoyed in exile, as well as exile could be suffered at home.

In *Ghana Must Go*, the character of the twin boy grapples with challenges in self-expression, stemming from his Scottish heritage and his ambiguous skin colour, neither distinctly Black nor white. This lack of clear racial or national identity foregrounds the theme of cultural hybridity, particularly as he becomes conscious of his appearance and its implications for belonging. Ucham (2015) argues that *Ghana Must Go* contributes to global discourses on cultural integration, portraying the interconnectedness of the world not only in diasporic contexts but within local African environments as well. Similarly, Stenport (2020) views Selasi's work as positioning Africa as a critical and empowering region, highlighting individuals who can succeed when offered the opportunity—despite originating from communities marked by violence, crime, and systemic marginalisation.

Although the characters face emotional and psychological trials, they are well educated and materially successful: their father, Kweku, is a surgeon; their mother, Fola, a trained lawyer; Olu, the eldest son, is a doctor married to a Chinese woman; and one of the twins is a gifted artist attempting to carve out a meaningful path. Even Sddie, the youngest, who struggles with identity and low self-esteem, ultimately finds a path to self-affirmation. These character

trajectories illustrate not only the complexities of diasporic identity but also the enduring capacity of African individuals to overcome adversity and contribute to meaningful development. In this light, Selasi's narrative suggests that Africa, despite its colonial past, holds the potential to cultivate independent thought and self-determined futures.

Stenport (2020) also emphasizes that *Ghana Must Go* interrogates identity through the lens of immigrants who adopt Western ways of life. Their internal struggles loss of identity, disorientation, and emotional breakdown—align with Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. This hybridity fosters a kind of mimetic tension: a simultaneous desire to emulate the coloniser's lifestyle and a recognition of the cost to one's self-esteem and cultural grounding. Selasi traces these internal conflicts back to the colonial experience, with its legacies of racial discrimination and domination—realities that continue to influence educational and social practices.

Wallinger (2019) supports this perspective by examining how the novel explores themes of colonialism, imperialism, and imagined homelands. He identifies *Ghana Must Go* as a postcolonial narrative that sheds light on the phenomenon of cultural disidentity and migrancy—what Bhabha calls the "arrangement of migrancy." Migrants, according to Wallinger, live in liminal spaces—"inside and outside"—as they negotiate multiple histories and geographies. This dual existence, shaped by both dispersal and translation, highlights the fractured nature of diasporic subjectivity and underscores the instability of identity.

Moreover, Wallinger argues that Selasi crafts a narrative that challenges traditional notions of biography and plot, using a fragmented structure to depict

the personal and collective histories that define postcolonial African experiences. The novel's episodic structure mirrors the historical ruptures Africa has endured, showing how these disruptions have lasting effects on individuals and families. Despite the political achievement of independence across much of the continent, the novel suggests that many Africans are still searching for a more profound, internal sense of liberation.

Selasi's engagement with her own family history is subtly interwoven into the novel, revealing what Wallinger (2019) identifies as autobiographical threads that, while present, do not overshadow the broader narrative. In Zadie Smith's words, writing becomes "the revelation of a consciousness"—a personal yet collective expression of being in the world. Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* thus becomes a literary exploration of the emotional and psychological legacies of colonisation, diaspora, and hybridity. The novel also touches on themes of taste and cultural perception, as exemplified in Fola's reflection on "the African disregard for flowers," a phrase that gestures toward what Gyasi terms "the indifference of the abundantly blessed"—a critique of cultural estrangement within abundance.

Culture shock and acculturation are salient aspects of any international study trip. Over the years, many institutions have devised several strategies to help international students transition to life in the host country. However, most of these strategies are insensitive to diverse cultural or country-specifics. Motahane et al (2021) review how Gyasi exposes the terrors that white folks caused black people. According to Motahane et al. (2021), Gyasi should be appreciated for not letting Africans off the hook by being complicit about the slave trade in her novel. In the novel, Gyasi discusses the unfortunate role that

African nations played in enabling slavery. There is the showcasing of how Africans contributed to all the ethnic wars, kidnapping of innocent people, and trading of human beings in exchange for goods from the British, Dutch and Portuguese. These were all selfish, contributing factors to the slave trade and the inhumane effects still manifest in the contemporary African character. While reading *Homegoing*, Welnhofer (2017) also applauds Gyasi for using *Homegoing* as a way for opening up conversations on the obscure relationship between Africans and African-Americans today, giving thanks to our disturbed past. Welnhofer (2017) continues that Gyasi's artistic role of sending the minds of readers into the culture of Africa is subtly done through how the content provides healing to a particular group of people. The text gives readers some indigenous parts of African life, such as the family, how the family works, and some other traditional features, in the transfer of didactic information that influences the listener's or the reader's choices in life.

The link between pure cultural identity and hybrid heritage—along with the pain and horror it entails—illustrates the lingering tensions between the past and present that hinder Africa's development (Welnhofer, 2017). In *Homegoing*, Gyasi presents the theme of the traveler and the complex historical movement of people, portraying the displacement of individuals from one cultural context to another. This transformation is made possible by the historical reality of the Atlantic slave trade. As Welnhofer (2017) notes, the novel captures the intricacies of multiple historical epochs, emphasizing the connection between Africa's ancestors and contemporary generations, who continue to grapple with inherited trauma and the challenge of reconnecting with their roots.

Tariq (2021) further explains that Afropolitanism, as seen in Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, involves a revisiting and redefinition of African diaspora culture and identity. The characters in the novel are deliberately shaped within a framework of dual cultural geographies, languages, and national identities. The narrative transcends continents and generations, offering a counter-discourse that sheds light on the social, political, and psychological experiences of Africans, both past and present. These experiences significantly influence their personal and professional lives. Afropolitanism, in this context, repositions both Africa and its diaspora on the global stage.

Palmer (2000) argues that Africans remain in continuous movement, having undergone numerous transformations. However, the enduring legacies of colonialism and racial oppression have prompted a unified struggle for liberation across their political, cultural, and social identities. He contends that African societies must rehabilitate the concept of "Negro identity" in order to reconstruct a form of nationalism that empowers Africans—both on the continent and in the diaspora—with full political, intellectual, and economic agency. This imperative for resistance is evident in diaspora literature such as *Ghana Must Go*, where characters reflect the ongoing African quest for freedom amid both internal and external constraints.

This ongoing struggle for emancipation has led to an evolution in African culture and traditions. As Africans navigate new environments, they continuously adapt, incorporating changes into artistic expressions, dance, fashion, and other cultural practices. These traditions, although transformed, remain unique due to their grounding in place, climate, history, time, and space.

Manning (2000) supports this view, suggesting that the legacy of slavery serves as a foundational element in African American historical narratives.

These ideas are anchored in the theoretical framework of the study, which provides a robust foundation for understanding the cultural, historical, and philosophical concerns explored throughout.

Theoretical Framework

Literary theory describes the foundational principles employed to interpret and uncover the meaning a literary text conveys to its audience. A discussion of the theoretical orientation informing this study is therefore necessary, as it situates the research within an appropriate analytical framework. This section outlines the theoretical approach adopted in examining the three selected texts. In confronting the issue of imitative representation, the study analyses the characteristics of the main characters through the critical lens of postcolonialism.

Postcolonialism

This study is primarily grounded in postcolonial theory, which is applied alongside the literary elements of characterisation and style to illuminate the central arguments of the research. Postcolonialism serves as a critical lens through which literature from formerly or currently colonised societies is examined (Kpessa-White, 2021). The theory also extends to works authored by citizens of colonising nations, particularly when such literature engages with colonies or their peoples as subject matter. Central to postcolonial thought are the concepts of otherness and resistance (Afzal-Khan et al., 2000). Postcolonialism addresses the enduring influence of colonial rule across both

temporal and geographical boundaries, focusing on historical conditions and the ongoing legacies of Western imperialism.

Beyond its historical scope, postcolonialism functions as a critical project aimed at re-evaluating and reclaiming the histories, identities, and agency of those subordinated under various forms of colonial domination. Ashcroft et al. (2007) describe postcolonialism as the discourse that explores the “effects of colonialism on culture and societies.” It concerns itself not only with cultural dynamics during colonial rule but also with the continued implications in the post-independence era. A central concern of the theory is the internalisation of Western ideologies by the formerly colonised, a process through which Western thought has come to dominate global culture, marginalising indigenous cultural expressions (Selden & Widdowson, 1993). The coloniser’s culture is positioned as superior, casting the culture of the colonised as the inferior “Other.”

Postcolonialism, thus, gives a different perception of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. It questions the legal acceptability of the assumption that the coloniser’s culture is better than the colonised culture. Since there are many people in many countries around the world who have experienced colonialism, postcolonialism offers an essential way of revealing the realities of the colonised people. Postcolonial theory became part of the critical toolbox in the 1970s, and many practitioners credit Edward Said’s *Orientalism* as the founding work of postcolonialism. Gandhi (1998) intimates that the proponents of the theory examine how writers of colonial countries attempt to articulate and celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the coloniser. They also examine ways in which the literature of the colonial

power is used to justify colonialism as the perpetuation of images of the colonised as inferior. However, attempts at coming up with a single definition of postcolonial theory have proved controversial, and some writers have strongly critiqued the whole concept (Strongman, 2014). This reason accounts for terms like post-colonialism (with a hyphen) and postcolonialism (without a hyphen); there is also another understanding given to the term as postcoloniality. It is their experiences and concerns that allow for the differences among them.

According to Strongman (2014), Post-colonialism (with a hyphen) signifies the period that comes chronologically after colonialism. The term comes from Britain's former colonies in the Caribbean, Africa and India. Many post-colonial writers write in English and focus on common themes such as the struggle for independence, emigration, national identity, allegiance and childhood. Strongman (2014) adds that postcolonial theory (without a hyphen) is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century. The theory takes many different shapes and interventions, but all share a fundamental claim: that the world we inhabit is impossible to understand except in relationship with the history of imperialism and colonial rule and to conceive of European literature, philosophy, European colonial encounters and oppression around the world. The "post" as a prefix of postcolonialism does not suggest that colonialism has ended. In that case, it has been rigorously debated. The theory emerges from and is deeply indebted to anti-colonial thought in the first half of the 20th century. This has meant that it has taken multiple forms: It has been concerned

with forms of political and aesthetic representation and has been committed to accounting for globalisation and global modernity.

Postcoloniality refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations (Strongman, 2014). Thus, coloniality survives colonialism and of a power that takes three forms – systems of hierarchy, systems of knowledge and systems of culture. Postcoloniality takes control and management of knowledge by the “universal of western modernity (Kpessa-White, 2021).

To deal specifically with the demands of this study, Postcolonialism in the understanding of Homi K Bhabha's interpretation of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence is adopted in order to focus on the effects of colonialism on the character of contemporary African society created in the selected texts. It is also considered a field of international relations that uses the effects of colonialism to describe the conditions of countries today, with a focus on personal information from their people. Though postcolonial (without a hyphen) is what is specifically chosen as the main tool for the theoretical analysis, the two other definitions given above can still stand for the analysis of colonialism and anti-colonialism.

It is argued in the analysis that colonialism not only occurred through the physical seizing and displacement of people from land, but also through the colonisation of minds. According to Parasha (2021), the debate triggered by recent publications and research justifying colonialism demands an intellectual engagement with the histories of colonialism and their impact on postcolonial trajectories of development, peace and conflict. The argument posits that

colonialism inspired development in societies that adopted its modern project, enlightened governance, and efficient administration, which in turn fostered national consciousness embedded in anti-colonial struggles. This issue has been extensively critiqued. However, less attention has been paid to colonialism's enduring everyday impact and continuities (Mfum Mensah, 2005).

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989), in *The Empire Writes Back*, argue that about three-quarters of people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, “the idea of postcolonial theory emerges from the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of postcolonial writing.” This literary concept stems from the challenges Africa faced in its encounter with the West, as well as the postcolonial writers’ critique and celebration of awareness of creation and a new self. Quayson (2000) reiterates that postcolonialism is a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the level of ex-colonial societies as well as at the level of more general global developments thought to be after-effects of empire. Postcolonialism critique focuses on the forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world, the politics of anti-colonialism, class and ethnicity define its context (Young, 2001).

The term has been accused of creating heroes. Its dominant spokespersons or thinkers are Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha and many more. Hall (2015) notes that a collection of essays from these thinkers identifies ways in which the postcolonial period is far from over. Their essays again acknowledge that debates and contests characterising postcolonial commitment have shifted grounds. Essays from these writers

combine accessibility for their scholarship with postcolonial literary studies by foregrounding relevant contexts in which their textual and theoretical debates are situated. In practice, postcolonial can be understood in three terms, namely: history, contradiction, and economics (Lo & Gilbert, 1998). Because postcolonial is formulated as a field of cultural production, it can, in other words, be used to explore cultures and societies. Said (1978), one of the prominent scholars of the field of post-colonial studies, establishes one of the controversies of the African past in his *Orientalism*. Orientalism, in Said's formulation, is principally a way of defining and locating Europe's others. He explains that Orientalism was about Europe itself, and hinged on arguments that circulated around the issue of national distinctiveness, and racial and linguistic origins. It aims at reversing how the discourse gazed, as in, looking at the historical or cultural provenance of Orientalism. It is analysed from the point of view of an "Oriental" (Said 1978).

The vigour of the discourse stems from the fact that Said himself claims to be an orientalist due to his disheartening life experience of living in the United States as an Arab Palestinian living in the West. Through the lenses of Said as an orientalist, the United States is where the East signifies danger and threat. The concept demonstrates the deep repercussions of orientalist discourse since it emerges directly from the disheartening experience, like racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanising ideology, which is the fruit of Said's own unique punishing destiny. In his view, as a Palestinian Arab living in America, he deploys the tools and techniques of his adopted professional location to discern the manner in which cultural hegemony is maintained. He intends to provoke and stimulate a new kind of dealing with the Orient (1978).

Orientalism is necessarily viewed as being linked inextricably to colonialism. Orientalism describes the link between knowledge and power. The source of this controversy is demonstrated by Prime Minister Arthur Balfour's defence of Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1910, when he declared that: "We know the civilisation of Egypt better than we know any other country" (1978, p. 32). Europe believes that Africa cannot govern itself and so must be governed by a knowledgeable country that has the power to do so. Hence, the creation of the oriental from the European notion of scientific appropriation of one culture by another. This shows how colonialism was justified through orientalism.

From this understanding, it is a critical response of the western powers to multiple forms of control and supremacy that resulted from colonial and imperial activities (Barley, 2011). Linking this up with literature, postcolonial operates by involving aspects like language, history, nationalism, space and place, body politics, and/or a mixture of colonial and colonized culture. Meanwhile, various possibilities are covered in this study: hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence.

According to Larzurus (2013), West African states remain "in continuing subservience to European and North American governments and corporations" and describe the ongoing presence of Western governments and multinational companies in the region. Powerful foreign companies like Shell Oil Company have been active in Ghana and Nigeria for several decades. The Nigerian Delta is attractive for its rich crude oil occurrences. Oil is extracted with the support of the national elites, who have been enriching themselves in the process. There is this other group that also exerts influence in several postcolonial colonies. The British Woods Institution, the International

Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation. These agencies employ punitive and disciplinary policies as a basis for the distribution of loans. These loans, which were very necessary by the early 1980s because every African country at that time was manifesting signs of acute economic distress, were reflected in a mounting and unsustainable debt burden, a permanent trade deficit, and an acute fiscal crisis, which meant that the state was unable to maintain basic infrastructure or fund essential social services (Larzurus, 2013).

As explained earlier, neocolonial interference comes in the form of transnational companies extracting valuable natural resources. Falola and Oyeyem (2015) have also said that another instrument of neocolonial control is humanitarian and developmental aid. Thus, a disguised form of intervention, having been placed beyond criteria in a space of moral certainty, can be seen as a dusted-down version of the white man's burden. Great Britain tries to achieve an imperial aspiration through how aid contributes to the discursive construction of Africa as less developed, backwards, and in need of receiving gifts from the advanced global north. By this, there is encouragement of the image of Africa as a dark continent and a place defined by lack (Sharp, 2013). It is this development aid that impedes growth and development, breeds dependency, crowds out personal initiative, and hinders real growth in Africa (Moghalu, 2014). Furthermore, it is central to the notion that European things are superior to African ones, and that Africa requires development in the first place. Thus, development is perceived in the taste for European aesthetics at the detriment of an Africentric initiative that can reduce the performance of the roles of sovereignty and statehood that are so acute and encompassing: the penetration

of external power through the nominally supportive mechanisms injected into the African system, all in the name of development aid. As a result, arguably, imperial instruments of control over Africa generated this new form of slavery, according to critics who claim that despite the formal independence of many former colonies, colonialism has never ended and that it is possible to refer to the present as a colonial era.

Postcolonialism is a practical way of making sense of and an intellectually valuable response to the different ways that colonial interference has shown up (Larzurus, 2013). Postcolonialism, understood in this sense as a challenge to forms of imperialism, contributes to the literary focus of addressing postcolonialism using the three selected texts and dealing with their analysis. These literary texts provide useful explanations and insights concerning the contexts and backgrounds embedded in them. Postcolonial theory, chosen to identify the plight of the contemporary African character clearly, highlights aspects of difference, complexities, and ambivalence as forms of resistance and promotes the idea of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence as multiculturalism, especially from the perspective of the transposition of the character of contemporary Africa.

Homi K. Bhabha is very knowledgeable in cultural studies. His work, *The Location of Culture*, discusses the differences and similarities between the colonisers and the colonised. As a writer of two influential books, *The Location of Culture* and *Nation and Narrations*, he qualifies as a regular contributor to the Art Forum. According to his theoretical assumptions, it is oppression, traumatic colonial feelings, and the impact of other influential factors that produce another culture, creed, habit, and civilisation. These are deeply

influenced by Said, Derrida, Lacan, and Sartre. His theoretical postulations are based not only on fundamental but also experimental concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, which are stimulants of cultural productivity. Homi Bhabha, whose analysis of the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser stresses the interdependence and mutual construction of these subjects and explains hybridisation as a political and cultural negotiation between the coloniser and the colonised. Bhabha continues that the colonised is the only victim of colonialism. The coloniser can also be said to be a victim when hybridity is seen as a revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity effects. He calls it the fading of identity. This fading of identity is a direct result of hybridity, which may also lead to identity crises, both in the colonising and the colonised cultures. Bhabha adds that it is hybridity that brings the idea of the fusion or combination of colonising and colonised cultures with traditional signs and customs, and continues that cultural practices can be assimilated and adopted, and cultures cross-fertilised, as positive, wealthy, dynamic, and oppressive (Bhabha, 1994). It is interesting to note that the impact of colonisation on individuals' hybridity and loss of identity creates a feeling of "positive", "wealthy" imitation of the coloniser's identity. In Bhabha's idea of hybridity, there is a space in between the designations of identity, and this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.

Hybridity is explained to have at least three meanings in terms of biology, ethnicity and culture. In its etymology, it means the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, and this genetic component provides the first meaning.

In another sense, hybridity might be understood to mean an individual “having access to two or more ethnic identities”. Bhabha believes that subjectivity is at the centre of the Western Eurocentric definition of culture and is necessary for it. He argues that it is the enemy that claims essence, unity and singleness of identity. In his notion, everything that may be mobilised against such an idea of unity counts as radical. Bhabha suggests that there must be a progression of this kind of identity if it challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenising, unifying force, established as genuine by the original past, kept alive in the national traditional tradition of the people.

Easthope (1998) has stated that Bhabha’s idea of hybridity is a knowledge domain like existence, which stems from previous experience of unity and identity, which is always liable to surface within the colonial presence. It is interesting to note that Bhabha’s opposition between identity and hybridity coincides with the presence and difference proposed from the understanding of Derrida’s contrast between presence and difference. Derrida explains difference by saying what it is not: it governs nothing, reigns over nothing and exercises any authority nowhere... there is no kingdom of difference, but difference instigated the subversion of every kingdom... (Easthope, 1998, p 145). Because the notion is modelled on Derridean difference, Bhabha’s hybridity is advocated as a position or effect in between existing positions. In the account of Derridean presence, it appears in time as making a present. In discourse, it is ensured by the privileging of one side of a binary, which aims to remove completely from recognition of its denigrating other. Presence, in this case, is inescapable because it is what gives it substance, what its conditions of existence are. Presence, then, is concluded as existing only to vanish into difference. It is this

form of subjectivity that Bhabha explains as substantiating and making sense of the identity that hybridity undermines. There is, therefore, a description of identity as a single and unitary source of oppression. This is what prompts the omission to distinguish between different kinds and the possibility of identity. Thus, all versions of identity claim to be absolute and originary as though the only notion of identity that exists outside of, not in accordance with, nature. This feeling signifies the condition of colonised individuals who mimic and reflect the coloniser's lifestyle and views.

Bhabha explains mimicry in postcolonial literature as most commonly seen when members of a colonised society, like the Indians or the Africans, imitate the language, dress, politics, or cultural attitude of their colonisers (the British or the French). Under colonialism and in the context of immigration, mimicry is seen as an opportunistic pattern of behaviour: one copies the person in power, because one hopes to have access to that same power oneself. Presumably, while copying the master, one has to intentionally suppress one's own cultural identity, though in some cases, immigrants and colonial subjects are left so confused by their cultural encounter with a dominant foreign culture that there may not be a clear preexisting identity to suppress. Mimicry is not only imitating something from others, but it also shows resistance in postcolonial studies. Mimicry then becomes a means of imitating and of being superior or inferior. The person who does the imitation is not in the same position as the original, according to Bhabha. It becomes the reshaping process, which means "almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86).

