

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The chapter is subdivided into five sub chapters including the background of study, research questions, purpose of the study and aim s of study, research significance and scope and limitation of the study. Every section describes the basic elements on which this research is based.

1.1 Background of the study

Literature is a reflection of the equally complex human experience, including political, historical and social experiences. In literature, authors frequently depict realities of life and represent various oppression and identity crises. A discipline which foregrounds the intersections of power, culture and identity is postcolonial literature that attempts to explore how colonialism affects the thinking and behavior of societies (Ashcroft et al., 2004). In postcolonial literary texts it is evident how colonization not only transformed the interior of the colonized societies, but also their way of seeing themselves. Identity within this framework is not stable, given that the colonized subjects are forced to struggle with self-images imposed by their colonizers, and also with suppressed memories of their indigenous cultures. Identity in a colonial setting, Peimanfard and Amjad (2018) suggest, is something that is contested, constructed through the act of mimicking-as well as deflecting-the colonizers. Consistent with this, Bhabha (1994) also argues in his book *The Location of Culture* that colonial identity is never stable but is rooted in an “in-between space” where the colonized imitate and yet challenge the power of the colonizers. This ambivalence capture the mental battle of individuals struggling to maintain their past and to capitulate for (foreign) powers.

Furthermore, postcolonial identity no longer just concerns cultural differences but is also concerned with power relations as well as resistance and self-recognition. Frantz Fanon (1963) writes about the fact that colonial domination annihilates the self hood of the colonized and substitutes it with an image of a oppressor in his book *The Wretched of The Earth*. Decolonization for him is both political and psychological which refers to the attempt to regain lost identity and dignity. This circumstance is evidence that identity is alive and eternally shifting.

This circumstance is evidence that identity is alive and eternally shifting. Therefore, studying postcolonial identity is important because it opens up an understanding of how colonial power relations still influence the psychological, cultural, and social realities of formerly colonized countries to this day.

The history of colonialism in Indonesia is ingrained in all aspects of life at that time, with the arrival of the colonists changing the history of the people's lives. From the economic and social to the political spheres, everything was influenced by the colonizers. According to Pim de Zwart (2021) for more than three centuries, the Dutch colonial regime established political and economic control over the archipelago, enforcing Western systems of governance, religion, and education. However, in 1942-1945, Japanese occupation began in the archipelago, replacing Dutch occupation at that time (Siong, 2006). This shift in power relations had a serious influence on Indonesian society, for even as Japan arrived with the slogan of liberating Asia from Western imperialism, their government actually became an authoritarian source of ideological and cultural lines (Mahayana & Kunci, 2013). As a result of the colonial experience in Indonesia extending beyond political domination, influencing the ways people adapted to colonial authority, negotiated their identity, and responded to changing system of power. These conditions later become an important aspect represented in literary works portraying the colonial period.

This complex and multifaceted history is crucial for making sense of Rory Marron's novel *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* (2013). The novel is worth studying as a work that tells the story of war and occupation, but also delves into psychological and cultural challenges faced by Indonesian society between two empires. Marron illustrates, through his characters, how because of colonialism, the colonized people sought a sense of self, loyalty, and freedom. Hence this novel is a significant literary mirror for comprehending the postcolonial experience of Indonesia. Rather than merely portraying the historical events of the Japanese occupation, the novel also illustrates how colonial domination influences the character behaviour, identity, and relationship. Through the characters responses to colonial power, the novel suggest that colonial experience is not only a historical

event but also a psychological and culture process that continuously shapes the lives of the colonized.

In this regard, postcolonial theory offers a productive set of tools for the scrutiny of discourses of power, culture and identity. This theory attempts to show that a colonial ideology persists in and shapes modes of thought, behaviour and speech despite the end of Colonialism. Homi K Bhabha is a leading proponent of this theory and, in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), writes that colonized peoples are not simply passive resisters to colonial rule but rather behave in an imitative and ambivalent space. Bhabha discusses the notions of mimicry and ambivalence to explain how colonial power is undermined through this process of cultural imitation and mediation. Through these concepts, postcolonial theory makes it possible to interpret colonial experience not merely as an act of domination but also a process that shapes the behaviour, identity, and relationships of the colonized subjects. Therefore Bhabha theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding how colonial experience is represented in Rory Marron's novel.