In postcolonial discourse, mimicry is characterised as an attitude when the colonised country's people begin to mimic the coloniser's actions, attitudes,

language and culture. Mimicry is not totally imitation, and the colonised is being assimilated into a dominant or even superior culture. As Bhabha explains, it is an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners and ideas; thus, mimicry is repetition with difference. This is an important term because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. When the colonial discourse encourages the colonised subject to mimic the coloniser by adopting the coloniser's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a blurred copy of the coloniser that can be quite threatening. This is because mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics.

Mimicry, therefore, locates a crack in the certainty of its control of the behaviour of the colonised. The term has often been an overt goal of imperial policy. For instance, Macaulay gives an Indian illustration of a minute to parliament derided oriental learning and advocated the reproduction of English art and learning in India (most strategically through the teaching of English literature). However, the method by which this mimicry was to be achieved indicated the underlying weakness of imperialism—for Macaulay suggested that the riches of European learning should be imparted by a class of interpreters between us and the million whom we govern- a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinion, in morals and intellect. In other words, not only was the mimicry of European learning to be hybridised and therefore ambivalent, but Macaulay seems to suggest that imperial discourse is compelled to make it so in order for it to work. Gupter (2013) suggests that mimicry is mostly referenced to the “been to” a person who has travelled to the West, and

has thus returned home. In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Frantz Fanon mocks the one affected as the pretentious “been to “and his/her cultural confusion. He exposes the trauma of being Black and the haunting desire to be like the whites. Fanon also interrogates what the black man is seeking answers to on his own, saying that Black is not even a man. It is the desire to mimic the white that haunts the black day and night. He confesses, “I am obliged to state that the black man seeks only one destiny, which is to be white.” He reiterates that the metamorphosis of the colonised black in the process of being a white makes him different from his own race and community and transforms him only to resemble the white, thus, he is excluded from his own society and belong to neither his own people nor to the whites, and he is almost the same but not white. Fanon, in an excellent manner, exposes this racial anxiety of being white when he produces these words: “There is a fact, 'White men consider themselves superior to Black men” (Gupter, 2013). There is another fact given by Gupter (2013) that “Black men want to prove to white men at all costs the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect”. How these racial difference and linguistic difficulties of a foreign language can lead to traumatic experiences is far from imagination?

Postcolonial theory has given voice to the unvoiced and a platform to third-world countries, enabling them to write back to the Empire using the same language taught to them by their masters years ago. According to Gupta (2013), Bhabha describes mimicry as sometimes unintentionally subversive. This thinking is derived from Jacques Derrida’s deconstructive reading of J.L. Austin’s idea of the Performative Act. He argues that mimicry is a kind of performance that exposes the artificiality of all symbolic expressions of power.

For example, if an Indian desires to mimic the English, becomes obsessed with some particular codes of English (such as the British colonial topiary obsession with the sun) associated with the English hat worn to protect from exposure to the sun, his performance of those codes might show how the codes are. The gaps and splits that result from imitating other cultures, such as this illustration, provide a new dimension for the colonised individual. This is what Bhabha calls ambivalence.

Engaging with Derrida and Easthope, becomes a way not to discard their contributions but to situate Bhabha's framework as more suited to the kind of historicised and politically embedded literary analysis undertaken. In positioning Bhabha against these thinkers, the study is able to bring a scholarly voice into the conversation—highlighting where there is conceptual limitations in deconstruction's abstraction and, conversely, the productive tensions in Bhabha's model that resonate with the African literary representations considered in the study.

Ambivalence considers culture to be composed of opposing perceptions and dimensions (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha argues that this ambivalence presents a split in the character of the colonised other, and takes into consideration creatures who are their very own mixture. As a postcolonial writer, Bhabha claims that at the site of colonial dominance, there is still ambivalence. Bhabha attempts to discuss the categories of intercultural gaps through race, class, gender, and cultural practices. The ambivalence distinguishes the emotions between positive and negative attitudes towards the colonisers. Young (1995), Bhabha explains that ambivalence is developed in psychoanalysis to describe an uninterrupted fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its

opposite. There is also the simultaneous attraction towards and repulsion from an object, person or action (Young, 1995). In viewing this situation in colonial discourse, Young intimates that Bhabha gives a complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterises the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. In this regard, ambivalence becomes the relationship whereby the colonised subject is never completely opposed to the coloniser. In other words, instead of assuming that some colonised subjects are complicit and some resistant, ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relationship within the colonial subject.

There is also the situation where ambivalence characterises how colonial discourse relates to the colonised subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing or represent itself as nurturing. Because colonial discourse has a problem of producing compliant subjects who must reproduce its assumptions, habits and values, ambivalence becomes a disturbing factor in this simple relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. This is because ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination since ambivalence rather produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. In this respect, it is not necessarily disempowering for the colonial subject. It is seen as ambivalent or two-sided. This, in effect, produces, to a great depth, a disturbance of the authority of colonial discourse.

Ambivalence is therefore a great controversy in the proposition of Bhabha's theory because the colonial relationship is always ambivalent, generating the seed of its own destruction. It is also controversial because it

implies that the colonial relationship is going to be disrupted, regardless of any resistance or rebellion on the part of the colonised. In colonial discourse, ambivalence is compelled because the argument remains that, according to Bhabha, the discourse never really wants colonial subjects to be exact replicas of the colonisers. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, discusses using an instance about Charles Grant, who desired to infuse the Christian religion in Indians but was concerned about how he might cause Indians to agitate for liberty (Bhabha, 1994, p. 87). To Bhabha, Grant's solution was to mix Christianity with a disagreeing physically distinct individual whose practices of the doctrines are to produce a partial reform that would induce an empty imitation of English manners. This is what Bhabha demonstrates as a conflict with imperialism itself that will inevitably cause its own downfall. It is, therefore, a compelled ideology within colonial discourse to create ambivalent situations that will disrupt its assumption of monolithic power. In effect, Young (1998) has suggested that the theory of ambivalence is a way that Bhabha uses to turn the tables on imperialism and emphasises that ambivalence induces an empty imitation of English manners.

These concepts, as explained in relation to the study, provide an understanding that postcolonialism is a multidisciplinary, if not interdisciplinary (Hugga, 2002; 2013). It adopts disciplinary perspectives from multiple fields such as literary studies, history, geography, modern languages, political science, anthropology, and sociology. In this study, postcolonialism is to be understood in the field of literary studies. Bhabha argues that "it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history—subjugation, domination,

diaspora, displacement that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 246).

The study primarily builds on Bhabha’s key contribution, which lies in his theorisation of resistance, where he interprets some of colonisation’s negative effects on the colonised and transforms them into subversive and antiauthoritarian strategies. This understanding of the concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry illustrates his method of conceptual reversal. In Bhabha’s formulation of these concepts, the consent turns from the natives’ incomplete and identity-denying or negating imitation of the coloniser to being a subject of difference. With this strategy of resistance, he fetishizes colonial culture’s potential and strategically provides an insight that is counter-opposed (Bhabha, 2004, pp. 124–30). These three concepts chosen for the study, hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, in postcolonial studies, are considered because postcolonial theory explained through these ideologies fundamentally concerns the issue of culture, identity, and representations. Their use is therefore relevant, as it will help to achieve the set objectives of this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a critical, empirical, and theoretical review of the study, focusing on the issues raised in the study and grounded in thematic organisation, as reviewed within relevant literature related to the study’s scope of work. The discussion was intended to provide a critical overview of research related to the topical concern of the study.

CHAPTER THREE
THE REPRESENTATION OF DOMINATION FROM THE
COLONIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN THE THREE
SELECTED TEXTS

Introduction

Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain* constitute the primary data that is used for the analysis in this chapter. Reference is made, however, to some other texts because they have a bearing on the discussion in this chapter. The focus of this chapter is to examine how the three novels show the representation of domination from the colonial administrative system in the character of the contemporary Ghanaian society created in the three novels. The chapter will first examine the issue of domination, followed by an analysis of background information about the three texts in relation to the historical context of contemporary Ghanaian society, as depicted in the texts. It will then explore how domination is represented through the writers' perspectives.

Accordingly, the chapter will do a comparative analysis of how Atta, Gyasi and Selasi, as Ghanaian diasporic writers, strategically and aesthetically manipulate and use literary tools such as characterisation, setting and plot to present how domination is still represented in the character of contemporary Ghanaian society as showcased in the three selected texts.

As demonstrated in the analysis, several authors, including Corinne & Michael (2022), Anderson (2017), List and Laura (2016), and Pettit (2011), have provided definitions of domination in general terms and different contexts. As regards Manor (2017), cited in Corinne and Michael (2022), domination

historically, and in contemporary societies, represents an important and ubiquitous aspect of social relationships with notable implications for prosocial tendencies. Manor adds that domination has been shown to reduce emotional recognition accuracy and foster a thwarted sense of autonomy, as well as increase negative affect and relationship dissatisfaction. This negative affect is conceived by List and Laura (2016) as a biologically based system which motivates and subordinates behaviour and responsivity to perceptions of power and subordination. Anxiety and depression are related to subordination and submissiveness as well as a desire to avoid subordination. Arnold (2017) gives a different context in which domination is a kind of unconstrained, unjust imbalance of power that enables agents or systems to control other agents or the conditions of their actions. The tradition of thinking in this sense is primarily associated with the historical scholarship of Philip Pettit, who presents domination as a relation between agents. Pettit explains that only agents can dominate or be dominated, and it is all about how social relationship is structured. (Pettit, 1997; List & Pettit, 2011).

The concept is evaluated in the context of moralised and non-moralised considerations, with the understanding that the exercise of dominating power that violates human rights is viewed through the lens of moral theory. Non-moralised theories also hold the view that domination can be identified without reference to theories of the right or the good. That is why those who insist that domination can be defined without making moral judgment are not usually committed to value-independence. Craven (2012) intimates that domination is a crucial aspect of colonialism. Its main goal is to extract economic benefits from the colony, resulting in control over the lives of natives in political,

economic, cultural, and social spheres. In the context of education, domination occurs when the dominant group is the object of education, either to be taught about or learned about (Wheeler-Bell, 2022). The dominant group associated with education usually seeks to dominate for their own ends rather than those of the educators. As literature shows, the most important effects reflect in the fact that though the educated character remains rooted in the African (Ghanaian) culture, this character has come to accept consciously or unconsciously the European culture and its related institutions for purposes of organising and administering their societies. In this study, this thematic concept is explored using the postcolonial theory through Bhabha's interpretation of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence. It will be explained by relating ideas to how the theory describes the issue of domination through the characters' attitudes, actions, language, and culture. Discussion follows from the analysis of *Harmattan Rain*, *Homegoing*, and *Ghana Must Go*, respectively.

Discussion

Harmattan Rain

Ayesha Harruna Attah sends readers back to how history connects independence through education and how present-day Ghana is tied to colonial interference and subjugation. Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain* focuses on three generations of Ghanaian women in a family: Lizzie Achiaa, Akua Afriyie and Sugri. In the text, readers have glimpses of Ghana as it might have looked like in 1954 before independence, up to the early 2000s. We learn about Ghana's political unrest during the coup d'état era and witness the evolution of Ghanaian politics. Ayesha Harruna Attah does a great job of weaving Ghana's history into the storyline in a simple, clear way, without being politically biased.

The novel is divided into three parts, so readers have the opportunity to delve deeper into the lives of each character and their storyline to the point where all three storylines are woven together perfectly. As the novel takes us from one generation to the next, readers witness family cycles, past mistakes and habits continuing. It becomes refreshing to go through the realistic ups and downs of the lives of these ladies. Lizzie bravely runs away from her village to find her lost lover and also tries to pursue her nursing career; Akua Afriyie, her rebellious first child struggles with being a single parent and strives to find happiness through her art; Sugri, Akua Afriyie's only daughter, a brilliant but shattered girl, learns hard lessons of life as she goes away to college in the US.

The narrative voice describes how history connects the struggle for independence associated with the first lady, Lizzie, with the period of Ghana's independence with Nkrumah and his creative and philosophic but shattered ideologies to present-day independent Ghana. This form of independence is accompanied by the mental and physical exhaustion of individuals living in a dilapidated postcolonial Ghana. Readers are given a picture that epitomises the state of present-day Ghana and real independence in relation to the domination of Africans through education. In the narrative, readers are given glimpses into the fragile nature of the kind of independence Nkrumah envisaged for Ghana:

Mother Constance sucked her teeth. Lizzie didn't know the woman was interested in politics and especially, that of the Gold Coast.

"What's wrong? She asked the old nun. "I don't think this country is ready for independence," Mother Constance said.

"Why do you say that? Lizzie asked.

"Trust me, I'm Irish. I know the value of independence, especially from those ..." Lizzie could have sworn the woman had been about to drop an expletive. "... from the English," she said, "But this country is divided. Kwame Nkrumah needs to talk to the NLM and quell the fire that is raging in people's hearts, before taking control from England. Baffour Akoto and the NLM

don't want the kind of government Nkrumah is pushing for. He seems in such a hurry to free this country, but if he doesn't work with them, I'm afraid the Gold Coast will be torn apart. The last thing you want is a civil war." (*Harmattan Rain*, p 28)

From the excerpt, an opinion is communicated about Ghanaian politics and the issue of independence linked with the domination of the people of the then Gold Coast. The Nun cowardly expresses a warning within an unfinished thought about "the value of independence". This, she communicates using the action in "suck-teeth". Though the phrase "suck-teeth" as used appears empty, the expression phonetically hints at uncertainty and reflects the sound it describes.

There is again a deep sense of attachment to the phrase "the value of independence" as used by the nun in the excerpt. Her means of communicating her opinion explains how important independence is to a particular group of people. Independence fosters one's ability to be self-reliant and to be able to do what is necessary in order to create a fulfilling life for oneself and one's family. Independence fosters self-awareness and sensitivity towards others, teaching them self-motivation as they have the freedom to find their own reasons to achieve their goals. However, her manner of communicating her opinion, as described by the narrator, does not capture the essence of independence as envisaged by the people who were pursuing the phenomenon during their fight in the 1950s. Her manner of speech, as described in the excerpt, appears ironic and apologetic at the same time.

At the level of being apologetic, she relates how the English perceives independence as essential but rather plays a nonchalant role in allowing Nkrumah to have a feeling of success on the road to independence instead of showing interest in the collaboration of the National Liberation Movement

(NLM) and the Nkrumahist ideals that could produce value in the independence the people were seeking.

According to Biney (2007), the British were already preparing themselves for the day they would grant full independence to their African colonies by the mid-50s. Their understanding was that in order for a colony to be successful after independence, strong educational and governmental institutions were required. Because of this, the British government wanted a handover process that was supposed to take about 50 years. However, occurrences after the Second World War accelerated the process of independence when the people of Ghana realised the evil nature of the white man after their good will and contribution to World War II and so demanded independence without agreeing to the due process that could bring about the value of the independence they required (Pimpong, 2006).

Arguably, Nkrumah's ideals clashed with those of the NLM, and this was not healthy for the revolutionists in Ghana at the time. These elites who took up the revolution were privileged to perceive the evils of the white man and wanted liberation for their people. Although they required independence, they also needed the right process and collaboration to facilitate a smooth changeover. Perhaps the nun, from the excerpt, had this in mind; she sided with the people of the Gold Coast, and because she worried about their plight, she could not suppress her feelings. However, she also needed to protect white integrity as an Irish person who was not supposed to expose and act as a betrayer of the plight of the British colonial government. It appears that this situation accounts for her composure in speech, as showcased by the narrator. Again, the narrator seems to present Homi Bhabha's notion of attraction and repulsion that

characterises the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. In this case, the theory of ambivalence plays a role in the sense that Attah describes the disrupted colonial relationship, regardless of the resistance on the part of the colonised Ghanaians in their fight for liberation. Probably, the narrator had the idea of the worried Charles Grant, who desired the infusion of Christianity in the Indians but did not like the fact of causing the Indians to agitate for liberty after their conversion (Young, 1995). Arguably, Attah can be considered in support of Bhabha's proposition in this area of colonial discourse, with the illustration of contradiction around the Nuns' composure to demonstrate the conflict within imperialism itself.

On the other side, and in support of the argument around Charles Grant in 1972, whether it is cowardice or loyalty on her part as an Irish citizen living on the Gold Coast, the narrative voice strategically presents the Nun's manner of speech and choice of words as contradictory. This contradiction becomes the clue that exposes the reality at stake. The phrase "suck-teeth" as used earlier by the narrator has a connection with the word "expletive" in the narrative. Both contexts ironically appear to fill up space without adding to the sense found in "the value of independence". Nevertheless, they ("suck-teeth" and "expletive") still serve as syntactic place holders. The effect of using both words is to emphasise the essence of the message found in the contradiction.

There is again the use of ellipses. Ellipses as a literary term have been used to describe an unfinished thought of the Nun. It has also been used as a shared knowledge of information between Lizzy Achiaa and the Nun. The information is not volunteered, but is, however, replaced by the omission of the sense that is supposed to be generated from this important fact about

independence. Its use in speech also distorts the sequence of senses perceived from the information. The narrative voice discusses this clue through how surprised the character (Lizzie) feels and then finds out how Nuns are also interested in politics and governance. Perhaps Attah tries to explain to readers that the missionaries took significant a part in the colonisation of Africa which is in line with Uba's, (1975) assertion that the Christian missionaries are said to be the main influencing factor that brought about the problem facing Africa and that the interests of the missionaries and the British colonial government were almost the same. This establishes the fact that the nun respects the debt of knowledge insofar as British History is concerned. From the excerpt, readers can appreciate how the independence achieved by Kwame Nkrumah hangs in the balance. The nun's analysis of Nkrumah's rush for independence signals her sense of uncertainty about the lasting nature of independence, and this reveals her Eurocentric paradigms. As a British herself, she was not comfortable with the quest for independence championed by Kwame Nkrumah. This explains why in the excerpt she advances many reasons to nullify the value gained from the independence of Ghana. She even preempts not just the failure of Nkrumah's quest for independence but also pessimistically forecasts a civil war. In reality, Ghana never experienced a civil war even after the overthrow of Nkrumah. Thus, nullifying her pessimistic stance on her presumed failure of Nkrumah's quest for independence. With a reductionist tone, she compares the state of the Gold Coast around the time Nkrumah was fighting for independence to a worn-out cloth that can easily be torn apart if not handled with care. "...I'm afraid the Gold Coast will be torn apart." This is further proof of the Nun's lack of faith in Nkrumah's action, which also contradicts her own profession as a missionary.

The discussion of the issue of independence follows that Africans are stuck within the white man's civilisation, and that ideology has since been the standard for their living. According to the narrative, the African is stuck mentally and will never be free. From the narrative, we can glean thus:

“We are stuck,” the man went on. “Mentally. Brothers and sisters. We will never be free. The British might leave us in March, but in here,” he hit his chest, we will never be free! ...Lizzie took off her shoes. The man's words were bothering her now, even more than his prodding member. She would rather live in Accra than live in Adukrom No. 2. She wanted nice clothes and to ride around in shiny cars. Did that mean that she liked the white man's ways? Did that mean she wasn't free? (*Harmattan Rain*, p 43)

From the first paragraph of the excerpt, the independence of Ghana is approaching, but the narrative voice presents a kind of doubt about freedom for the people of the Gold Coast, even when the British leave the shores of the Gold Coast. Independence here becomes the contention of the character of contemporary African society created in the narrative. According to the speaker, the form of independence the people were seeking was one accompanied by mental and physical exhaustion. Probably, the people of Gold Coast had already noticed their mental disorientation, which created a new identity for individuals who were going to live in a dilapidated postcolonial Ghana after achieving independence. There is a clear demonstration that the British have succeeded in influencing the natives with their way of life through domination in the context of education. Those natives who were privileged to receive that form of education have developed a preference for the tastes and likes of Britain. No wonder in the second paragraph of the excerpt, Lizzie decides to remain within Accra, wear nice clothes, and ride in shiny cars rather than go back to Adukrom No. 2, where her original identity is located.

The excerpt signals a contradiction both on the part of Lizzie and the man whose Eurocentric outfit “an ill-fitting tan jacket, dark brown trousers and shoes that matched his jacket. And straightened hair.” (Harmattan Rain, p. 41) has become the object of Lizzie’s annoyance. Though Lizzie is annoyed with the man’s dressing, she herself is desirous of Eurocentric luxuries (nice clothes and shiny cars). Here, her disapproval of Eurocentricism becomes the sense of her anger at the man’s dressing, because it showcases his ties with the colonial master’s domination. However, she is also desirous of the colonial master’s luxurious lifestyle. The narrator, by showcasing this, affirms Bhabha’s theory that relates to Grant’s solution to mix Eurocentricism with a disagreeing physical distinct individual whose practices are to produce a partial reform that would induce an empty imitation of English manners. In essence, both Lizzie and the man cannot extricate themselves from hybridity because their Eurocentric orientation unconsciously dominates their individualities. In effect, their characters are used to support the fact about ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never far from mockery.

From the perspective of taste, the narrative agrees with Wheeler-Bell (2022) that Lizzie’s behaviour is an exhibition of the unconscious/conscious acceptance of European culture and its related institutions. For her to be deeply imbued with Western taste also supports the idea of Bhabha’s mimicry that describes domination through traumatic colonial feelings and the impact of other influential factors that produce the kind of identity found within her character. Again, using Lizzie’s character, the narrator interrogates whether that situation (where the character of contemporary African society is understood to have been unconsciously caught or fixed within the Eurocentric critical

tradition) is independence. This phenomenon is what the study explains as vulnerability, and it resembles slavery in another form because whether or not the character is dominated becomes questionable. It is only a slave who is stuck within the anticipation of freedom. The emphasis is therefore placed within this historical analysis of why the African identity needs to be recovered, and if the narrative interrogates the African identity this way after gaining independence, then the education of the African needs a revision.

Homegoing

Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016) explores the concept of independence pursued by two generations spanning over three hundred years. The novel opens in the eighteenth century. From the opening pages, Effia is sold to an English governor by her parents. This sale into marriage paradoxically places Effia into a life of luxury in the Cape Coast Castle. It was at this same period that her half-sister Esi was captured in warfare and then raped and beaten in the ordeal dungeon below. Each chapter alternates between the two families that form this pattern.

The picture shows that Effia's Ghanaian descendants are those who champion war and colonialism. In comparison, Esi's descendants are those sold into slavery in America. At the end of the story, there is a reunification of the two family lines. This occurs when Marcus, raised in New York courts, and the bookish Marjorie, who is moved from Ghana to America in her infancy, meet to re-examine how their African identities could be re-coopted.

Following the historical analysis of why African identity needs to be recovered, Biney (2007) observes that the education of Africans needs a revisit. As a support for this assertion, she adds that Nkrumah rightfully identified basic

education and literacy as prerequisites for rapid economic and social development. He (Nkrumah) considered investment in the education of an individual as a means to the broader economic improvement of the country. This idea connects Harmattan Rain to Homegoing, where the concept of education as investment sparks a conversation between Yaw and Edward, revealing that despite the perception of education as a tool for domination, it can also be utilised for Africa's purification. From their conversation, readers realise how the value of African independence could be perceived through education. From these characters, readers also learn about the inherited trauma of the education received under British colonial rule. Yaw, for example, holds the view that an African must own his own Africa. This is believed to mean that though the African has received training to have the civilisation that has taught him the quality of life in thought and manners, taste, and intellectual refinement, he still feels for independence:

What you should be doing is saving your money to go to England or America for more schooling. You can't lead a revolution from behind your teacher's desk,' Edward said.
'I'm too old to go to America now. Too old for revolution, too. Besides, if we go to the white man for school, we will just learn the way the white man wants us to learn. We will come back and build the country the white man wants us to build. One that continues to serve them. We will never be free. (Gyasi, 2016, p. 223).

From the excerpt, readers can glean that European education does not necessarily inure to the benefit of the native African. It only transforms him from an African to an extension of white ideologies; as discussed by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, this form of education only translates into nervous conditions for the native African.

Again, there is a picture of approval and disapproval that liberation can be acquired through more schooling. The one that is instituted by the European-type school. The confusion and frustration of the speaker debunks this assertion. It appears that value is placed on education, but the narrator expresses reluctance to acquire this kind of education, which also seems to be the only way to independence. The narrative voice presents a feeling of approval within schooling as a means for liberation, but this same picture presents disapproval in the channel through which to receive schooling. The means of receiving schooling produce the conflict illustrated in the narrative. The character in question gives excuses that build on the fact that the European type of education comes along with domination, which he is not ready to allow himself, nor is he ready to allow his country to live with that form of knowledge that, to him, is dominating in nature and puts his country back into colonial servitude, though the country appears to be independent. The omniscient narrator, in this way, emphasises a new revolution for independence through the value of education, but seeks to caution readers to focus on how contemporary forms of education are still perceived in relation to the white man's cultural attitude. The ambience surrounding the condition provided through the character's excuses is hopelessness. This ambience of hopelessness describes how domination is exercised through the form of education received from European-type schools and also supports Bhabha's idea of ambivalence. This is perceived because of how the character of Yaw is used to distinguish the positive and negative emotions/attitude towards the colonisers' education (where there is a gap/split in cultural practice in relation to the white man's education).

Gyasi seems to support Pinto's (2019) assertion that education, and for that matter, European "civilisation", was primarily an instrument of political and social control in the quest for the realisation of the economic and political object of colonialism. In order to create and enforce their trade and political obligations, the British colonial government succeeded in controlling the emotional disintegration of the Africans. The narrator recounts:

We would like to set up an outpost in the village that would act as a residence for a few of our employees, as a way of, say gently reminding our friends there that they have certain trade obligations to our company. You've been specifically requested for the position, and given your parents' history with the village and given your comfort and familiarity with the language and local customs, we thought that you might be a particular asset to our company while there.

Quey had nodded and accepted the position, because what else could he do? But inside he resisted. His comfort and familiarity with the local customers? His parents' history with the village? Quey was still in Effia's womb the last time he or his mother had been there, so scared was she of Baaba. That was in 1779, nearly twenty years ago. Baaba had died in those years, and yet, still, they had stayed away. Quey felt his new job was a kind of punishment, and hadn't he been punished enough? (Gyasi, 2016, p. 51).

From the excerpt, the image is given that, right from the conception and the genesis of their improving the "status" and the so-called "civilisation" of the African, the British colonial government had the intention of having a continuous trade relationship with Africa. The picture pathetically reminds Quey of his obligation to put his own people under subjugation. This ironic elevation is what explains the inherited trauma that the African-educated go through, and it supports an earlier statement that says the colonial government produced low-level manpower for their needs, and their overriding objective was proselytisation (Pinto, 2019).

According to the narrative voice, Quey has “comfort and familiarity with the language and local customs”. Their successful tool has been the dual identity given to Quey, which allows him to interact with his own Africans and also makes him feel ironic belonging to the white man. What makes the situation more pathetic is his exposure to the various forms of oppression against his people and himself, but he has no means of resistance. He is forced to accept a position that dominates him internally, mentally, and physically. He is forced to use his mother tongue as an imposition on his own people. If he must exercise his authority in the trade relationship, it is because of his knowledge and familiarity with his customs. This becomes the frustration the African is supposed to go through when he receives the European type of education.

The narrative voice again shows a serious type of distance that exists between the African and his own environment. Though there is a feeling of familiarity created within the narrative, the time frame explained for the duration used for receiving the European civilisation does not allow a total grasp of Quey’s own culture. This becomes another form of domination described in the narrative as hybridity. The narrator describes this kind of identity as a form of punishment. This dis-identification and the subsequent disintegration that put Quey into two main cultures of confusion add to the pain of Quey:

Are you white? Cudjo had asked him, touching his hair Quey recoiled Cudjo’s touch, though many others had done the same thing, asked him the same question. I’m not white,” he said softly.

“What? Speak up” Cudjo said, and so Quey had repeated himself, nearly shouting. From the distance, the boys’ fathers turned to observe the commotion.

Not so loud, Quey,” James said.

Quey could feel color flood into his cheeks, but Cudjo had just looked on, clearly amused.

“So you’re not white. What are you?”

“I’m like you” Quey said.

Cudjo held his hand out and demanded that Quey do the same, until they were standing arm to arm, skin touching skin. “Not like me,” Cudjo said.

Quey had wanted to cry, but that desire embarrassed him. He knew that he was one of the half-cast children of the Castle, and, like the other half-cast children, he could not fully claim either half of him-self, neither his father’s whiteness nor his mother’s blackness. Neither England nor Gold Coast. (Gyasi, 2016 p51).

It appears that recent writers are still worried about this dis-identification problem and therefore continually speak against the issue. Though Africans believe that they have all received independence, the current state of Africans, as presented by Gyasi, speaks about colonialism.

From the excerpt, the exposition of Quey’s mental trauma becomes serious. His physical appearance betrays him. This can be likened to how the African physical outlook has recently appeared. The African taste for European clothes, hairstyles, and conduct betrays the African identity. In the case of Quey, his colour and his hair allow Cudjo to give him a kind of ridicule that also shows another form of domination received through the European type of civilisation. Cherry (2022) has stated that colour is closely associated with emotions and that it is a powerful communication tool that can be used to signal actions, influence mood, and even influence psychological reactions. The sentence “Quey could feel colour flood into his cheeks, but Cudjo had just looked on, clearly amused,” communicates the emotional difference between the two boys. Whereas Quey has a conscience-related problem about his identity, Cudjo carries himself about freely without any weight.

The narrator metaphorically connects the quality of “colour” and “flood” directly to Quey’s emotion. The colour used here connotes betrayal and jealousy at the same time. As Cudjo excitedly holds out his hands to indicate white or black to Quey, he feels betrayed, such that the description is

hyperbolically given to show how his pain and embarrassment rise to his cheeks to make way for tears. The narrator uses “flood” to indicate the degree and depth of the outpouring of his pain in relation to his colour and the confusion in his identity. What exposes domination is how he has to suppress the desire to cry because of the embarrassment that the act can generate for his character. Claudia (2022), however, observed that emotions affect the body. To see Quey’s pain and embarrassment that make way for tears, readers are introduced to how emotions are connected to the mental faculty and cause confusion in identity as a result of this natural occurrence that forces an individual to cry out to relieve them of pain. This concept holds firm: the belief that mental illness is the result of natural causes, not the supernatural. In this case, emotions, or psychological states, are our natural responses to the world around us. Claudia (2022) continues that keeping our emotions close to our chest continuously is not safe and healthy to move through life. This is likely to turn into a cyclical issue and prevent the individual from truly connecting well with others. The serious part of it is that when it backfires, there are mental and physical problems such as: impacting our self-confidence; causing individuals to feel stressed and depressed; and, worst of all, memory difficulties (Colleen Mullen, 2022).

Gyasi (2016) has artistically presented the mental and physical state of the African in this situation, cautioning her readers to be aware that it is this mental and physical challenge accrued from their emotional suppression that makes the character of contemporary African society vulnerable. This state of vulnerability, which furthers into practical compromise, is what the study considers the new form of slavery. This also supports Uba (1990), who has stated that the Africans in this state and plight are described as nameless

protagonists whose beings shadow as well as contrast with “others” who have names, matter, children, blood, and needs that help them to understand their origin and conduct. It is also described by Farnida (2020) as a post-colonial mimicry of the main character of contemporary African society.

The narrator offers a different perspective on Cudjo's character identity. He is shown to believe in himself. Cudjo's composure is described in the excerpt as “clearly amusing.” According to Nambia (2022), the expression of amusement is usually accompanied by genuine laughter. The experience of laughter changes the breathing pattern and often causes all the muscles to relax. According to Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials, the body responds to stress with muscle tension, which can cause pain or discomfort. In turn, tense muscles signal to the body that it is stressed. This keeps the cycle of stress and muscle tension going. Progressive muscle relaxation helps break this cycle by reducing muscle tension and general mental anxiety.

An analysis of the creative presentation of Gyasi (2016) critically examines the plight of these two boys, Quey and Cudjo. Their character examination in this manner showcases the plight of the character of contemporary African society in order to encourage Africans to believe in themselves and concentrate on their abilities and culture. The state of mental or emotional strain is again examined through how language and name are presented as other forms of cultural domination, disintegration and mental anxiety for black Africans. The narrator in Gyasi's *Homegoing* has described that:

Ness was not certain she would ever get used to hearing English spill out of the lips of black people. In Mississippi, Esi had spoken to her in Twi until their master caught her. He'd given Esi five lashes for every Twi word Ness spoke, and when Ness,

seeing her battered mother, had become too scared to speak, he gave Esi five lashes for each minute of Ness's silence. Before the lashes, her mother had called her maame, after her own mother, but the master had whipped Esi for that too. Whipped her until she cried out "My goodness!"- the words escaping her without thought, no doubt picked up from the cook, who used to say it to punctuate every sentence. And because those had been the only English words to escape Esi's mouth without her struggling to find them, she believed that what she was saying must have been something divine, like the gift of her daughter, and so that goodness had turned into, simply, Ness. (Gyasi, 2016, p. 71).

The study has earlier discussed Emeagwali's (2006) assertion that the colonial master has intentionally disintegrated African culture and heritage using the European form of education. The discussion given in chapter two of the study supports the showcasing of the plight of Ness and her mother, Esi, as described in the excerpt. From the excerpt, readers are given a display of Ness's resistance through silence. Meanwhile, this particular silence is another form of emotional suppression that has been identified by clinical scientists as one of the major factors undermining growth and development in the character of contemporary African society (Claudia, 2022). As mentioned earlier, suppression is more dangerous than reacting to the emotion. The narrator, therefore, describes the connection between the pain in the brutalities meted out to Esi and Ness's silence to avoid the pain inflicted on her mother. The writer artistically uses onomatopoeia in this particular instance to describe the sound and the action found in how the word "goodness" is heard rather than read in the narrative. Perhaps the writer showcases the depth of destruction in language and names the loss of the African heritage, and also describes the level of emotional torture in the idea of compromise. The discussion this way introduces current advocacy to readers that the kind of frustration and pain associated with the elimination of African heritage in terms of the destruction of their name and

their language is a deliberate, continuous domination on the part of the colonial master. The remedy is found in this sensitisation campaign aimed at wiping out the stench that colonialism has left on Africa.

Ghana Must Go

Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* similarly presents images that showcase the plight of the character of contemporary African society as an object of colonial subjectivity. *Ghana Must Go* gives the picture of a modern family and showcases the relationship between two different types of individuals. The novel shows the importance of where we come from to who we are, and also teaches that the truths we speak heal the wounds we hide. Taiye Selasi explores the issue of parental inadequacy and the kind of shame that drives a man to abandon his family for fear of appearing inadequate in their eyes. The Sae family mourns their father's death, Kweku Sae, with a struggle to come to terms with his death as well as work their way through various family issues. Though he has left them behind, his wife and children are left to deal with the fallout of his passing and unfinished business in the mortal world.

The story begins with this Ghanaian surgeon who dies in the garden of a house he designed himself by sketching it out on a napkin. He meets an old yogi who is said to live in a perfectly constructed beach house and brings Kweku's design to life. As Kweku meets his death through a heart attack, he reflects on old memories that include the births of each of his children, the injustice surrounding his profession as a surgeon, and his wife, Folasade. The story shows Kweku's current wife, Ama, sleeping, unaware of her husband's condition. At the same time, Folasade stays elsewhere, nursing the broken heart she was left with many years ago at the hands of her relationship with Kweku.

Ghana Must Go similarly describes the historical context that relates to why the African mindset is currently dominated by Europeans and why growth and development seem to be a huge problem in Africa.

The opening pages of the novel introduce readers to a poetic illustration of how Africa's irresponsible attitude allowed the Europeans to overtake them with surprise, dominate the African mind, and render Africans slaves in their own land. The poetic illustration metaphorically explains the capabilities of the leaders of Africa, who could have saved the land of Africa, but allowed themselves to be owned by common people who were also seeking an elevation for their lives. The poetic illustration draws a comparison between Kweku Sae's character and the leaders of Africa, who were either blindfolded or reluctantly ignorant about a significant threat to Africa's humanity. The narrator poetically weaves the idea of domination and Africa's ignorance and reluctance to see within the lines presented. According to Al-Akopov (2017), a good surgeon is capable of handling difficult situations with calmness and persistence, ready for emotional discomfort and psychological trauma. He adds that this good surgeon possesses intelligence, creativity, courage, and perseverance on behalf of his patients. He says again that these traits are critical factors that outweigh the slight differences among medical personnel. If the good surgeon is described this way, how could Kweku Sae not cater for his own health but allow "an unexceptional" health problem to take away his precious life?

It could be argued that the narrative voice aims to highlight the protagonist's carelessness, drawing a parallel between his actions and the leaders of Africa's failure to recognise and address a looming danger that has now stripped Africa of its dignity and humanity. The situation is given that

Kweku Sae could not see the signs, which means that there were signs to indicate danger. Nevertheless, whether he did not see or reluctantly ignored the signs, the most serious and important question that can be asked here is, why couldn't he see the signs, or why did he ignore the signs if he was so experienced as perceived from the narrative? Perhaps there was something strong that must have hindered this move. An emphasis is placed on foresight on the part of Kweku Sae's character and, by extension, the leaders of Africa. This hindrance can be obtained from a message that presents an application of an appropriate instrument that has been used by the Europeans for this exercise, and this is perceived through a planned apparatus intentionally positioned for an important purpose.

Taiye Selasi plans the lines brilliantly to showcase how Africans live at the intersections of histories and memories that are experienced in their preliminary dispersal and their subsequent translation into a new and more extensive arrangement along routes. Though the lines appear to talk about Kweku Sai and how he admires his own wealth and feels strange that he owns all that, the narrative voice, by extension, describes Africa's gradual transformation through planned disorientation and subsequent owning of the mind. Kweku realises his capabilities when all is lost, just as we find in the case of Africa, where the beautiful things lost to the Europeans are replaced with something unknown to Africans. The novel explains that the plight of Africa appears like a dream. However, the outcome was brilliantly planned and arranged to keep Africa and its inhabitants in perpetual bondage. From the narrative, we can glean that:

It's a brilliant arrangement. This one story compound, by no means novel, but functional, and elegantly planned: Simple

courtyard in the middle with a door at each corner to the living, Dining, Master, and (Guest) Bedroom wings. He sketched it on a napkin in a hospital cafeteria in his third year of residency, at thirty-one years old. At forty-eight bought the plot off a Neapolitan patient, a rich land speculator with mafia ties and type II diabetes who moved to Accra because it reminds him of Naples in the fifties, he says (the wealth pressed against want, fresh sea air against carpenter who was willing to build it, the only Ghanaian who didn't balk at putting a hole in a house. The carpenter was seventy with cataract and a six-pack. He finished in two years working impeccably and alone. At fifty-one moved his things in, but found it too quiet. At fifty-three took a second wife. Elegantly planned. Now he stops at the top of the square, between doorways, where the blueprint is obvious, where he can see the design, and considers it as the painter must consider the painting or the mother the newborn: with confusion and awe, that this thing which sprang to life there inside the mind or body has made it here, from in him to in front? (Of course he knows: with the proper application of appropriate instruments; it's the same for the painter, the mother, the amateur architect- but still it's a wonder to look at (*Ghana Must Go*, Part 1:2).

From the excerpt, Selasi pays attention to how her readers perceive her intentionally violated components put together to explain the European means of keeping the African mind from realising their capabilities. The aesthetic appeal of her language use emerges from the violation created in the second group of words that end with a full stop. In the normal sense, a full stop as a punctuation mark ends a sentence. In this case, it ends a phrase. The words/elements in the phrase are put together brilliantly to suggest a crucial feeling that fulfils the terms they lay out. The elements found within the phrases are separated by commas. By implication, the commas suggest a kind of confusion created for readers. From how the group of words has been put together, readers are given the impression that there should be pauses. However, the elements provided do not require any separation that would cause pauses, apart from confusing readers, which also signifies European means of confusing black

identity. The phrase, made to behave as a sentence, signals carelessness and maybe ignorance. Perhaps Selasi intentionally uses this apparatus to create readers' awareness of Africa's ignorance and carelessness. In an actual sense, it has been placed like that to intentionally misplace readers' attention and prevent clarity of meaning. The pause is supposed to be a major function of the comma. Selasi, by this tool, emphasises European means of confusing and preventing Africans from obtaining the meaning of identity through the type of education introduced to them and its disorienting effect. The topic sentence opens the argument of the planned activity. The words that follow explain the planned arrangement. It goes ahead to make readers aware that the arrangement is not about fun but something capable of physical performance. The phenomenon has a tangible application that goes beyond just a novel. Though it occurs inside the individual African character, its manifestations are physical and clearly shown on the outside. The planning also takes care of the outside.

From the excerpt, there is also a kind of security apparatus to keep the victim within the "courtyard with doors at each corner to protect the concocted individualisation made up by the "master", the "guest", who waits in the "bedroom wing" (Ghana Must Go, part 1:2) The master in question is said to be in the interior, waiting because there is a mechanism put in place for checks and balances to continue. According to Onwauchi (1972), it was within the territorial boundaries of Africa that some of the key elements of the present Western civilisation were developed. Western civilisation has impacted Africa and created many problems of cultural adaptation and the incorporation of Western laws and customs into existing tribal ones. The planned apparatus suggests a kind of disorientation and a mental disturbance that must have

arrested the African freedom to fight the Europeans from capturing their healthy human hearts and their great fascination in life, just like Kweku Sae, whose life was robbed away by an unexceptional heart attack that could have been remedied.

The narrative voice again describes Africa's foresight and vision, using a carpenter as a symbol. According to the narrative, the carpenter in question is seventy years old, has a six-pack, and has a cataract. The contradiction shown could be found with a seventy-year-old who has a six-pack. It is normal to have blurred vision at the age of seventy. Information received from the website of the Mayo Clinic (2022) is that people who reach the ages of seventy to eighty years are likely to have cataracts. According to the website, a cataract is a clouding of the normally clear lens of the eye. For people who have cataracts, seeing through cloudy lenses is a bit like looking through a frosty, fogged-up window. Clouded vision caused by cataracts can make it more difficult to read, drive a car, especially at night, or see the expression on a friend's face. Cataract, according to the Mayo Clinic, interferes with one's vision.

Otten et al. (2017) have found that individuals with six packs have very well-developed stomach muscles. Well-proportioned also means that the person's body fat is low enough. That is why the six-pack becomes visible. Though the information given does not emphasise that people with six packs are perceived as very strong, the implication can express strength. Making a comparative analysis of this contradiction of a six-pack with cataract, associated with the carpenter in the novel, Selasi metaphorically presents Africa's foresight. It could be argued that the comparison of a six-pack with cataracts seeks to ridicule Africa's capabilities without foresight. The carpenter in

question could complete a building within two years without any fault. Why then doesn't such an impeccable job expert have vision or foresight? There is therefore an advocacy that it was Africa's disability, though it had the capability, that has caused Africa's current domination and underdevelopment.

It is interesting to note that the systems that worked in the past are what enable the current environment to be informed. Readers can now identify how the planned security apparatus that keeps the victim in check informs the exercise of domination found within the education received from the European-type school. The narrative voice presents Kweku Sae's character as a symbol of colonial subjectivity and an object of illustration of the remnant of the character of contemporary African society:

The issue was the landscaping, such as it was, there being less than a quarter-acre of land left to "scape." Most of the plot had been cleared for the house, with a remnant patch of jungle off the sunroom.

Mr. Lamptey considered the stick figures. "Hmm. What kind of trees are these?"

"Never mind that," Kweku muttered, considering the size of the plot, The pool would have to be smaller than he'd drawn it at the hospital, but there were four fewer swimmers to use it, so fair enough. They'd just need to chop down the mango, or uproot it. The thing was looming verdant in the middle of the view.