In Rory Marron's novel *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java*, the colonial experience is not only depicted as a one-way relationship, but rather a complex spectacle of survival. This study interprets these experiences by highlighting the phenomenon of mimicry that occurs within the characters' actions and utterances in the novel, where the colonised subjects imitate traditions and language as a mechanism for self-defence and protection. Through this representation, colonial experience is interpreted not merely as physical domination by the colonizer, but as a process that gradually transforms the behaviour and identity of the colonized subjects. The characters imitate the colonizer not because they fully accept colonial values, but because imitation becomes a strategy for survival within an unequal colonial power structure.

Bhabha's concept is worth mentioning it since it demonstrates that colonialism isn't something that just exploits politically and economically but does also determine the way of thinking and claiming for identity of colonized cultures. With the help of this theory, the author is enabled to contemplate how characters in Rory Marron's novel *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* demonstrate dynamic tension between desire to imitate the colonizers culture and being proud of their

own identity. Consequently, Bhabha offers a fitting structure through which to approach the types of mimicry and ambivalence at work in the novel.

Amidst Transition *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* by Rory Marron, the transition is that of an occupied Java as viewed from the vantage point of its inhabitants during this period of war games between the Dutch and Japanese. The story is taken from several characters who experienced this transition period, who experienced inner conflict between political change, shifts in power, and the identity crisis that arose from the interaction between Eastern and Western cultures. In the context of Homi Bhabha's theory, the phenomenon that occurs in society, such as cultural mimicry or ambivalence towards colonial power, is very apparent in this novel. The characters are often positioned in an ambiguous position, neither completely rejecting nor accepting the values brought by the colonizers. This depiction is in line with Bhabha's (1994) view that ambivalence is a condition in which colonial subjects occupy an "in between" position, where acceptance and resistance coexist, making colonial identity unstable and constantly negotiated.

By interpreting these phenomena of mimicry and ambivalence, this study demonstrates that the colonial experience in Rory Marron's novel *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* reveals an identity crisis and emotional instability experienced by the colonised. The characters use mimicry as a tool for self-preservation to avoid Japanese authoritarian punishment, and they also experience inner turmoil between acceptance and rejection. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of both concepts becomes crucial to reveal how colonial power not only controlled physical territory but also divided the consciousness and identity of the colonised people.

This discussion is important because it shows how literary works are able to describe the complexity of the relationship between colonizers and the colonized, not only as a conflict of power, but also as a identity and cultural process. Through this novel, readers can understand how colonialism shapes the identity and perspective of communities towards themselves.

The researchers chose the novel *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* by Rory Marron as a data source, because this novel provides a highly detailed narrative about the Japanese occupation of Java, which is often overlooked in

literary discussions. Unlike other historical novels, this novel specifically explores the identity crisis and the dual feelings experienced by colonised societies during the Japanese occupation. Meanwhile, Homi K Bhabha's theories of mimicry and ambivalence were chosen as the theoretical framework because they are the most suitable for deconstructing the behaviour of characters who appear physically compliant when imitating Japanese culture, but are actually experiencing an identity crisis mentally. The combination of the novel and Homi K Bhabha's theory allows researchers to reveal that colonial experience is not merely about physical oppression, but a complex negotiation of identity.

In addition, mimicry is also evident in the extreme actions of characters who attempt to imitate the style and ideology of the colonizers, but instead expose the weaknesses of colonial power itself. As Bhabha argues, mimicry is “almost the same, but not quite,” exposing the performative nature of colonial authority (Bhabha, 1994). This makes *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* relevant for analysis using Homi K Bhabha's postcolonial theory approach, particularly in the sections on mimicry and ambivalence.