Mr. Lamptey laughed uproariously. He would do nothing of the sort. Had the mango ever harmed them, done them wrong in any way? To kill it would be like slitting his grandmother's throat. "A bit rich, Kweku said. "I will not harm this tree."

"For Chrissake, you are a carpenter. You work with harmed trees"

"Jesus was a carpenter"...

Some authority. In fact, he felt his vision slipping slowly from his grasp. No children sleeping peacefully, No Fola swimming glistening, and if the mango remained standing, no beach of bleached white. The tree had to go.

"I 'll hire someone else."

"You will not." Mr. Lamptey sat, saying no more. Cross-legged and cloth clad at the base of the mango

for three days, two nights, smoking hush, keeping guard...
(*Ghana Must Go*, part 1:16).

The first paragraph of the excerpt symbolically presents the remnant of the character of contemporary African society. This symbolic presentation begins with the problem associated with African culture. “Landscaping”, as used in the excerpt, refers to the activity that modifies the visible features of the cultural environment of African society, including elements such as language, food, name, clothing, etc. According to the narrator, most of these elements had been cleared with a remnant of a “patch of jungle off the sunroom”. By extension, the narrative voice metaphorically presents a kind of adulteration that has penetrated the cultural environment with a remnant whose description is hard to perceive.

Literally, Kweku Sae owns the landscape that is “less than a quarter-acre left to scape” (*Ghana Must Go*, part 1:16) and hopes to clear that remnant for a swimming pool. It appears that the writer wants to show readers that the adulterated culture can be perceived through Kweku Sae’s character. Since the narrator showcases Kweku Sae as a surgeon, whose education has, of course, been obtained from a European-type school, the indoctrination received from this type of civilisation can be considered to have cleared the African ethos, causing Kweku Sae’s character to represent the remnant of African culture described in the narrative. The piece left that is considered indescribable is even described as “looming verdant”. Perhaps the narrator tries to make readers realise that even the little African value left in contemporary African society stands at risk of being removed entirely.

Kweku Sae's association with an assumed civilisation and modernity comes with the mention of uprooting the mango tree, which represents the remnant of the life and breath of the local traditional existence. He hopes to replace the life and breath of the local traditional existence with a swimming pool. He perceives that making the tree remain is backwards. Just as Armah explains in *Osiris Rising*, "it is backwards to have a jungle near the country's most sensitive security installation" (*Osiris Rising*, p. 52).

The images provided by the narrative offer readers insight into Kweku Sae's understanding of independence and civilisation, as he reflects on how the "mango tree" can replace the lustrous and sheeny pictures he associates with his wife, Fola. From the perspective of the narrative, the situation appears to talk about modernity as opposed to the life and breath obtained from tradition. The images suggest a range of connections. It could be argued that Kweku's vision to become civilised goes against his tradition, so he needed a quick decision. The narrator explains metaphorically how he deliberates on asserting his authority in order to hold onto his grasp of the "beach of bleached white". The image created here reflects the act of whitening something or making something colourless. His mindset has been made to value things European. This occurs because the European coloniser owns Kweku Sae's physical, as well as mental, universe through the institution of Western education. This supports Wa Thiongo's (1986) assertion that the more the critical temper of Africans is influenced by the Eurocentric critical tradition, the more gradually they become 'Black Westerners. From the forced ego to assert his authority, readers are given the impression that Kweku is not happy with his current taste for European things, but has no choice but to continually live with it. This form of

compromised situation is what the study means by “the exercise of domination found within the character of contemporary African society”.

From the discussion, it can be assumed that the writer points out to readers that the European-type school is still a strong security service to eliminate all potential hazards by cutting down on the people’s local traditional existence. Kweku Sae, in this situation, represents the remnant of the character of contemporary African society, which tries to maintain the established order from Europe by eliminating all potential hazards. For them, they have to adjust to the importance of their complex state. However, the writer’s disapproval of this potential hazard comes in how the narrator showcases resistance through Mr. Lamptey’s character. This can be described by how the excerpt shows a host of connections about his character. The narrative voice describes Mr. Lamptey as filled with “uproarious laughter” when the issue of chopping down the mango tree crops up, just as Gyasi presents Cudjo’s character in *Homegoing*, with the resistance factor as an advocacy for the healing process.

As additional information to Claudia (2022), Logan (2021) has also observed that laughter decreases stress hormones and relieves pain. It also improves one's resistance to diseases. By extension, Mr. Lamptey’s laugh is a form of resistance and a relief from the pain of the dangerous Eurocentric ideals suppressing growth and development in contemporary African society. The adjective that qualifies the laugh also explains the boisterous nature of how Africans must meet the kind of influence that is impeding growth and development in Africa. The omniscient narrator presents an unruly resistance and an indefatigable attitude when Mr. Lamptey is said to stay at the base of the mango tree for three days and two nights, keeping guard. The adjectives that are

used to describe his posture at the base of the mango tree explain Sela's formula for diagnosing a remedy to resist Eurocentrism in Africa. From the excerpt, he sat "cross-legged and cloth-clad at the base of the mango tree". This posture suggests that he is on the defensive side of protecting the remnant of African culture realized as useful as opposed to the complex imitation perceived in the excerpt as indescribable. This indescribable identity is perceived in *Ghana Must Go* as a vulnerability. The narrative voice explains that:

He feels a second pang now for the existence of perfection, the stubborn existence of perfection in the most vulnerable of things and in the face of his refusal – logical admirable refusal – to engage with this existence in his heart, in his mind. For the comfortable logic, the curse of clear sight, no matter which string he pulls on the same wretched knot: (a) the futility of seeing given the fatality of beauty, much less of beauty in fragility in a place such as this where a mother still bloody must bury her newborn, hose off, and go home to pound yam into paste; (b) the persistence of beauty, in fragility of all places!, in a dew drop at daybreak, a thing that will end, and in moments, and in a garden, and in Ghana, lush Ghana, soft Ghana, verdant Ghana, where fragile things die.

He sees this so clearly he closes his eyes. His head begins throbbing. He opens his eyes. He tries but can't move. He is glued there, overwhelmed. The last time he felt this was with Sadie. *Ghana Must Go*, part 11: 3).

It is clear that Kweku Sae's vulnerability is expressed through how he yearns for the "existence of perfection". From the beginning of the narrative, readers are introduced to the value of independence, and this connects the emotional state of Kweku Sae at the scene of his death. His character yearns for freedom by seeking perfection, which appears inevitable. From the narrator, his mind seems stressed as a result of his inability to understand and appreciate the consequences of clear sight. The narrator describes clear sight as a curse in this sense, where one's education places one within a state of vulnerability. His position as a surgeon gives him the opportunity to take the necessary

precautions to save his own life. Surgeons rarely wait for the death of a patient before making arrangements or taking precautions to save. The speaker paradoxically presents this idea through the terse form of presentation that also connects with the content. As an instance, phrases like, “logical admirable refusal”, “the futility of seeing given the fatality of beauty”, “the persistence of beauty, in fragility of all places!” give readers the opportunity to judge Kweku’s state of disillusionment when he is unable (after all his education) to agree with his identity to move on with life and align himself in his new state in Africa. Perhaps, his super imposition of clear sight, which turns out to be a curse, as described in the narrative, might have caused his heart attack. The adjective that qualifies clear sight contradicts the meaning. One with clear sight is considered a person who has presbyopia, farsightedness, and the ability to plan prudently for the future. These elements positively affect the growth and development of a character and his or her society at large. However, the adjective that qualifies this clear sight is negative. It suffers devastating consequences. There is therefore a comfortable logic in the narrator’s assertion, “admirable refusal to engage with his existence in his heart, in his mind” prompts Kweku Sae’s frustration found in the type of education that is supposed to give civilisation to Africans. All the adjectives used in the excerpt to describe this form of civilisation add to the disappointment found in the kind of education received from the European-type school. It is this disappointment that makes the character of contemporary African society vulnerable. The sorrow that comes along with this vulnerability is also seen by Ayi Kwei Armah as “The shaping crimes” and by Kofi Awoonor as “a senseless cathedral of doom”. This form of civilisation is the type that does not coerce Africa through guns, but is a mentally

planned disorientation that hinders growth and development in the character of contemporary African society. This supports Lee and Kaluaranchi's argument that formal education is not necessarily beneficial, though Harber (2014) has said it is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world by enabling a source of growth and development that shapes society.

From the excerpt, the imagery given through a mother, still bloody but who has to bury her newborn, presents to readers that the plight of the educated African character is susceptible to injury. However, the educated African can align with the new identity and move on. Just as is said by the narrator that "a mother still bloody must bury her newborn, hose off, and go home to pound yams into paste; (b) the persistence of beauty, in fragility of all places!" Domination occurs when Africans tend to believe that something foreign is superior to that of Africa. This tendency or belief, which also makes the African devastated and receives negative consequences of emotional suppression without resistance, is what the study claims as a new form of slavery strategically put in place to dominate Africa, and, for that matter, Ghana.

While the analysis thus far draws a strong parallel between Kweku Sai's character and the disoriented postcolonial African subject, it is important to also recognize that Selasi complicates this symbolic reading by offering a deeply humanised portrayal of Kweku, one marked by vulnerability, emotional fragility, and psychological trauma. Kweku's actions, particularly his retreat from familial responsibility and his apparent inability to recognize signs of his deteriorating health, may not simply be the result of negligence or pride, but rather the outcomes of years of unaddressed shame, identity conflict, and emotional repression.

His wrongful dismissal from the medical profession—an event only briefly detailed but profoundly consequential, carries with it a sense of humiliation that reflects the systemic injustices faced by Africans navigating Western institutions. This trauma, compounded by the weight of diasporic expectations and internalised ideals of success, renders Kweku not just a flawed man, but a man who has been deeply wounded by the very structures he once aspired to master. His inability to care for his own heart may then be interpreted not only literally but metaphorically—as a result of emotional paralysis born out of dislocation and unhealed loss.

Selasi's portrayal of Kweku's final moments further deepens this reading. As he stands in the quiet elegance of the house he built, overwhelmed by “confusion and awe,” readers are not shown a man in denial, but one who is reckoning with the totality of his choices and their consequences. The tone is elegiac, not accusatory. The stillness of his death becomes a poetic meditation on failure, not as moral indictment, but as the tragic outcome of a life caught between worlds, torn by ideals he could neither fully embody nor reject.

Thus, while Kweku Sai functions as a potent symbol of postcolonial disorientation and compromised independence, he is also a deeply sympathetic character—an individual who, like many postcolonial subjects, struggles to reconcile inherited histories with lived realities. His downfall, though emblematic, is not entirely of his own making. Rather, it is shaped by broader forces—colonial legacies, psychological displacement, and cultural fragmentation—that haunt the postcolonial condition.

Comparative analysis

All three novels critique these forms of domination from different temporal and generational perspectives, showing how the legacy of such systems continues to reverberate in postcolonial lives.

The speaker in *Harmattan Rain* directly engages with the early phases of colonial and immediate post-independence governance in Ghana. *Homegoing* moves between the Gold Coast and America, tracing the legacies of slavery and colonialism across generations. *Ghana Must Go* deals more with the consequences of postcolonial elite formations and what happens when colonial administrative structures are handed over to new African leaders, often trained in the West.

In critiquing these novels, it occurs that, while the British colonial administrative system is not the novel's central focus, its mechanisms are embedded in the social and economic frameworks that emerge.

Harmattan Rain explores how colonial administrative systems displaced traditional political orders and introduced hierarchical bureaucracies that privileged Western values and education. For example, the character of Lizzie's father, Koo Mensah, is a symbol of resistance to colonial authority and its Western-centric ideals. He refuses to send his daughter to school, fearing that formal education is a tool for alienation.

The critique is seen through the British administration's use of educated Africans in their bureaucracies, suggesting that these individuals, though Africans, became instruments of domination by proxy. In *Harmattan Rain*, characters such as Lizzie embody the ambivalent consciousness of the postcolonial subject. Her desire for "nice clothes and shiny cars" stands in stark

contrast to her annoyance at the man dressed in Eurocentric fashion, revealing her own internalisation of colonial taste and status. The narrator in *Harmattan Rain* uses contradictory desires to show how characters have internalised colonial values unconsciously. In terms of domination, Colonialism is not merely an external force; it persists in the character's psyche, choices, and dreams. Lizzie's preference for urban modernity over her ancestral village (Adukrom No. 2) dramatises this deep internal schism. In the geography of domination, Accra in *Harmattan Rain* functions as a modern colonial center, a place of opportunity shaped by colonial infrastructure and lifestyle. Adukrom, the village, represents tradition, yet is abandoned for Westernised spaces. This setting dramatises the abandonment of indigenous identity in favor of cosmopolitan mimicry. Even the geography reflects a colonial hierarchy—rural is backward, urban is modern, repeating colonial binaries.

The plot is structured as a symbol of historical disruption, generational continuity and cycles of vulnerability. *Harmattan Rain* is structured into three generational arcs, suggesting that independence was only partial. The repetition of familial struggles suggests that colonial legacies remain unresolved. Artistically, the plot resists closure. Instead, it shows how trauma and colonial mimicry reappear, subtly altered, across time.

In terms of domination, the plot mirrors cycles of inherited struggle, especially for African women navigating hybrid identities.

Linking this theoretically, Bhabha's notion of mimicry and ambivalence is evoked through Lizzie—her mimicry of colonial taste is both an expression of aspiration and a sign of unresolved colonial trauma.

Consequently, *Harmattan Rain* reveals the irony of the educated Ghanaian whose participation in state-building is still trapped in colonial modes of thinking, a kind of internalised domination.

In the case of *Homegoing*, on the same thematic concern, Effia's lineage remains in Ghana, subject to the transformation of the local chieftancy under British indirect rule. The chiefs, often co-opted, are shown to administer British will, complicating indigenous leadership. The slave castle, Cape Coast, is a chilling image of colonial bureaucracy: an administrative building with prisons below and luxury quarters above, symbolising how cruelty and control were institutionalised. The symbolic use of the castle—luxury above, dungeon below—depicts how colonial domination stratified African life. Marital privilege and slavery co-exist in one structure. The setting of *Homegoing* becomes a metaphor for Ghana's fractured psyche, where wealth, oppression, memory, and silence are spatially co-located. The castle represents a palimpsest of violence, mirroring the way modern Ghana rests on unresolved trauma. The plot structure represents fragmented genealogy and historical reunification

Gyasi's plot alternates between descendants in Ghana and America, mimicking the rupture of colonial and slave histories. The eventual reunion between Marcus and Marjorie becomes a moment of symbolic healing. Fragmentation itself is the form, mirroring the psychological fragmentation of a colonized people. Even in reunification, the novel implies that healing is possible only through historical reckoning, not forgetfulness.

The colonial state's structuring of race, class, and gender norms plays out across time, affecting educational access, personal aspirations, and the socio-political autonomy of descendants. *Homegoing* traces a broader

genealogy of domination through figures like Quey and Yaw. Quey, coerced into colonial service due to his heritage and education, feels trapped—his role in perpetuating colonial trade is imposed, not chosen. The narrator in *Homegoing* renders domination as an intergenerational burden, showing how descendants of colonial subjects are often unknowingly co-opted. In terms of domination, characters like Yaw are ambivalent toward European education, seeing it as a source of personal growth but also cultural betrayal. His line, “We will never be free,” echoes the notion of mental enslavement, despite political independence. Linking this theoretically, Bhabha’s mimicry is evident in how education alienates the characters from their cultural core, creating fractured, inauthentic selves.

Ghana Must Go, on the other hand, portrays the patriarch, Kweku Sai, as a successful Ghanaian surgeon whose life is torn apart by both Western institutional racism and the corrupt remnants of colonial governance in Ghana. Kweku’s wrongful scapegoating in a corruption scandal highlights how the post-independence state, rather than resisting colonial systems, mimics their authoritarianism, politics, and colonial educational ideologies. His children, especially Taiwo and Kehinde, experience the psychological dissonance of being children of a postcolonial elite shaped by the residue of colonial educational and administrative ideologies. Using character as a vehicle for critique, Kweku Sai, the brilliant surgeon, exiled by shame, and his children, raised in Western societies, struggle with belonging and identity. This is a portrayal of psychological exile and a form of domination of characters who are physically free but spiritually dislocated. The colonial ghost survives in the professional shame, elitism, and silence that plague the Sai family. Kweku’s

failure in Ghana stems from a system still haunted by colonial power dynamics. In *Ghana Must Go*, the family's journey spans continents, but Accra remains the locus of betrayal and unfinished business. The setting reflects the diaspora's emotional geography, where no place offers complete refuge. The effect positions Ghana not as a home but a mirror, forcing confrontation with familial and national illusions. Ghana becomes both a haven and a site of trauma—a nation attempting to modernise under the lingering weight of inherited structures. The plot is structured as a puzzle of memories, secrets, and shame. The narrative loops through time, mimicking the disjointed experience of postcolonial identity. The non-linear plot captures the diaspora's sense of displacement—neither fully at home in Ghana nor abroad. The inability to speak or reconcile past shame (Kweku's silence, Folasadé's detachment) reveals how domination is psychological and intimate.

The Theoretical Link is that characters in *Ghana Must Go* reflect diasporic mimicry, where postcolonial elites unconsciously embody the very systems that exclude them.

Whereas *Harmattan Rain* offers a nuanced portrayal of how colonial administrative power operated not just externally but through internal contradictions, *Homegoing* depicts domination as a transnational and enduring system, with the colonial administration initiating structures that racial capitalism and modern governance later inherited. *Ghana Must Go* also exposes how colonial administrative values—hierarchy, discipline, status—persist under new guises in modern African states, and how they fracture family and identity across diasporic lines.

Across *Harmattan Rain*, *Homegoing*, and *Ghana Must Go*, colonial administrative domination is portrayed as a layered and evolving force. In *Harmattan Rain*, it appears as direct control and cultural intrusion. In *Homegoing*, it operates through systemic institutionalisation and transatlantic impact. In *Ghana Must Go*, it lingers as an inherited structure that perpetuates injustice and personal ruin under a postcolonial guise. Together, the novels reveal that colonialism did not simply rule—it taught the colonised how to rule in its image.

Attah's *Harmattan Rain*, Gyasi's *Homegoing*, and Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* are not just intergenerational novels—they are meditations on the unfinished business of colonial domination. Each author, situated within the Ghanaian diaspora, crafts a narrative that critiques the illusion of postcolonial independence. Drawing on complex literary techniques—particularly characterisation, setting, and plot—they expose how colonial domination, far from being a historical footnote, remains embedded in the character of modern Ghanaian society.

Chapter Summary

Analysis of the three texts emphasizes a link between Africa's independence and the white man's civilization. The analysis reveals that domination occurs within the standard or the reference point against which the African evaluates and judges aesthetics in relation to the White man's civilisation, and the reason why the African holds the belief that whatever is not the best for the African is not the best. From the discussion, Africa's independence is accompanied by mental and physical exhaustion. In Atta's *Harmattan Rain*, this mental and physical exhaustion is a form of domination

which occurs as a result of how the process for independence in the Gold Coast undermined the value of independence and the result of this is the mimicry of western lifestyle that describes domination through traumatic colonial feelings and impact of factors that make the educated African vulnerable (Bhabha, 1994). The study reveals that this phenomenon has contributed to the formation of an African identity, which, in turn, has led to the dilapidation of Africa. A further emphasis from Attah's *Harmattan Rain* is that it is this state of vulnerability, showcased by the study as domination, that makes the educated African continually interrogate the form of independence at the disposal of the African. In Gyasi's *Homegoing*, this form of domination created within the independence of the educated African character can still be addressed through education, which can also be obtained from the European-type school. This assertion supports Harber's (2014) impactful speech that if one goes through education, the person acquires knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits that enable a source of growth and development that shapes society, but the same assertion challenges Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995, p. 425), who argue that Western education in developing countries is not as beneficial as we might think.

Following the above discussion, the study therefore envisages that the enslavement of the African can be addressed through more schooling only if the domination that occurs within the distance that exists between the African and his/ her environment can be addressed. This is supported by Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, which suggests that the colonial master has colonised the African using a deliberately created distance that allows an interest in the socialisation used for the reception of European aesthetics, and this does not allow proper

familiarisation with African culture. From the novel, Africans must assume an indefatigable posture that serves as a defensive side of protecting the remnant of African culture, which is now realised as a useful tool that can oppose the complex imitative representations that are indescribable. The novel adds that this deliberate apparatus of distance with its accompanying physical and mental outlook of the African betrays him in health, language, religion, taste, and name; the contemporary African character compromises to this kind of existence because resistance appears inevitable. It is envisaged clearly from the discussion in Chapter three, using the argument from the three selected texts, that systems that worked in the past are what inform and keep the educated African as a victim and within checks, as well as inform the existence of domination found within the education received from the European-type school. However, more schooling, totally imbued with the familiarisation of the African environment, can aid in the development process of Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE FORMS OF IMITATIVE REPRESENTATIONS FOUND WITHIN
THE CHARACTER OF CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAAN SOCIETY
AND HOW THEY ARE EXHIBITED IN THE THREE SELECTED
TEXTS

Introduction

Imitation is the act of observing and replicating another's behaviour (Zentall, 2006). This form of behaviour is important in the development of traditions and culture and enables the transfer of information, behaviours, and customs (Khanal, 2012). For biologists, imitation is of interest due to its adaptive value for the survival of organisms, while psychologists are interested in the mechanisms responsible for imitation, especially in cases where the demonstrated behaviour cannot be seen by the imitator (Noel, 2008). Postcolonial analysis shows that imitation plays a significant role in childhood development as children tend to copy the behaviour of older, more assertive children or adults around them (Keen, 2022). Parents and teachers reinforce this behaviour through rewards of approval and encouragement, or the threat of punishment or loss of love. This gives the child a sense of vicarious satisfaction and helps them identify with the admired adults (Keen, 2022).

Imitation continues in adulthood for similar reasons as in childhood, such as the desire for social approval and admiration for successful or prestigious individuals. Taleb (2023) indicates that these factors all play a part in the conformity behaviour in which people unthinkingly accept as the opinion of the majority, rely upon dubious experts, and adopt fads and fashions created primarily for following self-appointed leaders during crises. He adds that the

behaviours of others are adopted because they become the path of least resistance. This applies to social customs such as the rules of etiquette. Taleb emphasizes the American way of eating, for example, in which we shift the fork from hand to hand and intimates that it makes little sense, but people do not fight this conformity behaviour, to ascertain whether it is rational or not but allow it to order our lives and give us a sense of belonging. Farnida (2020) describes imitative representation as a means of constructing meaning, associations, and values that are socially shared in culture. She describes imitative representation as a means of political presentation of a particular group in the sense of making a portrait. This process usually occurs, especially in the case of binary power relationships, through the representation of the West and the East, the self and others.

The study's emphasis on Bhabha's idea of power relationship is characterized as an attitude when the people in the colonised country begin to mimic the colonizer's actions, attitudes, language, and culture. This chapter examines the forms that imitative representations take and how they are exhibited in the character of contemporary African society presented in the three selected texts. These forms will be analyzed using the postcolonial theory through Bhabha's interpretation of mimicry. It will be explained by relating ideas to how the theory describes the idea of power relationship exhibited in the characters' attitudes, actions, language, and culture. Discussion of the three selected texts follows this order: *Homegoing*, *Ghana Must Go* and *Harmattan Rain*, respectively.

Discussion

Homegoing

Yaa Gyasi perceives identity as a complex phenomenon rather than a natural, innate one. This is argued because her perception of the African is that of a social construct. It is this perception she has that allows her to re-imagine and thematise the forms and constructs in her literary works. Jennifer et al. (2022) have observed that it is through her fictional characters that she explains Africa's current way of negotiating the self within their new localities. The characters she depicts experience cultural challenges through how they perceive themselves as occidental and oriental, and this is what culminates in a crisis of the imitative character. Jennifer et al. add that Gyasi's novels represent the constant evolution of identity and the fluidity of characters found in the kind of African society that is always depicted in her novels. The conflicting cultural impact exhibited through their imitative tendencies demonstrates a kind of unreconciled self-depiction in the imitative individual. In the narrative, the narrator demonstrates how Yaw, an educated character, is caught in a deepened sense of alienation that showcases the inadequacy of his knowledge of local wisdom. It could be observed from the novel that his knowledge reception is only suitable for foreign style, due to the chunk of western knowledge and skills that places him in an imitative compromising situation, even in the case of expressing love towards a woman. This form of imitative tendency is explained thus:

It was in Oseim that Yaw had met the first girl he would ever be interested in. In school, he had loved the Romantic poets best, and he had spent nights in Oseim copying Wordsworth and Blake onto tree leaves that he scattered around the spot near the river where she went to fetch water.

He spent a whole week doing this, knowing that the words of white Englishmen would mean nothing to her, that she could not read them, knowing that she would have to come to him to find out what the leaves said. He would think about it every night. The girl bringing her bundle of leaves to him so that he might recite “A Dream” or “A Night Thought” to her.

Instead, she went to Edward. It was Edward who read the lines to her, and afterwards, it was Edward who told her that the leaves were Yaw’s doing.

“He likes you, you know”, Edward said, “Maybe he will one day ask you to marry him.”

But the girl shook her head, clucked her tongue in distaste. “If I marry him, my children will be ugly,” she declared.

That night, lying next to Edward in his room, Yaw listened as his best friend told him that he had explained to the girl that you could not inherit a scar.

Now, nearing his fiftieth birthday Yaw no longer knew if he believed this was true (Gyasi, 2016, p. 228).

Though he protests against the European style of living, Yaw is seen mimicking the European way of romance, even when he knows the admirer he is trying to impress does not understand and interpret the words he intends to send across to her. From the excerpt, readers experience how romantic love in Africa is peculiarly linked to the models of Europe and the United States. However, Parle (2016) has explored ways globalization has reshaped local ideas about topics of this sort. This notwithstanding, love in Africa is ignored, resulting in a serious lack of understanding about a vital element of social life. Gyasi uses the situation of Yaw to draw her readers’ attention to how romantic love is perceived in Africa, to have a vivid compelling look in a form of rethinking the importance of paying attention to the many different cultural and historical strands that constitute the role of love in the African society and to consider its failure in order to correct the idea of romantic love using European models. There is no doubt about this when the narrative pays attention to why Yaw had to mimic Wordsworth and Blake in order to be heard about how much he can express his love towards “a village girl at Oseim”. From the narrator’s

point of view, there is disapproval of this imitative tendency in the form of the girl's rejection both of Yaw's personality and his Eurocentric way of proposing to her.

Ironically, it is this same Yaw who renders loud notes of his anger towards European modes and their adaptation by native Africans. The village girl in question is seen to naturally fall in love with Edward, a different, educated African character in the narrative, who is also a friend to Yaw and happens to explain the content of his friend's intention. The narrator further describes the love affair that ends in rejection in connection with the inheritance of a new identity. From the excerpt, readers observe Edward's interpretation of the words written by Yaw to the village girl who rejects him by associating his looks with inheritance. As earlier stated, imitations are forms of behaviours that are also considered to be socially constructed and not biologically inherited (Jennifer et al., 2022). This can be explained to mean that the actions put up by Yaw cannot biologically define him. That is the reason why the narrative symbolically and metaphorically makes use of his "scar," which was not biologically inherited but accidentally obtained. This accidental outlook of Yaw is what is interpreted through Bhabha's idea of mimicry as copying the colonizing behaviour, culture, and values, which results in mockery. Yaw appears to copy the colonizer because he thinks he has access to the same force. His rejection, however, exposes this complex phenomenon that negatively affects the individual's mentality and personality.

The negative interplay of the individual mentality and personality, seen through Yaw, supports the study's claim of slavery in contemporary lifestyle. Czachura et al. (2023) have explained that scars can result from accidents and

surgeries. This resultant change in appearance can negatively affect body image and self-confidence. Placing a premium on beauty, attractiveness is associated with positive attributes contributing to the “beauty-is-good” stereotype (Czachura et al., 2023). Czachura et al. (2023) emphasise that biases usually result from scars on faces. This suggests less warmth, competence, and dehumanisation. From Czachura et al.’s perspective, we realize that scars are not inherited but can be obtained accidentally. In this case, the narrator, by extension, implies that the imitative tendencies that cause a change in identity for the African-educated character psychologically dehumanise, create stereotypes, and clear away the beauty and the courage of the individual. Interestingly, however, these traits are psychologically adopted, not biologically adopted, and for that matter, there is the possibility of correcting this vital element of social life. This liberating kind of belief adds to the reason why the narrator admonishes Esther for keeping to a form of mimicry that presents her identity in stupefaction. From the excerpt below, readers can observe that:

Yaw looked up from his book. Esther was standing in front of him with the long handmade broom she had insisted on bringing with her, even though Yaw told her that his house had many brooms. “You understand Twi? Yaw said in his mother tongue, and Esther nodded. “Then speak freely. We hear enough English as it is.” It was like he had opened a gate. Her body begins to slip into an easy stance, and Yaw realized that it was not his scar that had terrified her, but rather the problem of language, a marker of her education, her class, compared with his. She had been terrified that for the teacher of the white book, she would have to speak the white tongue. Now, released from English, Esther smiled more brightly than Yaw had seen anyone smile in ages. He could see the large, proud gap that stood like a doorway between her two front teeth, and he found himself training his gaze through that door as though he could see all the way down into her throat. Her gut, the home of her very soul.

From the above excerpt, the African is trapped in a self-imposed identity despite the freedom that can be found in African culture. Esther’s character

exemplifies how language contributes to the oppressive nature of imitating white culture. The narrator suggests that using one's mother language can lead to liberation, symbolised by the opening of "a gate". This is compared to an opportunity for personal growth, new beginnings, and positive energy. The speaker advocates for a path to abolish colonial slavery. The understanding given here is that Esther tries to speak English because she has come into contact with a teacher of the white culture, and so her language and posture must be accommodated in the new environment. However, the picture showcases her posture when forced to use a new language, revealing a mixed identity and mood that puts a person in a state of loss (of strength and energy), resulting from hard physical or mental work. The narrator capitalises on this state and directs readers to a path of liberation through the use of the mother language, which becomes an escape point. As an emphasis, an open gate symbolises opportunity, new beginnings, and the welcoming of positive energy or blessings. It can also signify the invitation to explore new paths, embrace change and embark on a journey of personal growth (Lenard, 2010). In this general description, the narrator advocates a workable pathway through which liberation from this new form of colonial slavery can be achieved. The pathway chosen is again compared using an explicit equation between a doorway and the gap between Esther's two front teeth. The narrative voice interprets a proud distinction between two cultures using the doorway and the gap between Esther's two front teeth. There appears to be an interpretation of a wide gap between European culture and African culture. In trying to adopt the dominant culture, the element of replacement takes away one's pride as an African. Yaw

is showcased to see and train his gaze through the distinction between the two cultures.

Within this long-fixed look or gaze, there is the interpretation of “home” and “soul.” According to Metz (2019), a soulful home is a place where an individual can truly be themselves and reflect their own style, values, and aspirations. The advocacy in this case is discussed through how the mother language of the African can truly aid him to find “himself” and reflect his values and aspirations rather than allow another culture to overtake his soul and destroy the meaning of his life. The long-fixed look, which is capable of entering the throat, explains how the narrator connects freedom to identifying with one’s culture that liberates the soul in the long run. The scenario also showcases the human posture when one is released from the suppression of another culture. It is this outlook of self-destruction from another culture that brings about economic dependence. The economic independence of contemporary African society is also affected by this imitative tendency, resulting in corruption and stunted development. Education is identified as the root cause of this issue, with education policies corrupting the mind. The excerpt below recommends starting contact tracing from the basic schools, where learners are made to speak English compulsorily in and outside Africa. It is established from the discussion that the destruction of the mindset that results in economic dependence is what allows for corruption in contemporary Africa. Gyasi advocates for children’s involvement in finding a remedy to corruption, as they hold information and can facilitate contact tracing:

“ESS-CUSE ME, SISTAH. I take you see Castle. Cape Coast Castle. Five cedis. You come from America? I take you see slave ship. Juss five cedis”

The boy was probably around ten years old, only a few years younger than Marjorie herself was. He had been following her since she and her grandmother's housekeeper got off the tro-tro. The locals did this, waiting for tourists to disembark so that they could con them into paying for things Ghanaians knew were free. Marjorie tried to ignore him, but she was hot and tired, still feeling the sweat of the other people who had been pressed against her back and chest and sides on the nearly eight-hour tro-tro ride from Accra.

"I take you see Cape Coast castle, sis. Juss five cedis", he repeated. He wore no shirt, and she could feel the heat radiating of his skin coming toward her. After all the traveling, she couldn't stand another strange body so near hers, and so she soon found herself shouting in Twi, I'm from Ghana, stupid. Can't you see?

The boy didn't stop his English. "But you come from America?" Angry, she kept walking. Her backpack straps were heavy against her shoulders, and she knew they would leave marks.

The excerpt indicates that education has a role in transmitting and fostering values that determine, in turn, behaviors, attitudes, and reactions specific to responsible citizens. However, the failure of the same form of education in shaping national identity due to the components that make up the educational system can cause a disaster to the nation's character. The disastrous components can be found in Gramsci's notion of hegemony, where knowledge permeates through society and the entire system's values, attitudes, beliefs, and morality are affected, resulting in people enjoying the support of the status quo in power relations. The narrator in Gyasi's *Homegoing* illustrates this consideration in the little boy who hopes to use his power to generate money from a supposed stranger from America. He tries this through mimicry of the English language. The showcasing of this disaster could be found in how the speaker presents the phrase in capital letters and at the end receives an insult from Marjorie, the supposed stranger. The scenario highlights the vastness of the identity problem when Africans attempt to mimic this sort of language power. On the issue of corruption, the narrator suggests contact tracing from

basic schools and involving children in finding a remedy for corruption in tourism.

The excerpt also advocates for addressing imitative tendencies, which can negatively affect self-confidence and create stereotypes. The narrator provides an advocacy about the challenges of tourism in Ghana, showcasing how corruption undermines tourism development in the country. The boy's supposed power in using language to dominate explains the issue of imitation, where the domineering power of the English language can cause stupefaction on the part of the African. This again emphasizes Bhabha's idea of mimicry, which explains a means of imitation and of being superior to the inferior. The meaning of the narrative describes the person who imitates as not being in the same position as the original (Bhabha, 1994). Marjorie's backpack straps leave marks on her shoulders, which is a metaphorical representation of the "marks" that explain the state of the African and how difficult it is to differentiate them from foreigners. Meanwhile, the idea of stupefaction connected with this "supposed" foreigner describes the person as "almost the same but not white". The passage again associates poverty with imitation, as the boy feels superior when he uses English, his description as not wearing a shirt, and the "heat radiating off his skin" disagree with the kind of superiority he assumes. Generally, the passage effectively discusses the negative impact of imitative behavior on identity in contemporary African society. According to Gyasi, the situation in the diaspora is more pathetic. The narrator recounts how Yaw and his wife had to go through an unhealthy level of disappointment. From the narrative, readers observe that:

At home in Huntsville, her parents spoke to her in Twi and she answered them in English. They had done this since the day

Marjorie had brought a note home from her kindergarten teacher. The note reads:

“Marjorie does not volunteer to answer questions. She rarely speaks. Does she know English? If she doesn't, you should consider English as a second Language classes. Or perhaps Marjorie would benefit from special care? We have great Special Ed classes here.”

Her parents were livid. Her father read the note aloud four times, shouting, “what does this foolish woman know?” after each repetition, but from then on they had quizzed Marjorie on her English every night. When she tried to answer their questions in Twi, they would say, “Speak English,” until now it was the first language that popped into her head. She had to remind herself that her grandmother required the opposite.

From the excerpt, the narrator presents a confused individual who symbolises the diaspora, where the upbringing of children becomes a problem for immigrant parents. Azubiaga et al. (2009) have observed that it is sadly common for parents in immigrant families to develop an unhealthy level of codependency. Children born to immigrant parents have a feeling that they live between two cultures all their lives. The identity of second-generation immigrant parents and their sense of self do not revolve solely around their heritage from the old country. This is why Marjorie becomes confused about the use of language and therefore tries to speak to her parents using Twi whereas her parents demand that she uses the English language for the response to their questions. Another issue is the confidence of immigrant parents in their native country's heritage. The narrator ironically presents how Marjorie's parents, despite all the obscene acts about the foreign culture they find themselves exhibiting, still warn their daughter to speak English and covertly feel that they are nurturing their child in their local culture. This parental stupefaction reiterates traces of slavery and supports Bhabha's idea of mimicry. It is characterised as an attitude when the colonised country's people begin to mimic

the coloniser's actions, attitudes, language, and culture. The imitative tendency has a characteristic of metamorphosing into something "exciting".

Ironically, Marjorie's condition is perceived later as a health issue. To educational experts in her school, she needs special care, and it is only children with birth defects who are classified as special students with special needs. There is therefore no doubt when Marjorie's father attaches foolishness to the issue given by the school's authority to give special care to her because she is unable to speak the foreign language. However, Marjorie's parents force her into a continuous slavery and loss of identity situation by letting her speak English. From the excerpt, there is a state of willful "betise" when the immigrant family takes a death-like attitude to what Marjorie's identity will be, though they knew what was wrong with her as well as what could happen to her identity as an African. The underlying matter is that they did not have control over the whole situation, and this is the security apparatus that the colonial master has successfully placed on Africa in order to have continuous domination and continually demand what does not belong to them. The narrator showcases this situation through the ironic presentation of a furious person who continually allows a child to stay "in between cultures," though she does not like the condition.

Ghana Must Go

Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* presents a similar disdain for the condition of immigrants but with a more powerful attitude, atmosphere and tone. The narrative voice amplifies the reality of how difficult the life of an immigrant can

be, using vivid descriptions that reveal the frustration in speech and physical appearance. As the excerpt shows, the speaker expresses that:

Indeed, she was. Taiwo. A light-skinned Taiwo in ten, fifteen years, thinner lips, straighter hair. Femi aimed a silver remote at the face like a gun, whispered “pow!” and music went off. Kehinde half-expected the woman to fall, mortally wounded, slumping out from her frame to the floor, Or half-wished. As he started at her, something else happened, the inverse illusion: An ugliness emerged. He found the woman ugly, overwhelmingly ugly; knew ugly things would happen on account of her face; and he hated her, her appearance, her milky-white pallor, he hated this woman, neither African nor white, who belonged to no people, no past he had heard of, who Sat the wall, cold with death, cut from ice, the only member of their family they had ever vaguely looked like, this pale, hated beauty entrenched in wrought brass (*Ghana Must Go*, part 11:6,9).

The narrator portrays Taiwo as useless and worthless, with no African biological traits like thick lips, coarse and kinky hair, and dark skin. This can be seen as an attempt to end the destructive identity assumed by contemporary African characters. The narrator compares a remote control to a gun, suggesting that Taiwo is controlled by a system that values European ideals and continually changes her African identity into an imitative representation of Europe. The silver remote control is compared to a gun, suggesting that something that is no longer useful must be eliminated. The adjectives used to describe Taiwo’s physical appearance send worthless and useless impressions, conveying disapproval of the current state of contemporary Africans. The inverse illusion suggests a reversal of African nature in a negative effect due to the European-designed apparatus that impedes development. The speaker expresses hatred for this condition and disapproval of the fact that African immigrants do not belong to any particular people or have a past. The narrative encourages a return to Africa in search of roots, as advocated in Gyasi’s

Homegoing, to understand the genesis of the dilapidated condition of contemporary Africans:

“Be quiet. I’m telling them a story. It’s clear they don’t know. One should know where one comes from, don’t you think? It’s important. They should know about our family, how we all came to be.” He laughed again, loudly, looking sharply at Taiwo. “And now here you are,” then at Kehinde, “twins. You know what we Yoruba Say about ibaji. You bring us good luck and great fortune, you twins. And you know what my name means, yes? Femi means ‘love me,’ I want you to love me, Ibeji, you hear?” (*Ghana Must Go*, 6:9-10 part 11).

The narrator discusses the importance of knowing the story of one’s beginning. In telling the story about the African, the narrator laughs loudly at Taiwo, who is showcased as neither African nor white. The narrator then presents a history of the past by considering the importance of “name”. In the narrative, all the names are African, emphasising the importance the writer attaches to names, identity, and history. It is not surprising when, in looking at Taiwo, the narrator laughs as described in the excerpt because the name does not match the looks described in the narrative. By this act, there is a deliberate consciousness about the disparity between naming and physique. There is a clear picture of love for the name concerning the physique. There is again advocacy for knowing the importance of the meanings found within the name and how the name impact humanity.

The narrator emphasises the importance of preserving originality and using it as a basis for creating copies. In the narrative, twins signify good luck and great fortune, and the name Ibaji is supposed to be kept as an archetype of good luck and great fortune. This idea is connected to Gyasi’s *Homegoing*, where both writers compare the idea of keeping the European style of living as a model and following it without completely conforming to it, as Bhabha says

that the condition is not the same. The conclusion drawn from this situation is that Africans should adhere to the historical narratives that explain the origins and significance of the current African state, then strive to emulate these stories as models. The narrator advises that until the issue of model-taking is addressed, the block on Africa's development will continue. Evidence is provided to support this claim:

This was the problem and would be ever after, the block on which she sometimes feels her whole being stumbled: that he (and so she) became so unspecific. In an instant. That the details didn't matter in the end...she sensed the change immediately, in the tone people took when they learned that her father had been murdered by soldiers; in the way that they'd nod as if, yes, all makes sense, the beginning of the Nigerian civil war, but of course. Never mind that the Hausas were targeting Igbos, and her father was a Yoruba, and her grandmother Sottish, and the house staff Fulani, some Indian even. Ten dead, one an Igbo, minor details, no matter. She felt it in America when she got to Pennsylvania (having been taken first to Ghana by the kindly Sena Wosornu), That she'd stopped being Folasade Somanyina Savage and become instead the native of a generic War-Torn Nation. Without specifics. (*Ghana Must Go*, Part 11:1).

From the excerpt, there is the impression of the problem staying ever after if the African decides to remain "so unspecific." From one perspective, the problem of remaining unspecific is described as "the block that makes the whole body feel stumbled. To stumble means "an unintentional but embarrassing blunder". The narrator explains the "block" using how the immediate change occurs in an individual who is found within the change that causes a blunder. The narrator explains that the change is caused by a "murder by soldiers". By using murder, the narrator is metaphorically describing the enormity of the defect in the physique. While the murder is real, because it recalls a past history, it is metaphorical within the context of African identity

and place in the community of continents or nations. It is this murder that has rendered the African “unspecific” This exemplifies what Bhabha details as the fading of identity which is a direct result of hybridity and which may also lead to identity crises; both in the colonising and the colonised cultures. The enormity of the problem is expressed within the distortion described using local examples and relating it to a foreign example that cultural practices can be assimilated and adopted and cultures cross-fertilised; as both the local and foreign exemplary distortions of the individual suggest impossibility.

Taiye Selasi tries to establish the fact that hybridity is crucial and guards against falling into the trap of thinking about a true kind of identity devoid of any foreign trait. From the narrative, there is the showcasing of different kinds of cultures that gives readers the impression to think about the need to integrate other cultures due to the current global interconnectedness. This consideration by Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go* creates the awareness of a hybrid attitude towards the path taken for development. The text highlights the shortcomings in both African and European cultures, suggesting a shift away from the European way of life, which is often assumed to be superior.