Based on a review of several previous studies, there has been no study analysing Rory Marron's novel *Black Sun, Red Moon A: Novel of Java* using Homi K Bhabha's theoretical approach, particularly the concepts of mimicry and ambivalence. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute new insights to postcolonial literary studies, particularly in understanding how the processes of colonial mimicry and ambivalence shape the identity of colonized communities as depicted in this literary work.

Several previous studies have also used the same theory, namely Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory, to explore similar issues in literary works. Research conducted by Yeni Istari (2018) entitled “*The Impact of Hybridity and Mimicry on Indian Immigration Identity: A Postcolonial Analysis in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland*” analyses the ways in which Indian immigrant cultures are influenced by and engage hybridity and mimicry of Western culture. The findings indicate the emergence of a double consciousness, whereby identity is negotiated between two dissonant cultures.

Meanwhile, Dr. Sanjiv Kumar (2016) entitled “*Bhabha’s Notion of ‘Mimicry’ and ‘Ambivalence’ in V. S. Naipaul’s A Bend in the River.*” This article analyses the cultural mimicry and psychic ambivalence of Naipaul’s characters under colonial domination. The study concludes that mimicry becomes a subversive submissive strategy and illustrates the instability of colonial authority; ambivalence is expressed as contradictory emotions in which colonized admiration for, and resistance to white culture are combined. It is shown that Bhabha's concepts can be used to analyse the paradoxes and configurations of identity experienced by characters being in-colonized as well as re-colonized.

Both studies demonstrate the usefulness of Homi K. Bhabha’s postcolonial theory to analyse the complex relation between colonizer and the colonized, particularly in his concepts of mimicry and ambivalence. However, it is not appears to be using Homi K. Bhabha's theory, and especially the notions of mimicry and ambivalence, with respect to *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* by Rory Marron. This novel offers a historical context that differs from most other postcolonial works, as it focuses on the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, a period that has rarely been the subject of postcolonial literary studies. Therefore, this research is important to fill this gap and contribute new insights to postcolonial literary studies, especially those related to colonial representation on the island of Java.

1.2 Research Question

1. How is mimicry represented by the colonized characters in Rory Marron’s *Black Sun, Red Moon A Novel of Java*?
2. How is ambivalence reflected in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in Rory Marron’s *Black Sun, Red Moon A Novel of Java*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Dealing with the previous research question, this study is intended to

1. Analyze the representation of mimicry performed by the colonized characters in Rory Marron’s *Black Sun, Red Moon A Novel of Java*.

2. Elaborate the form of ambivalence that shapes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in this novel.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the development of literary studies, particularly in the application of Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory to literary works set in the colonial history of Southeast Asia. Theoretically, this study broadens the understanding of the concepts of mimicry and ambivalence proposed by Homi K. Bhabha in the context of Indonesian culture. An analysis of the novel *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* by Rory Marron provides a concrete example of how postcolonial ideas can be used to interpret the power relations of identity and cultural representation during the Japanese and Dutch colonial periods. Thus, this study is expected to enrich the academic literature discussing the application of postcolonial theory to modern literary works.

In practical terms, this study is expected to raise public awareness of the impact of colonialism felt by the people in Indonesia, especially in Javanese island, during the Japanese occupations. It also examines how this impacted and changed the state structure, political system, culture, and identity of the people at that time. Furthermore, this research can also help readers to reflect on issues of that period, such as cultural domination, social inequality, and identity crises, which are still often felt in modern Indonesian life.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the study

This study focuses on analyzing Rory Marron's novel *Black Sun, Red Moon: A Novel of Java* using Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory, particularly the concepts of ambivalence and mimicry. The study explores the way Indonesian and Japanese are encoded through characters, conflicts, and power relations between colonizers and the colonized in Japanese colonialist occupation of Indonesia. This study focuses on these two concepts and does not consider other aspects of postcolonial theory such as hybridity, the other. Furthermore, this research does not analyze the novel through its historical and linguistic history; rather, it is an attempt to analyze identity and power representation in literary texts. The purpose of this constraint is to ensure that the depth and scope of the study follows from its aims.