From a different perspective, another recognition is created at the same point to integrate the two cultures, as the presentation discusses borrowed cultures that portray Africa as an evolving human being with a blend of several cultural varieties.

Harmattan Rain

Aysha Harruna Attah, in *Harmattan Rain*, presents a similar interpretation of this idea of integrating cultures. There is a picture of the “unspecific” portrayed as:

Lizzie, dressed in a red, yellow and green *kente* cloth, stood in front of the mirror in her room. She held her hair, now straight, in a pompadour. Mercy told her she couldn't start independence with her hair coarse and kinky and had passed a hot comb through it to get it straight. "Ready?" Mercy asked wearing the same outfit as Lizzie. "Yes," Lizzie said. They walked out of the nursing school and into Selasi's Chevy Corvette (*Harmattan Rain*, p 45:46).

From the excerpt, the narrator connects two cultures using *kente* cloth and a hairstyle held in a "pompadour". *Kente* cloth is a type of fabric with interwoven cloth strips, native to Ghana (Opoku-Asare, 2013). Opoku-Asare intimates that the cloth represents the history, philosophy, ethics, and moral values of Ghanaian culture. From the Hoetshel collection of the Metropolitan Museum, George Leland Hunter (1913), Pompadour, on the other hand, was a decorative style of Louis XV and XVI of France in the 18th century. The style was introduced by Madame de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV. The style continued in the period of Marie Antoinette, the mistress of Louis XVI. It is a versatile hairstyle that's suitable for a day at the office, a night in town, or a walk down the red carpet. In modern times, a pompadour starts with an undercut where the hair is long, stretched on top with a short fade on the sides and back. The synonyms for pompadour are ponytail, hairdo, quaff, and coiffure. The narrator tries to describe how imitation of other cultures has generic features, like connecting *kente* from Ghana and pompadour from France. There is a symbolic representation of how the Africans can merge cultures, taking substance from what feels best, in order to be placed within a hybrid attitude towards the path taken for development.

From another perspective, the narrator considers how the African sees beauty in relation to European standards and that something foreign is better. The emphasis placed on this particular advocacy speaks volumes to readers that

Ayesha Harruna Attah is not in support of dismissing African aesthetics and strongly accepting European aesthetics, and considers the latter as best. There is a reason to believe that the speaker advocates the understanding that bringing another kind of culture on board is not in itself evil. The emphasis on this particular point can be found in how the narrative voice showcases the *kente* cloth with colour. The narrative voice describes Lizzie and Mercy as dressed in red, yellow, and green kente cloth. Opoku-Asare (2013) has observed that the colours of each of the kente clothes worn by these characters for the occasion hold symbolism. Yellow/gold symbolises status and serenity. Red symbolizes passion and green symbolises renewal (McNeill, 2008). In a way of explanation, the narrator, by status, presents the relative position or standing of the individual in Ghanaian society. Passion is seen as a trait of being intensely emotional with warm affection or devotion to a particular situation. No wonder both girls were so passionately involved in the activities of Independence Day, as showcased in the excerpt. With renewal, the narrator creates the picture of “filling” again, by supplying what has been used up. In the excerpt, there is a patching up of the pieces after independence. There is the showcasing of intense happiness for the freedom acquired, and people are yearning to see the aftermath of the independence to patch up differences. This symbolic representation of the colours described to form the *kente* cloth of the ladies conflicts with the hairstyle that is showcased as the best posture that the characters assume after independence. The freedom that is hoped to give them status, passion and renewal for a new living is disturbed by the mixing of a foreign culture that is pictured to take away the organic state of the posture/physique of the ladies.

Hence, Africa's general independence becomes questionable. Their outfit indicates authority as expressed within the colour interpretation.

However, their thinking about a hairstyle that is adopted from a foreign culture and perceived as a show of authority conflicts with the idea of renewal for the strength in the independence they had obtained. The writer tries to blend two authorities to ascertain how it works. This is why further advocacy is emphasised when the writer tries to create awareness on thinking about the right pathway for obtaining value in the independence of Africa, specifically Ghana. There is an issue about the posture that the African assumes as not representing real independence. The narrator clarifies this particular posture when Lizzie and Charles are put together as partners to receive and welcome visitors for the Independence Day celebration:

“That’s my school,” Lizzie said with the excitement of a four-year old, pointing at the pink building as they passed by it. Such a pretty building.” Nora said, “what kind of school is this?” “it’s a nursing school,” Lizzie said. “Wonderful,” Nora said. Her voice was warm and buttery. It spread over the ears so gently. “what about you, Charles?”

“I’m studying physics at the University College of the Gold Coast,” he said. That explains the bags, Lizzie thought, and ill humour. Physics! “Very impressive,” Nora said, buttering Lizzie’s ears.

The description of Lizzie’s happiness at experiencing Independence Day and her dress, posture, and position at the ceremony all match the status and passion explained earlier. However, the narrator’s description of her as a four-year-old could suggest that the people of the Gold Coast were not mature enough for independence or did not understand the consequences of their liberation. This highlights the concept of mimicry discussed by Bhabha, where imitating the coloniser’s identity creates a feeling of superiority within the African, but this kind of superiority places the African back into slavery. The

writers suggest a recasting of the African story of the beginning to address the impact of colonisation on an individual's hybridity and loss of identity, and to value African culture while integrating other cultures due to global interconnectedness.

On the part of Charles, his position as a physics student at the university places his character within a disposition that the narrator describes as irritable. This disagreeing mood is pictured through how Lizzie "thought, and ill-humour". The adjectives used to describe Charles's disposition explain the narrator's disapproval of how Africans feel superior to the inferior, just as Bhabha presents in his understanding of mimicry and hybridity, where the colonised appear to wobble within the superiority believed in slavery.

Comparative Analysis

In the aftermath of colonisation, many African societies continue to grapple with identity crises rooted in mimicry. This is a condition in which the colonised subject imitates the cultural values and systems of the coloniser. Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry describes this phenomenon as "almost the same, but not quite," capturing the tension between aspiration and alienation. Contemporary African society often exhibits forms of political, cultural, and personal imitation that reflect internalized colonial values. In *Ghana Must Go* by Taiye Selasi, *Harmattan Rain* by Ayesha Harruna Attah, and *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi, the authors portray how this imitation manifests in individual characters and broader social structures, revealing a fractured postcolonial selfhood.

All three texts highlight the superficiality and contradictions of mimicking Western political or institutional forms. *Harmattan Rain* is the most

direct in critiquing political imitation; *Homegoing* historicises it, and *Ghana Must Go* explores its effects on diasporic returnees disillusioned by the lack of genuine transformation.

Western education is a dominant site of imitation, frequently regarded as a marker of progress and superiority.

In *Ghana Must Go*, Kweku Sai's American medical training and eventual professional success represent the postcolonial subject's attempt to emulate Western excellence. Yet, his failure to reconcile this identity with his Ghanaian roots results in estrangement from his family and homeland. His identity becomes a simulation of Western ideals rather than an integration of self. The children of Kweku and Fola, particularly Taiwo and Kehinde, embody aesthetic and cultural mimicry. They are raised abroad and embody global (mostly Western) cultural expressions, but the nuclear family modeled after the Western ideal collapses. Kweku's desertion and his children's emotional detachment highlight the failure of this imported structure to sustain bonds in the face of postcolonial pressures. their African identities feel performative or fragmented, especially during their return to Ghana.

In *Harmattan Rain*, Akua's ambition for Western education reflects Ghanaian society's post-independence veneration of European knowledge systems. Despite her achievements, she embodies a cultural duality that leaves her spiritually and emotionally unanchored. Her daughter Sugri, who grew up in Europe, experiences this imitation even more intensely, struggling with what it means to be authentically African. Sugri's experience in Europe forces her to adapt to Western cultural standards, particularly in her relationships, attire, and social life. Her longing to fit in leads to internal conflict and cultural

disorientation. The mimicry becomes a form of survival but also a denial of self. The generational tensions between Lizzie, Akua, and Sugri reflect differing attitudes toward family, gender roles, and tradition. Sugri's struggles stem from being raised outside of communal values, trying instead to live up to imported ideals of independence and self-reliance.

In *Homegoing*, the colonial school system in the Gold Coast grooms certain characters to serve the colonial administration, conditioning them to value European customs over indigenous practices. This indoctrination shapes characters like James, who imitate European manners and beliefs, distancing themselves from local traditions after generations in America internalise white beauty standards and Western cultural ideals, suppressing their Ghanaian ancestry. Marjorie, who is Ghanaian-American, struggles to reconcile her grandmother's heritage with her American school environment, where cultural imitation is almost expected for acceptance. The breakdown of family across generations—especially under slavery and colonisation—shows how imitation was often enforced by systemic violence. The idea of family as defined by Western norms is rendered inadequate for characters whose histories are rooted in fragmentation.

Each novel critiques how mimicking Western family ideals often leads to alienation rather than cohesion. *Homegoing* emphasises historical rupture; *Harmattan Rain* shows evolution across time; and *Ghana Must Go* focuses on diasporic dysfunction.

These three novels demonstrate that imitation—whether educational, political, cultural, or familial—has failed to liberate the African subject. Rather, it perpetuates a cycle of dependency, confusion, and fragmentation. The

characters in *Ghana Must Go*, *Harmattan Rain*, and *Homegoing* reveal that imitative representation does not merely reflect admiration of the West but signals a deep-rooted anxiety and lack of confidence in African epistemologies and systems.

In line with Bhabha's theory, this mimicry is ambivalent: it can subvert or sustain colonial logic. These novels tend to show the latter—where imitation forestalls genuine independence and identity formation. Therefore, through the lens of these texts, one may argue that the character of contemporary African society continues to wear the mask of the colonizer, 'almost the same,' but never quite free.

While *Ghana Must Go* centers on the personal fallout of imitative success, *Harmattan Rain* expands this to a generational and national level. *Homegoing*, in contrast, emphasises the structural imposition of imitation through colonial education and its lasting legacy.

Conclusion

It is evident from the analysis that the imitative behaviours exhibited by the contemporary African character in the three selected texts are social constructs that are accepted and reinforced by their respective cultures. The characters do not question the rationality of these behaviours but instead conform to them as a way of life.

As described specifically in *Homegoing*, the chapter highlights the influence of European and American models on romantic love in Africa, despite globalisation reshaping local ideas on the topic. This lack of attention towards romantic love in African literature leads to a serious misunderstanding of a crucial aspect of social life. The conclusion drawn is that there must be a

rethinking of the importance of paying attention to the different cultural and historical strands that shape the role of love in African society, and correct the idea of romantic love by avoiding European models. Gyasi's novel emphasises the need for the right models to depict romantic love, devoid of stereotypes. The impact of other powerful factors that produce another culture, creed, habit, and civilisation, as Bhabha (1994) suggests in his idea of mimicry, is seen in the domination of white culture in African societies. Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* advocates for the use of original models, such as language and name, instead of adopting European models. The conclusion is that until the problem of model-taking is addressed, Africa's development will continue to be hindered. Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* emphasises the importance of language in this domination of white culture, and Ayesha Harruna Attah adds that the mother language is necessary for development on the path to liberation.

Education in Africa and its related policies are significant factors that have contributed to the corruption of the minds of Africans. Attempts to solve this problem have failed because those affected try solutions without possibly knowing the root cause. Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* suggests that tracing the problem must begin from basic schools and with children because they can provide real information. Ayesha Harruna Attah's novel further highlights the corrupt mindsets in universities that allow contemporary Africans to live in a state of willful ignorance. All three novels reveal the negative impact of the current state of affairs on the contemporary African character, hindering development in Africa. However, they also emphasise that the hybrid state of contemporary Africa is a necessary path for development. The advocacy remains that integrating cultures must be allowed as the African society evolves.

The three texts reveal another important case of African immigrants who yearn to reconnect with their roots in Africa. However, according to the perspectives of Yaa Gyasi and Taiye Selasi, these immigrants often resort back to their immigrant countries to face humiliation at the hands of European oppressors because their return to Africa and its associated issues like corruption and tourism do not encourage desirable stay. The novels demonstrate how corruption undermines tourism development in Ghana. Therefore, the imitative representations exhibited by the characters in the three selected texts are not simply for pleasure but are important in understanding the overall appreciation of imitative representations in contemporary African society.

CHAPTER FIVE

**THE ROLE OF THE CHARACTER OF CONTEMPORARY
GHANAIAN SOCIETY IN SEARCHING FOR THE PATH TAKEN
TOWARDS SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND REAL INDEPENDENCE IN
THE THREE SELECTED TEXTS**

Introduction

The literature extensively discusses education as a significant tool for the coloniser's political and social control to realise economic and political objectives. Pinto (2019) states that colonialism's essence is to absorb the colonised as a cultural, economic, and political subsystem. This belief has led some scholars to differentiate between natural or practical intelligence and bookish intelligence. Pimpong (2006) argues that the prevalent form of education in Africa, bookish intelligence, has produced many educated but ignorant elites. This level of ignorance is not only embarrassing, but also costly in terms of the cultural, economic, and political disintegration of Africa. Therefore, despite Independence being achieved by all African countries, this situation hinders Africa from realising and enjoying real independence.

Independence encourages one to have the ability to be self-sufficient and create a fulfilling life for oneself and one's family. Pimpong (2006) adds that independence is not just a personal virtue, but it is a moral virtue. It involves avoiding debt with others and taking control over one's life. Therefore, independence is important for personal growth, financial stability, self-sufficiency, creativity, and innovation. When these virtues are absent in an individual and within a particular environment, the individual, as well as the environment, will lack the value that comes along with independence and its

resultant freedom, economically, politically, and culturally. The present literature has suggested that Africans still aspire for independence despite it being deemed to have been attained by all. This chapter aims to analyze the viewpoints presented in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain*, and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* to illustrate how these contemporary literary works demonstrate the ways towards gaining self-knowledge and real independence.

The chapter analyses the position of the creative writers selected for the study and how they showcase the path taken towards achieving independence despite it being deemed to have been attained. The analysis will focus on the characters and their journey towards achieving independence, using post-colonialism understood in the field of literary studies. The discussion will be organised around these two main headings, namely: the desire for independence and the path taken towards achieving real independence. The analysis will be based on the perspectives of the three authors.

Discussion

The Position of the Writers on Africa's Desire for Independence

The creative writers selected for this study showcase Africa's desire for independence despite it being deemed to have been attained.

Yaa Gyasi's work, in particular, explores the restoration of the years of unfairness and iniquity committed against the African continent through her characters' desire for freedom. Gyasi's characters demonstrate that even though colonialism was abolished and Ghana has been independent from colonial rule since 1957, the issue of self-alienation caused by colonialism still contributes to why Africans desire freedom. Fanon also adds to this perception, emphasising

how colonialism overwhelmed Africans and caused them to lose their pride and become psychologically destroyed. The narrator in Gyasi's *Homegoing* describes how the political leaders of the Gold Coast independent movement desire independence. Even though an illustration for discussion about Africa's desire for independence is given before post-independence, Africa, as the excerpt below shows, still yearns for freedom. Emphasis is given through Gyasi's authorial presentation that the desire is still meant for the current dispensation. This is argued because the narrator connects the idea of bookish intelligence and domination in the light of today's curriculum, as well as how the curriculum impacts learners. Evidence is given that:

The book was getting unruly. The Gold Coast independence movement's political leaders, the Big Six, had all come back from school in America and England, and as far as Yaw could tell they were all like Edward, patient but forceful, confident that independence would indeed come. Yaw had been reading more and more about the black people of America's movement towards freedom, and he was attracted to the rage that lit each sentence of their books on fire. He wanted that from his book. An academic rage. All he could seem to muster was a long-winded whine (Gyasi, 2016, p. 229).

From the excerpt, Yaw is reading a book that is perceived to be written by the leaders of Gold Coast, the Big Six, who are also presented as people who have returned to Ghana after their studies in America and England. Yaw is attracted to the content of the book that explains their quest for independence. The narrator explains independence from colonial rule as well as independence from an academically rigorous school. According to the narrator, there is a feeling of intense anger attached to the sentences that make up the content of the book. There is a further interpretation that personifies how the anger attached to the quest for independence moves readers of the book to take action against injustice or to protect themselves and the people they care about. The

narrative voice names this action as academic rage. This is where independence from an academically rigorous school comes into play, and what Wa Thiong'o (1986) believes is the kind of education that instills a sense of inferiority and disempowerment in the collective psyche of a colonised people. This is the feeling of both success and daily challenge in terms of their identity and their exposure to all the forms of oppression that lit up the fire described as academic rage. The whole action is metaphorically presented through the behaviour of "the wind". If the connection between the wind and the actions of readers "of the book" is discussed, they are introduced to how the force generated from the sentences that make up the book influences the action. From Yaw's perspective, as described by the narrative, the force of the book induces tears. This manner of presentation explains to readers that Gyasi's position on Africa's desire for independence in our contemporary society is that of a high-pressure current that moves with considerable force. If independence is desired in this manner, then Africans are still enslaved. Gyasi further intimates that though Africa's desire for independence is with considerable force, pushing forward appears elusive. From the narrative, readers can glean that:

She didn't realize she'd been screaming until she felt James's hand on her mouth, pushing her lips as though he could force the words back in. He held her like that for a long time, until she had calmed. She didn't know if he understood what she said, but she knew then, just by the faint push of his fingers on her lips, that he was a man capable of hurting, that she should be glad to be on the one side of his meanness and not another.

"You want to go home?" James asked. His Fante firm, though un-clear. "Your home is no better." (Gyasi, 2016, p. 17).

From the excerpt, the high-pitched noise of Effia's piercing cry symbolises the force with which independence is sought. It could be perceived that Africans exhibit this desire unconsciously. This perception is received from

how Effia kept on screaming without realising she was doing so. Nambia (2022) has said that screaming is a reflex action. It is an instinctive, unlearned reaction to a stimulus. It is an innate, unconditioned psychological action, and this instinctive action is experienced when one is excited, sad, afraid, or surprised. In the case of Effia, the experience is that of surprise, sadness, or fear. It could be argued that her perception of her position in the castle at the time when she hears the faint noise exposes her position as a slave rather than a master's wife. This surprise is what causes the innate unconditioned action "to scream". James' grip, which also symbolises European enslavement, adds to the reason to desire to free herself from domination. However, she needed to be calm because her state and position then seemed impossible to gain the independence she desired. Even the "faint push of his fingers on her lips" describes the inevitability of Effia's attempt to free herself from the meanness of the white man. The narrator describes two sides of the European meanness towards Africa.

On one side, the narrator describes the white man's meanness as faint, which implies that the pain inflicted on the slave is barely perceptible and lacks loudness. Consequently, it becomes challenging for the slave to realise their status. On the other hand, the physical brutalities inflicted on Africans during the Atlantic slave trade on various plantations are an explicit manifestation of the white man's meanness. Although slavery is supposed to have been abolished, this study suggests that it still exists through the barely perceptible meanness of the European coloniser.

It is noteworthy that the Ghanaian mentality after independence has been centered around the belief that freedom can be attained through material wealth and physical conditions, with the expectation that justice and equity would

improve their living conditions. However, the reality is that the material conditions for the majority of people have not improved and have even worsened. The evidence suggests that individual freedom and wealth can be achieved through education, particularly in European-type schools. Several African writers, including Attah, have illustrated that pursuing a career in medicine or law is perceived as a means for acquiring wealth and the good life, which is emulated from the white man's civilisation. As a result, many elites want their children to follow the same path, with the hope that they can be their liberators. Unfortunately, this thinking leads to bookish intelligence that unconsciously traps the African, including the Ghanaian, in a position of slavery.

Ayesha Harruna Attah expresses Africa's desire for independence from the perspective of this bookish intelligence when Lizzie tries to send Akua Afriyie's mind, looking for wealth from the assumed means of obtaining civilisation. The argument is given that she could bring into reality "the kind of civilisation" that her parents could not achieve. From the narrative, it could be argued that:

"You start boarding school next year", Akua, she said. You're going to have to stop playing with your little brothers and sisters and start behaving like a big girl. Akua Afriyie glared at her. What do you want to be, when you're as big as your papa and me?

An artist, "Akua Afriyie said, looking out the window again. " "You won't make any money," Lizzie said. "You should think about becoming a doctor or a lawyer, OK?"

"You're not a doctor. Papa's not a lawyer. Why can't I be an artist? She asked, pouting.

"Because artists are poor," Lizzie said, her conclusion final. (Atta, 2008, p. 150).

From the excerpt, the idea of school is what is seen as a means of wealth and civilisation. This is why Akua, as a character, is advised to keep away from her little brothers and sisters because entering into the business of schooling is believed to give a new form of identity to an individual as well as lift that individual to a higher standing. That is why Akua has to stop playing with her little brothers and sisters. There is again the desire to find out what becomes of the individual after entering school. This desire is to be “civilised” and be free to obtain wealth and a better identity. From the narrative, it is intelligence through the European-type of school that can bring this “civilised” individual to realisation. Furthermore, white-collar jobs are perceived as the sole way to wealth and freedom for a better identity. From a career guide, updated on the 10th of March, 2023, from the Indeed Editorial Team, working as a lawyer can be a highly fulfilling venture for professionals seeking an intellectually challenging and influential career, and also has the potential to earn high rates of compensation by offering their expertise and services. The same career guide, updated on June 6, 2023, explains that one of the most important reasons to become a doctor is to alleviate poverty and make a better living or feel better in society. As such, Lizzie warns Akua not to think about becoming an artist because “artists are poor” (Attah, 2008, p. 150).

However, it is argued by Jenkins (2022) that art is a powerful form of self-expression. It provides an outlet for individuals to share their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and other aspects of life. Art enables people to express themselves when words fail them, serving as a means of communication. Attah’s advocacy for Ghana’s liberation and the pursuit of self-knowledge and true independence is exemplified by this argument.

The Position of the Creative Writer Towards Self-Knowledge and Real Independence

To seek self-knowledge and freedom from domination, Cooper (2021) asks a simple but profound question, “Who am I?” and encourages others to ask themselves the same question. He also asks, “Why do I act the way I do?” Cooper argues that becoming aware of oneself in situations where one is not alone provides clues to understanding one’s behaviour. If individuals do not understand or are unhappy with their actions, it signals that change is necessary. The challenge is determining how to change or what needs to change. Wilson (2021) reflects on how many people are trapped in their daily routines and argues that to live a better life, people must actively choose how they live. Ignorance, fear, and indifference do not lead to self-knowledge or positive change. Gyasi provides an example of this in her work:

Cudjo closed his palm again and started to run. He was faster, and Quey had a hard time keeping up. When they got to a clearing in the forest, Cudjo got down on his stomach and motioned for Quey to do the same.

He gave Quey his snail, then marked a line in the dirt as the starting point. The two boys put their snails behind the line, then released them. At first, neither snail moved.

“Are they stupid?” Cudjo asked, prodding his snail with his index finger. “you’re free, stupid snail. Go! Go!

“Maybe they’re just shocked,” Quey said, and Cudjo looked at him like he was the one who was stupid.

But then Quey’s snail started to move past the line, followed, seconds later, by Cudjo’s snail. Quey’s snail didn’t move like a snail usually did, slowly and deliberately. It was as though he knew he was racing, as though he knew he was free. It didn’t take long for the boys to lose sight of him, while Cudjo’s snail ambled along, even turning in a circle several times.

Suddenly, Quey was nervous. Maybe Cudjo would be angry at his loss and tell him to leave the village and never come back. Quey had only just met Cudjo, but already he knew that he didn’t want to lose him. He did the only thing he could think to do. He stuck out his hand as he’d often seen his father do after business deals, and, to his surprise, Cudjo took it. The boys shook.

“My snail was very stupid, but yours did well,” Cudjo said.

“Yes, mine did very well,” Quey agreed, relieved.

“We should name them. We’ll call mine Richard because it’s a bad British name and he was bad like the British are bad. Yours can be named Kwame.”

Quey laughed. “Yes, Richard is bad like the British,” he said. He forgot in that second that his own father was British, and when he remembered later, he realized that he didn’t care. He felt only that he belonged, fully and completely (Gyasi, 2016, p. 57).

From the excerpt, readers are introduced to two boys, Cudjo and Quey, who were engaged in a race. Given that Cudjo is faster than Quey, Cudjo’s association with Quey allows Quey to identify himself and understand why he behaves the way he does. Quey’s identity becomes liberated. It appears that Cudjo is the one who gives instructions in their relationship, and Quey follows Cudjo’s orders without questioning. The narrator metaphorically describes their relationship using a snail race competition as a comparison.

The narrator uses language that implies irritation with the slow pace of the snails. It is clear that Cudjo is the one who presides over the race. At the beginning of the race, Cudjo expects the snails to move, as this is necessary for self-knowledge. However, since the snails refuse to move, Cudjo gives them a command that allows them to exercise their freedom to move. One could argue that the snails’ lack of awareness of the freedom available to them is similar to the Africans’ assumption of freedom, which may go unnoticed, causing them to move slowly, like a snail, towards progress into freedom. The narrator uses a simile to compare slowness to move with stupidity and applies it to Quey. However, Quey quickly realises the freedom he assumes after Cudjo gives the command. Immediately after the command, using six words with strong emotion that indicate a start, there is a snail that gives a good head start, but the narrator describes its pace as “slow”. This simply proves that the other snail

behind him is way slower. The narrator indicates that the last snail is the slowest of all. But this presupposes that all snails are slow, despite one being first.

The narrator describes one snail as moving slowly despite having a good head start, while the other snail is even slower and turns in circles. This may suggest that Africa is slow to progress towards freedom, not fully aware of the freedom it possesses. Quey, whose snail was first, is nervous about losing and upsetting Cudjo. This scenario indicates a reevaluation of colonial identity effects seen in Bhabha's hybridity, which in turn could be due to a psychological element at play against the new identity Africa assumes. It appears that the understanding of her freedom after independence is unclear to the African. The idea of being a slave continues to play a role in the psychological mindset of the African because it becomes quite strange to feel nervous when freedom is clear, and freedom has also allowed for leadership. This lack of clarity contributes to the hybrid state of not belonging to either the white man or the African traditional culture after their encounter with the European and European-type school. The victim is faced with the impact of colonialism, resulting in an identity crisis and hybridity.

The illustration also describes Bhabha's idea of ambivalence, which considers culture to be composed of opposing perceptions and dimensions, making it difficult to distinguish emotions between positive and negative attitudes towards the colonizer. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86).

The African in this state and plight may struggle to fully comprehend the value of independence available to him/her, and this supports Bhabha's theory of resistance, interpreting the coloniser's negative impact as the slowness of a snail in realising independence, and promoting social equality to oppose the

coloniser's authority. This idea of social equality, emphasised in Gyasi's novel, acknowledges the various forms of inequality that exist in society and presents systems that can work to eliminate them. Tirona (2023) argues that these systems require the input of stakeholders and must be informed by local planning history to be successful. The speaker in the narrative advocates for gentrification, which involves environmental justice, community engagement, and empowerment issues (Mohedano, 2018). Quey's action of mimicking his father's handshake to greet Cudjo is an example of learned behaviour that works for him, demonstrating the importance of empowering learners to work on their dislocation. This aligns with Tyler and Taba's perspective of the rational model of curriculum development, which considers the learner a major stakeholder in curriculum development. Without this empowerment, African learners may only acquire bookish intelligence that reinforces an unconscious slave mentality.

The narrator continues to promote empowerment, justice, and self-awareness through the use of naming. The name represents a true identity and freedom as seen in the narrative. This is exemplified by Quey's snail, which symbolically represents him and is named Kwame, an African name that shows readers that when Africans engage in self-realisation and understand their behaviours, the search for freedom can be successful. The symbolic snail that achieves freedom and leads the way reinforces the contemporary African writer's advocacy for the use of African names as a tool in the Africanism remedy process.

The advocacy continues with how the contemporary African writer tackles the content of the current curriculum. According to King (2017), the

national curriculum profoundly impacts institutionalised black history in schools. Textbooks still often classify Africans as docile and portray them as content with slavery. How these prescribed learning items are internalised in the African child causes this African to unconsciously exhibit some tendencies of a slave mentality. From the narrative, we can glean that:

Every day was for him and Effia. She was the most patient mother in all of Cape Coast, in all of the Gold Coast. She spoke softly yet assuredly. She never hit him, even when other mothers taunted her, telling her that she would spoil him and that he would never learn. “Learn what?” Effia would answer. “What did I ever learn from Baaba?”

And yet Quey did learn. He sat in Effia’s lap as she taught him to speak, repeating a word in both Fante and English until Quey could hear in one language and answer in the other. She had only learned how to read and write herself in the first year of Quey’s life and yet she taught him with vigor, holding his small, fist in hers as they traced lines and lines and lines together. (Gyasi, 2016, p. 54)

The first paragraph of the excerpt exhibits the relationship between independence and domination. The narrator uses Effia’s means of instruction to Quey as a measure of independence and domination. This is exhibited through how teaching and learning activities occur between her and her son, Quey. There is the use of language to provide this form of instruction from Effia to Quey, and the narrator uses the adjectives “soft” and “assuredly” as emphasis. From the narrative, her soft speech with which she gives the instruction suggests that there is little weight or force found within the volume of emotion attached to the speech. This manner of speech is usually pleasing to the senses. The speaker points out that Effia’s soft manner of speech was unquestionable and positive, considering the meaning of “assuredly”. This is why Quey was able to learn. From the narrator, though other parents taunted her about her manner of instruction to Quey, she knew what she was modelling to Quey, as learning was

not going to yield any meaningful development in the boy. Thus there wasn't the need to speak harshly and apply punishment. If he had to learn and if she also needed to give instruction. The narrator's description of the instruction given is particularly focused on the use of language.

The excerpt portrays Effia as a language teacher using a prescribed curriculum, who presents herself as someone with acquired knowledge that does not make sense to her, but still has to transfer this knowledge. This conclusion is captured from the interrogative sentence: "Learn what?" Effia would answer. "What did I ever learn from Baaba?" This situation explains why Effia never saw herself as free, even though she freely received instructional knowledge from her stepmother, Baaba. The narrative creates awareness of the fact that how language and instructional processes are received has a significant effect on the learner. This effect contributes to the domineering feature of language habit showcased in the narrative. The transfer of knowledge is seen from an informal perspective, as Quey is not put through the formal school setting for his training in both his native and English languages, similar to how Baaba instructed Effia to acquire her native language and English language from her white husband, James. In the case of Effia and her son, the form of language study presented in the narrative describes the practice of the European-type school, where instructional items are practised through repetition and emphasis. The sentence "they traced lines and lines and lines together" emphasises the connection between the language learned and the impact it has on the psychology of the learner. This imagery presents the advocacy of using language as a dominant tool to suppress Africans, resulting in the imitation of European culture and the projection of everything African as inferior.

The excerpt portrays how Effia teaches Quey the white man's language with vigour as she holds his little fist in hers. Sharma (2022) suggests that the hold of the fist could be a metaphor for breaking the strength found in one's ability to fight for one's rights and suppressing the instinct that can trigger resistance. This situation explains how language is received, which has a significant effect on its learner and contributes to the domineering feature of language showcased in the narrative. The original nature of Quey is destroyed by the use of a foreign language, which robs away his strength and humanity as an African. The fact that his own mother is used to this psychological damage, and the mother who does it already knows the senselessness of inflicting this damage, explains the domineering feature of language. The excerpt creates awareness of how language is received, which has a significant effect on its learners. To link this situation to the contemporary African lifestyle, almost all elite homes are proud to see their children speak English fluently, but effortlessly charge their children to learn their native languages fluently. The result of this is the various forms of idiolects that are gradually replacing the original forms of language use in Ghana (Owu-Ewie, 2014). Though independent, some of these intentionally fixed apparatuses by the European colonisers explain that the independence enjoyed by Africa has no value. The discussion goes on when the narrator describes how new students who are full of life before they encounter the white man's education turn out to become aliens who no longer belong to themselves but to a new, weird form of culture that becomes inexplicable. The narrator uses the character "Yaw" and his students to share this particular picture of the contemporary African character:

On the first day of the second term, Yaw watched the new students amble in. They were always well-behaved children,

these boys, having been handpicked for their brightness or their wealth in order to attend school, learn the white man's book. In the walkways, on the way to his classroom, they would be so boisterous that it was possible to imagine them as they must have been in their villages, wrestling and singing and dancing before they knew what a book was, before their families knew that a book was a thing a child could want – need, even. Then, once they reached the classroom, once the textbooks were placed on their small wooden desks, they would grow quiet, spellbound. They were so quiet on that first day that Yaw could hear the baby birds on his window ledge, begging to be fed.

“What does the board say?” Yaw asked. He taught Form 1 students, fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds mostly, who had already learned to read and write in English in their lower-level classes. When Yaw had first gotten the post, he had argued with the headmaster that he should be able to teach in the boy's regional tongues, but the headmaster had laughed at him. Yaw knew it was a foolish hope. There were too many languages to even try (Gyasi, 2016, p. 225).

The excerpt sheds light on the environment that new students encounter in European-type schools for the first time. The new students are acknowledged for their brightness and well-behaved character before being accepted into the school and introduced to the white man's book. Before entering the classroom, they exhibit an effervescent personality through their wrestling, singing, and dancing escapades in their villages. However, upon being introduced to the school atmosphere and the white man's book, they become spellbound and quiet. Gyasi strongly advocates for a conducive environment for learning.

The passage describes how the new students' silence in the classroom is compared to the noise made by baby birds outside. The author suggests that this silence is due to the change in the language used in the classroom, which affects student behaviour. The use of regional accents in teaching enables better understanding and familiarity with the new learning and also forms a particular habit (Owu-Ewie, 2006). This situation aligns with Ngugi wa Thiong'o's decolonising message that states that the “domination of a people's language of

the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised” (Wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 16). The author emphasises the importance of a conducive environment for learning and advocates for the use of regional accents in teaching to promote better understanding and familiarity with the subject matter.

Wa Thiong’o (1986) adds that language carries the values of a culture, which can be adopted by individuals over time. This adoption can lead to alienation from one's own culture and an affinity towards the adopted culture. Ayesha Harruna Attah also explores the connection between taste, alienation, and identity. In her narrative, readers can see how this plays out:

Lizzie looked away from the entrance. To her right, she caught the stare of a man in an ill-fitting tan jacket, dark brown trousers and shoes that marched his jacket. And straightened hair. He smiled at her. Lizzie took her gaze away. What a creepy man, she thought. Maybe it was the matching jacket and shoes. Or the hair... “Would you like to dance?” the man with the tan jacket, tan shoes and straitened hair asked. “No, thanks,” she said. “Please. It would be an honour. You’re exquisite.” As much as she thought he was creepy, flattery had its benefits. “Only for one song,” Lizzie said. He led her onto the dance floor. She tried to steer him close to mercy and Selasi, but he had other plans. He wrapped his arms around her breasts felt flat against his chest. His breath reeked of alcohol. She tried to pry herself from his grip. He held her tightly... He hummed into her ears, pressing her tighter. She felt a strange poke. It grew more persistent ... she realized what it was. Disgusted, she used all the strength she could muster to push him away. “That’s enough”, she said, walking back to her table. “Baby, I want to see you again after tonight,” he said. “Sorry, I’m already taken,” she said, looking in the throng of dancers, trying to find Mercy. “It’s a white man, eh?” the man said, his voice loud. “You Gold Coast girls! That’s all you know. It’s disgraceful! Independence is coming, but we will never be free because of you people. The Gold Coast will never be free! His voice grew hoarser. She saw Mercy coming over with Selasi. “What’s going on?” Selasi said, his flat voice not at all menacing, “Your little sister here only likes white men!” the man went on. “Tell her to change her ways” ... We are stuck,” the man went on.” Mentally, Brothers and sisters. We will never be free! The

British might leave us in March, but in here,” he hit his chest, we will never be free! (Attah, 2008, pp. 42– 43).

The tone of the speaker is disgust and annoyance. This tone comes about as a result of the atmosphere that presents how taste has presented a disgusted personality as described by the speaker. The narrator, by this description, discusses how unpleasant the African appears when the issue of taste is considered. The man’s character is used to describe the issue of taste as he wears an ill-fitting tan jacket.”

The passage metaphorically compares the African man to the clothing he wears, specifically focusing on the color of his ill-fitting tan jacket. The description emphasises the relationship between the man’s skin color and his clothing choice, portraying them as entities with common qualities but not identical. Additionally, the man's shoes and straightened hair are described as matching his jacket. This symbolic figure supports Bhabha's idea of imitating something from others as a means of being superior or inferior. When Lizzie rejects his invitation, the man becomes angry. He feels entitled to complain because he perceives himself as a white man, despite his appearance not fitting that mold.

The excerpt emphasises the disapproval of the imitative representation through grammatical distortion. The sentence, “...she caught the stare of a man in an ill-fitting tan jacket, dark brown trousers, and shoes that matched his jacket. And straightened hair” (Attah, 2008, pp. 42– 43). This particular sentence is divided into two parts with different features, making the second part, which is a phrase, appear like a sentence. However, it is grammatically incorrect for a phrase to end with a full stop. This confusion of the second part as almost the same but not white, agrees with Bhabha’s idea of the reshaping

process. The writer's disapproval of the man's frustrations about freedom is showcased in his creepy nature, which advocates for the vulnerability of the Ghanaian as a form of slavery. There is no doubt that the narrator tries to send the minds of readers back to the African tradition to educate them on the kind of strength found within one's real identity.

From the excerpt, readers are introduced to the reality of the conflict between European aesthetics and Africanism when readers are given the picture that "Lizzie laughed. At first, she wanted to tell them to get off the filthy floor. But she remembered this is where her beginnings were. She had played on that same ground. This was who she was." (Attah, 2008, p. 141). The speaker creates a picture of the return to Africanism. Emphasis is placed on encouraging the contemporary African character to be empowered within Africanism and not to believe that something foreign is better than ours. Readers are made to understand the significance of embracing one's origin. Although Lizzie's origin is not portrayed as pleasant due to the use of the word "filthy", it highlights the importance of acceptance in order to move forward. Attah's narrative does not advocate for the rejection of other cultures, but it emphasises the need to appreciate and embrace one's own culture. The tendency to disregard one's origin and believe in another culture as superior is not ideal. The image portrayed is one of acceptance and appreciation of one's own culture while acknowledging the value of other cultures:

The man's words were bothering her now, even more than his prodding member. She would rather live in Accra than live in Adukrom No. 2. She wanted nice clothes and to ride around in shiny cars. Did that mean that she liked the white man's ways? Did that mean she wasn't free? (Attah, 2008, p. 41).

Lizzie's character is used to interrogate whether bringing another kind of culture on board with what one has is not itself evil. This is argued in the case where one has an interest in niceties, believed to be foreign. The narrator interrogates the attitude put up in relation to the taste for foreign materials. It looks as if the speaker wants readers to realise that there could be a blend if only tradition is not compromised. From another perspective, readers are being given the picture that allowing a change that can cause a positive outlook is, in itself, not bad. There is again the advocacy of another dimension of freedom. Freedom is being interpreted as a means of moving forward and putting away the things that appear unproductive. If "Adukrom No 2" suppressed Lizzie's ability to greatness, but Accra seems to be a springboard for that greatness, then freedom in this sense is positive. This in part explains why Lizzie's father is made to admit to the fact of Lizzie's success of choice when he calls her to commend her for choosing her husband, though he did not give his approval earlier in time. This becomes evident when Papa Yaw's character is used to display the sentiments of defeat and acknowledgement:

You have managed to do well for yourself," he said. Lizzie looked at him incredulously. Had she heard him right? "I have to tell you ..." he faltered. "All those years ago," he said, his eyes distant, "I wanted you to marry someone I chose, but you made the right decision. Even though your husband can't breathe well, he seems like a gentleman. *Mo!* (Attah, 2008, p. 145).

There are two main issues put up here – disobedience and success. The narrator advocates for an increase and productivity rather than sticking to certain beliefs that do not allow for positive change. Every child must follow the instructions of their parents. However, the speaker presents a violation through a surprise. Surprisingly, it is out of disobedience that success appears, and this is usually not the norm with folktales, whose nature allows the narrative to

qualify as reinforcing consequences and highlighting shared values or moral lessons. The most important element here is the fact that it solves a central conflict, which is bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. The narrative voice in this situation advocates living with the new identity Africa assumes as a consideration of a new path that has its own consequences.

Papa Yaw admits that though Lizzie did not listen to parental advice on her choice of husband, her decision has given her success as compared to the choice her parents wanted to make for her in the village before her training as a nurse. The narrator by extension, compares the traditional way of life to the modern way of life that includes education with its accompanying consequences. The idea of blending modernity with tradition to receive a third path is being advocated here. What is really at stake is the tendency to believe that a new way of life is better than that of the African. However, those ideologies that do not seem productive are eliminated from both sides, traditional and modern, to allow a third path that encourages growth and development. This supports the idea of hybridity discussed by Slipp (2017) that a third unique path of the African appears ideal considering global interconnectedness. What is being presented by Attah emphasises the current consciousness that is added to current scholarship about the issue of hybridity.

Selasi also writes against the idea of taste attached to foreign things. The presentation showcases the disapproval of this idea of associating quality to the things of Europe and downplays the things of Africa. To some extent, the realisation that things in Africa are of quality in *Ghana Must Go* is alarming. It appears that Taiye Selasi and some recent African writers are beginning to come to terms with the good things in Africa and are trying to write back to protest

the beauty of Africa in relation to that of Europe. From the narrative, we can glean that:

Mr. Lamptey would suck his teeth, spit, answer opaquely, not pausing, his sawing to puff on his joint. 'I should have been what I was destined to be. I should have been what I am,' and on. But he built the house perfectly, i.e, precisely as instructed, an unprecedented occurrence for Kweku in Ghana. He had never hired a Ghanaian reinterpreting his instructions somehow. 'No starch on my shirts, please, 'and the laundrer would starch them, insisting unrepentant, 'its better this way, 'paint the doors white,' and Kofi painted them blue. 'Sa, is nice oh, too nice,' with the indefatigable smile. Mr Lamptey made no changes, mounted no objections, offered no suggestions, cut no corners whatsoever. Until his last week of work... (Ghana Must Go, part 1:16).

The narrative presents the notion that the mindset people have for Africans must change. It advocates for Africans to believe in themselves and acknowledge the capabilities they possess. The conflict between Kweku Sae's former opinion of Ghanaians and their present ability to work precisely as instructed highlights this idea. The narrative acknowledges that some Africans do not constructively deal with matters as they should, but it also makes it clear that Africans can still come out with constructive ideas and produce things that are aesthetically pleasing for growth. The excerpt suggests that the indefatigable and unrepentant attitude of using the wrong means to tackle important issues does not support growth and development. The narrator emphasises the difficulty of exorcising the idea of taste from the contemporary African character, which is rooted in European indoctrination. Kweku agrees with the aesthetic architectural qualities of Mr. Lamptey, a Ghanaian, but his association of civilisation and modernity comes with the idea of uprooting the mango tree, which represents the life and breath of local traditional existence. He hopes to

replace it with a swimming pool because he feels and perceives the idea of the tree taking space backward, just as Lizzie finds it difficult to allow her children to play in the village of Adukrom No 2 in Attah's *Harmattan Rain*.

The narratives, in this scenario, provide images that help readers understand the concepts of independence and civilisation. Kweku Sae reflects on his current identity and regrets how the idea of modernity, represented by the desire to uproot the mango tree and replace it with a swimming pool, replaces the traditional way of life. Similarly, Lizzie dreams of a luxurious life in Accra with shiny cars. The narratives explore how tradition and modernity can merge, and Selasi provides evidence to support this idea. Evidence is given when:

Mr. Lamptey considered the stick figures. "Hmm. What kind of trees are these?"

"Never mind that," Kweku muttered, considering the size of the plot, The pool would have to be smaller than he'd drawn it at the hospital, but there were four fewer swimmers to use it, so fair enough. They'd just need to chop down the mango, or uproot it. The thing was looming verdant in the middle of the view.

Mr. Lamptey laughed uproariously. He would do nothing of the sort. Had the mango ever harmed them, done them wrong in any way? To kill it would be like slitting his grandmother's throat. "A bit rich, Kweku said. "I will not harm this tree."

"For Chrissake, you are a carpenter. You work with harmed trees"

"Jesus was a carpenter" ...

Some authority. In fact, he felt his vision slipping slowly from his grasp. No children sleeping peacefully, No Fola swimming glistening, and if the mango remained standing, no beach of bleached white. The tree had to go.

"I 'll hire someone else."

"You will not." Mr. Lamptey sat, saying no more. Cross-legged and cloth clad at the base of the mango for three days, two nights, smoking hush, keeping guard... (*Ghana Must Go*, part 1:16).

The images suggest a range of connections. It could be argued that Kweku's vision to become civilised goes against his tradition, and so he needed a quick decision. The narrator explains metaphorically how he deliberates on asserting his authority to hold onto his "beach of bleached white." The image created here reflects the act of whitening something or making something colourless. His mindset has been made to value things European. This occurs because Kweku Sae's physical, as well as the mental universe, is owned by the European coloniser through the institution of Western education. This sends the argument across that the 21st-century African appears not too different from her 15th-century ancestor in gullibility. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's assertion supports the idea put across that the more the critical temper of the African is influenced by the Eurocentric critical tradition, the more gradually they become "Black Westerners". From the forced ego to assert his authority, readers are given the impression that Kweku is not happy with his current taste for European things, but has no choice but to continually live with it. From another perspective, Mr. Lamptey's character, in *Ghana Must Go*, symbolises the renewal of the life of the African. This can be described through how the excerpt shows a host of connections about his character. The narrative voice describes Mr. Lamptey with "uproarious laughter" when the issue of chopping down the mango tree came up. As said earlier, laughter decreases stress hormones and relieves pain. It also improves one's resistance to diseases (Logan, 2021). Mr. Lamptey's laugh is a resistance and a relief from the pain of the dangerous Eurocentric ideals that are causing a dilemma among contemporary African characters. The adjective that qualifies the laugh also explains the boisterous nature of how

Africans must meet the kind of influence that is impeding growth and development in Africa.

In the excerpt above, Kweku Sae accuses Mr. Lamptey of being a carpenter who harms trees, but Mr. Lamptey resists and shows an unyielding attitude by staying at the base of the mango tree for three days and two nights to protect it. The adjectives used to describe his posture, such as sitting cross-legged and cloth-clad, reflect Selas's formula for resisting Eurocentrism in Africa. Mr. Lamptey's defensive posture suggests that he is protecting the old system, which he sees as useful, from the complex imitation that can never match the original:

Ama doesn't have that problem. Or he doesn't have that problem with Ama. First of all, she isn't as smart as the others. Which isn't to say that she's stupid. Far from. He knows that people talk, that people call the girl "simple," and he knows it's cliché, surgeon shacks up with nurse. But he also knows now that his wife is a genius, of a completely different sort than her predecessors were. She has her own form of genius, a sort of animal genius, the animal's unwavering devotion to getting what it wants. To getting what it needs, without disrupting the environment. Without tearing down the jungle. Without causing itself harm. He wouldn't have guessed this a talent at all, but for those smarter women's gift of self-flogging, self-doubt (*Ghana Must Go*, part 11:1).

The narrator presents the idea of looking into tradition and seeking the best out of what tradition has to offer for development. From the excerpt, Ama, who symbolically represents tradition, is also described as simple and does not show any form of imitation that impedes growth and development. The African tradition is not seen as sophisticated as the others, but is presented as simple and

informal. However, there is an attachment of originality and an unusual brilliance. This kind is described as one that does not disrupt the environment, does not disregard individual ability, and does not cause harm to individual identity. The advocacy lies within the fact that Africans must stick to a culture that will not create doubt in the individual identity and render the individual with the disability that accompanies gaps and splits, just as Bhabha's idea of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence explains.

Comparative Analysis

The search for home is central to the search for self-knowledge and independence.

In *Ghana Must Go* presents "home" is presented as an idea disrupted by migration, exile, and diaspora. The children must return to Ghana not just geographically, but spiritually and culturally, to begin to redefine what home means for them. although the setting is largely diasporic, the family's return to Ghana prompts a reckoning with what it means to be Ghanaian beyond Western benchmarks of success. The novel suggests that real independence must be internal, not just structural. Their process of return is hesitant, which the theory of "snailing" captures as a symbolic crawl toward identity.

In *Harmattan Rain*, Ghana's independence is depicted as incomplete. The dreams of freedom envisioned by the early postcolonial state are quickly replaced by authoritarian rule and political instability. Akua's life is emblematic of a nation still struggling to define itself on its own terms. Home is therefore seen as not a fixed place but a shifting terrain for women across three generations. Lizzie, Akua, and Sugri must each renegotiate what Ghana means

for them amidst political upheaval and personal transformation. Independence here is tied to reclaiming one's space as a woman within the nation.

In *Homegoing*, "home" is both a lost paradise and a recovered vision. The African American descendants long for a connection to the land they never knew, while their Ghanaian kin contend with the trauma of what their home has witnessed: slavery, colonisation, and internal conflicts. The intergenerational trauma of slavery and colonisation persists even after formal freedom. The characters' eventual confrontation with their ancestry and their healing suggest that independence cannot exist without a deep knowledge of the self and its origins.

Each novel presents home as a contested but necessary space in the journey to selfhood. The act of return, whether metaphorical or literal, is framed as essential to reimagining independence, not just as political autonomy but as existential anchoring.

The novels challenge the notion that decolonisation ended with flag independence. Instead, they expose the limits of political freedom unaccompanied by cultural, psychological, and economic liberation. While *Harmattan Rain* critiques post-independence governance, *Ghana Must Go* emphasises personal sovereignty, and *Homegoing* foregrounds ancestral reckoning. Together, they suggest that real independence is not a singular event but a multilayered process—historical, emotional, and epistemological.

Chapter Summary

The character of contemporary African society, as represented in *Ghana Must Go*, *Harmattan Rain*, and *Homegoing*, is caught in the tension between inherited identities and the desire for authentic self-definition. These texts

reflect a collective journey—a slow and often painful navigation toward self-knowledge and real independence.

The paths taken differ: some return home, some recover memory, some challenge the past, while others reimagine the future. But across all, there is an insistence that freedom cannot merely be legal or geographical—it must be internal, historical, and spiritual. Through the lens of these narratives, the reader is invited to consider not only how African societies continue to search for themselves but also how literature becomes a critical space for articulating that search. The path to real independence, then, lies not in forgetting the past but in confronting it, reinterpreting it, and moving forward with clarity and self-ownership.

The analysis of the three texts suggests a correlation between the current domination of the mental and psychological makeup of the contemporary African character conveyed in the novels and the independence of Africans in the 1950s. From the discussion, this connection has been the reference point against which the African evaluates and judges aesthetics in relation to the Whiteman's civilisation. Moreover, this holds the belief that whatever African is not the best. The advocacy generated from the narratives is that Africa's independence is accompanied by mental and physical exhaustion. In Attah's *Harmattan Rain*, the process needed for revolution undermined the value of independence, resulting in a dilapidated Africa and the mimicry of Western taste. The advocacy is for Africans to value their culture and seek growth and development through a culture that does not create doubt in individual identity or harm individual ability.

The analysis highlights the issue of educated Africans' constant questioning of the form of independence available to them, resulting in a state of mind that does not promote freedom but instead is a form of domination by the coloniser. This state of mind, considered by the study as enslavement, suggests that more education is needed to liberate Africans and serve as a purification process. However, the distance created between these educated Africans and their environment causes domination. This distance allows for the reception of European aesthetics but does not permit proper familiarisation with African culture. This deliberate distancing also affects the physical and mental well-being of the African, including their language, religion, taste, and name. *Ghana Must Go* advocates for an indefatigable posture to protect the remnants of African culture. *Homegoing* highlights the subtle pain of slavery that still affects African identity. The study's theorisation of "snailing" in support of Bhabha's hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, using a snail race phenomenon to resist the coloniser's negative effect, is captured on the basis that imitation is not a bold assertion of identity but a *hesitant mimicry* that delays authentic growth. As Bhabha notes, mimicry is ambivalent—it can be both resistance and submission—but in these texts, it is shown more as hesitant adaptation, a form of *snailing through borrowed forms*. For example, Kweku Sae (*Ghana Must Go*) and Akua (*Harmattan Rain*) embody characters who succeed in the Western system but cannot root their identities in it. Their imitation delays their own independence. Imitative representation is a symptom of snailing—progress made through the frameworks of the coloniser, often preventing genuine cultural or psychological autonomy. Characters across all three texts are in search of selfhood and independence, but they move through that process

slowly, fragmentedly, and with much conflict. This search is not revolutionary or radical—it is cautious, often burdened by memory, guilt, or displacement. The journey to self-knowledge is not linear or decisive, but one of circling back, digging through memory, and tentatively reconciling fractured histories—all hallmarks of the snailing process. Marjorie’s return in *Homegoing*, the Sae children’s reunion in *Ghana Must Go*, and Sugri’s struggle for belonging in *Harmattan Rain* all represent slow, painful steps toward reclaiming identity. Their hesitation mirrors postcolonial Africa’s broader reluctance to break from Western episteme. The characters’ gradual path toward self-knowledge and independence embodies snailing—progress is made, but with fear, delay, and uncertainty, revealing Africa’s cautious response to the question of who it truly is.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the role of the contemporary African character in search of a path towards self-knowledge and real independence. The chapter concentrated on how real independence is desired by the characters in the texts, though independence is assumed to have been achieved. This final chapter of the thesis presents the summary of the key issues discussed, the conclusion, and the implications of the study's findings.

Summary of Research

The purpose of the study was to explore the vulnerability of the “educated” character in selected Ghanaian literary texts and how this vulnerability becomes an enabling condition for slavery in contemporary Africa. The research set out to examine a section of the discourse by Ghanaian women, emphasising the literary perspective of the three Ghanaian novels written by these Ghanaian diasporic women. They are Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Harmattan Rain* (2008), Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2018). This study employed the postcolonial theoretical framework by focusing on Homi Bhabha's mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence to explore the phenomenon at stake. The postcolonial theory, in light of Bhabha's postulations, allowed for an understanding beyond the motives and actions of the contemporary educated character in the selected Ghanaian novels. It addressed the complexities and ambivalence as forms of resistance and promoted the idea of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence as multiculturalism, challenging the forms of imperialism. The theory was relevant in highlighting

the plight of the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society depicted in the selected texts and its relationship with slavery and independence. The study employed a qualitative research design that used thematic textual analysis to interpret the selected texts. The study was organised into six chapters.

Chapter One provided the background to the study, outlined the thesis statement, described the methodology and research questions, presented the theoretical framework guiding the research, and defined both the scope and structure of the study, significance, and organisation of the thesis. Chapter Two was devoted to a review of the relevant literature which included the critical review, empirical review and theoretical review. These reviews considered how African countries, especially the Ghanaian society depicted in the selected texts, have been dribbled by ideological blocks and the quest of the educated Ghanaian to look for an ideal path through education for development. The empirical review evaluated scholarship on the Ghanaian women's writings selected for the study. The aim of the chapter, therefore, was to contribute towards filling the critical gap and provide an analysis that highlights the centrality of the educated character in the social strata situated within the section of discourse by the Ghanaian women's novels selected for the study.

Chapter Three focused on the analysis and discussion of the domination from the education received through the European type of school. The chapter was in response to the first research question: "How is domination in the missionaries and the British Colonial Administration system represented in the three selected texts? Chapter Four was devoted to answering the second research question, "What forms do the imitative representations take in the three selected

texts?” Chapter Five answered the third research question, “How do the texts represent the movement of self-knowledge and real independence?”

In pursuit of research question one, the study focused on Wheeler Bell’s (2022) assertions, complemented by Bhabha’s idea of mimicry in assessing behaviour as an exhibition of the unconscious or conscious acceptance of European culture and its related institutions. To address research question two, the study considered the observations of Keen (2022) and Taleb (2023) that connect the idea of Bhabha’s mimicry and hybridity in discussing the contemporary African character created in the novels as an evolving personality, where alienation also places him within an imitative compromising situation.

In addressing research question three, the study employed the theory of hybridity and ambivalence. Two significant characters were examined under the theme “real independence”. The examination generated the theory of “Snailing” which is used in support of Bhabha’s understanding of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence to showcase Africa’s form of resistance to interpret the negative effect of colonialism and the postcolonial hangovers described as the search of selfhood and independence that rather move through that process slowly, fragmented, and with much conflict. The description is seen as a conflict because the journey to self-knowledge is not reflected as linear or decisive, but one of circling back, digging through memory and the scenery problems, just as the symbolic snail is portrayed through the activities of the educated characters depicted in the selected texts.

Key Findings

Key findings emerged as responses to the research questions and served to guide to guide the discussion. The questions are restated here.

1. How is domination from the Colonial Administration system represented in the three selected texts?
2. What forms do the imitative representations take in the three selected texts?
3. How do the texts represent the movement of self-knowledge and real independence?

Concerning research question one, the study demonstrated that there is a link between Ghana's independence during the 1950's and the current form of civilisation which is perceived by the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society as the best standard or the reference point against which the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society in the selected texts evaluates and judges the best practices in relation to the White man's civilisation. This link also shows the reason why this character holds the belief that whatever Ghanaian is not the best. From the discussion, Ghana's independence is accompanied by mental and physical exhaustion. In Attah's *Harmattan Rain*, this mental and physical exhaustion is a form of domination which occurs as a result of how the revolution process for independence in the Gold Coast undermined the value of independence and the result of this is the mimicry of the Western lifestyle that describes domination through traumatic colonial feelings and impact of factors that make the educated character vulnerable (Bhabha, 1994). The study shows that this phenomenon is what has created the kind of identity of the Ghanaian, whose kind of life has also created a dilapidated postcolonial Ghana and, for that matter, Africa.

A further emphasis from Attah's *Harmattan Rain* is that it is this state of vulnerability, showcased by the study as domination, that makes the educated

character of the contemporary Ghanaian society created in the selected texts continually interrogate the form of independence at his or her disposal. In Gyasi's *Homegoing*, this form of domination created within the independence of the educated Ghanaian character can still be addressed through education. This assertion supports Harber's (2014) impactful speech, which posits that education enables individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits that foster growth and development, ultimately shaping society. But the same assertion challenges Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995), who argue that Western education in developing countries is not as beneficial as we might think. The study therefore concludes, in line with these assertions and supported by Bhabha's theory of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence that the enslavement of the Ghanaian and the African in broader sense can be addressed through more schooling only if the domination that occurs within the distance that exists between the African and her/his environment can be addressed. This is supported by Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, which argues that the colonial master has colonised Africa by creating a deliberate distance that fosters an interest in European aesthetics, but this does not allow for proper familiarity with African culture.

In *Ghana Must Go*, Africans must assume an indefatigable posture that serves as a defensive side of protecting the remnant of African culture, which is now realised as a useful tool that can oppose the complex imitative representations. Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* adds that this deliberate apparatus of distance with its accompanying physical and mental outlook betrays the African in health, language, religion, taste, and name. The educated character compromises with this kind of existence because resistance appears inevitable.

The study concludes, therefore, using the argument from the three selected texts, that systems that worked in the past are what inform and keep the educated character as a victim and within checks, as well as inform the existence of domination found within the education received from the European-type school. However, more schooling imbued with the familiarisation of the African environment can aid in the development process of Africa, turning inward to reclaim identity.

In response to the second research question, the study concluded that the forms of imitative representations exhibited by the educated character in the three Ghanaian literary texts are conformity behaviours that are socially constructed and reified by people in a shared culture. Emphasis is given through how people do not fight the conformity behaviour to ascertain whether it is rational or not, but allow it in order to lead their lives. Analysis of this example is experienced in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, which reveals how romantic love in Africa is still peculiarly linked to the models of the West. The discussion emphasises how the movement of copying colonial forms to appear modern, then considers pace as passive, default and unconscious instead of being reflective, burdened, and hesitant.

The conclusion drawn is that there must be a compelling look in the form of rethinking the different cultural and historical strands that constitute the role of love in African society, and considering its failure to correct the idea of romantic love using European models. Gyasi's novel highlights a significant lack of understanding about a vital aspect of social life, which requires accurate representation using models that are free from stereotypes.

The study again found that the stereotypes created through the imitations of contemporary African society diminish confidence in indigenous products made in and by Africa. From Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, the stereotypes psychologically clear away the beauty and courage of the individual involved and place such a character under the domineering feature found within the imitation of the white culture just as Bhabha (1994) prompts in his idea of mimicry that it is the impact of other powerful factors that produce another culture, creed, habit, and civilisation. From Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, there is a story about the genesis or beginning of Africa's dilapidation and its current condition. In this case, the story provides the original models or basis, such as language and names, which can be used as copies or models instead of relying on European models. The conclusion drawn from this ideology is that, until the problem of model taking is addressed, Africa's development will continue to be hindered.

The study highlights the significance of language use in the classroom as a strong factor in student behaviour and thus contributes to the domineering feature found within the imitation of the white culture. The study revealed that language has been the primary tool that has stripped away the Africans' identity and strength, replacing them with a culture that Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* and Gyasi's *Homegoing* describe as indescribable and inexplicable. Emphasis from Yaa Gyasi is placed on how biological parents are those who are instinctively used to cause this damage. Yaa Gyasi suggests that language plays a role in the domineering feature of white culture imitations. Ayesha Harruna Attah suggests that the mother language becomes an escape point for development on the path to liberation. The analysis concludes that using one's regional accent to teach

others promotes proper understanding and familiarity with new learning, forming a positive habit for development.

Significantly, education in Africa and its related policies have played a significant role in corrupting the minds of Africans. Those who attempt to solve the problem often fail because they do not address the root cause. Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* suggests that contact tracing should start in basic schools among children, who can provide real information. Ayesha Harruna Attah's novel highlights how corrupt mindsets at universities lead to willful ignorance, because compromise becomes inevitable when stereotypes are already formed. All three novels showcase the negative impact of colonialism on the educated character, hindering development. However, they also emphasise that the hybrid state of educated character is a necessary step towards development.

The outcome is revealed as superficial progress, masked dependency, and a movement in another's image; moving but unsure who we are. Conclusion is that the idea of snailing becomes not a total failure but a deliberate symbol of the vulnerability of the educated characters and their society, as not stagnant, they are moving, but the pace and direction reflect hesitation, internal conflict, and postcolonial hangover.

The third research question emphasizes the theorisation of the idea of "real independence" using postcolonial theory, argued through Bhabha's concepts of mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence. To illustrate this concept, the study employs "Snailing", inspired by Gyasi's *Homegoing*, to represent the attitude of the educated character towards freedom as "they" move slowly towards independence despite their commanding position. Africa is not conscious of its freedom due to the fear and subordination instilled by the

European colonisers, even in their absence. The snailing theory gives a language to the emotional and symbolic slowness observed in the novels.

The study shows that Independence has been approached with caution, fear, and dependency and not confidence. Self-knowledge is pursued not through confident African-centered frameworks, but through halting reconciliations with inherited trauma.

African societies are in a liminal state—aware of the need for change, yet slow to shed colonial logic, moving like a snail: slowly, carrying the burden of its shell.

Implications of the Study

The research findings and conclusions drawn have significant implications for the educated character. In this regard the study has aimed to illustrate how the three selected texts written by Ghanaian Diasporic women have successfully demonstrated in nuanced terms or reflect a unique way of Africanism through familiarisation with the environment as a proper model for positive mindset peculiar to the educated character of contemporary Ghanaian society and Africa in general.

One important implication of the study is that the teaching of African literature and African history is a significant tool for reflecting on the impact of colonisation and independence. It is also a tool for reflecting our collective future. In other words, African writers should be thought of as social thinkers. The overall implication is that the teaching of History and literature at all levels of our educational system should be encouraged.

Another implication lies in the contribution it makes to the existing scholarship on the three selected texts involved: Ayesha Harruna Attah's

Harmattan Rain (2008), Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), and Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2018). Several critics have examined various aspects of these selected texts both individually and in comparative studies, concerning this phenomenon of the educated character. However, analysis of the educated character, which centers on the three selected texts, has been considerably comparative and contested.

The study lastly adds to the many insights and vocabulary on the concept of real independence. A theory, "Snailing," has been generated from the understanding of enslavement. This was coined to describe the crucial idea of Africa's preparedness to deal with the issue of "domination" and with this, the study has created an understanding of the kind of independence assumed by the educated character, especially the attitude of the educated character in the Ghanaian literary texts used for the analysis, holding back freedom and not pushing for progress as showcased in the three Ghanaian literary texts.

Recommendations of the study

After a thorough analysis of the three selected texts, the following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

1. Researchers can replicate the theme to reflect a broader pan African and diasporic concerns, particularly the negotiation of African identity in global spheres
2. A comparative study of both male and a different set of female writers to be conducted on "other forms of slavery." This may be conducted in other countries in Africa to affirm or contradict what this study has done.

3. A further recommendation is that a different theoretical approach be employed to provide further insight into the issue of enslavement revealed from the analysis of the selected texts used for this study. This may affirm or contradict the assertions made in this study.

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