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# UNDERSTANDING LIFE AND DEATH MEANING THROUGH THE CHARACTER OF EDNA PONTELIER IN KATE CHOPIN'S THE AWAKENING

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## ABSTRACT

A character in a story has its own personality traits, therefore, the existence of one is significant to the plot. Some variables, such as genes and environment, impact the development of a character's personality. Though Psychological approach, the researcher examines the personality development of the main character of Edna Pontellier in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. From analyzing the character development, the researcher finds that the character of Edna Pontellier has changed and developed from accepting of the life that she has to becoming rebellious in the search of her independence. Due to this, the point of view of life and death in the story is also changed. Somehow, Edna chooses death as a way to find happiness.

**Keywords:** *character; environment; life and death; personality development*

## INTRODUCTION

Literature, including science, attempts to explain the society in which we exist and to interpret our own roles as participants in the life experiences (Skelton, 2003, p. 213). There is no doubt that every role has each characteristic which is shaped by and through each own experience. Pikunas (1961) states that there are two things that shape the personality of a character which are heredity and environment. Heredity or usually called genes are come from the parents or ancestors. At the same time, the environment shapes every individual through family, friends, community, and culture (p. 58).

A literature can be analyzed in an intrinsic or extrinsic way. According to Nur (2017), intrinsic elements in literature are plot, theme, point of view, settings character and characterization, and symbol (p. 2). Meanwhile, the extrinsic elements in a literature are the historical background and author background. If a researcher wants to analyze a literature in intrinsic way, a researcher can analyze the intrinsic elements and connect it with the extrinsic elements. A

character normally changes along the story. The changes can be a development. The changes also depend on how story begins and how the story ends, too. It is because a character is a representative of a story who later the reader will interpret the value of the story from the character (Abrams, 1999, pp. 32-33).

From the story, Edna Pontellier as a main character in the novel, changes or develops her character because of her reaction toward new environment. As the result, the character of Edna Pontellier develops into Edna who is different from the beginning of the story. This research discusses how the environments in the novel develop the main character and how it also influences to the meaning of life and death according to Edna Pontellier. It is because the main character is one of the important elements in the novel, it is worth discussing the process on how the environment actually shapes the character of Edna Pontellier in the story. Edna Pontellier, as the novel has told the reader, is married to Léonce and has two children. On another hand, her friend, Adèle, is the ideal New Orleans mother, a model of flawless parenthood with Madonna-like attributes that Edna has no desire to emulate. Madame Ratignolle has three children and has been married for seven years, and she expects another. Adèle has spent nearly her whole married life pregnant. Unlike Edna, Adèle is pleased with her pregnancy and dedicated to her children and husband. Madame Ratignolle is as pleased with her marriage as Edna is with hers, but Edna cannot understand that she is simply different from Madame Ratignolle. (Metzger, 2001, p. 6) Therefore, as a woman, Edna feels something is missing. When the family goes to a summer holiday at Grand Isle, she meets

Robert. She spends time with him a lot meanwhile her husband is busy with his own business. Edna feels something different that she never has when she is with his husband. When she meets Mademoiselle Reisz, she also feels that she can express herself more than before. Edna decides to become an independent woman by leaving her family behind. She expresses herself through painting and her love for arts and music. She is awakened. The climax happens when Robert asks her to become his wife. However, Edna does not want to belong to anyone as she wants to live independently. She loves herself more than anything. However, her act is considered as rebellion toward the world and her nature as a French Creole woman. As stated in Metzger (2021) that Chopin was concerned in women's personal liberties, and the story might be viewed as a defense of a woman's self-awareness and independence (p. 6). It gives an idea that she feels confused. Then, she thinks that the people do not agree with what she has done, she decides to "end" her life by swimming into the ocean.

Through a psychological approach, a character in the story can be analyzed. According to Aras (2015),

> There is a very strong correlation between literature and psychology for the fact that both of them deal with human beings and their reactions, perceptions of the world, miseries, wishes, desires, fears, conflicts and reconciliations; individual and social concerns, by means of varied concepts, methods, and approaches. An author represents life according to his/her objectives, perceptions, ideologies, and value judgments and opens the doors of the unknown and invisible worlds to readers not only by arousing feelings and emotions but also by helping them to discover the meaning of life and

existence. Clearly, literature enables individuals to know and question their identities by raising consciousness and awareness. It is to be noted that man and existence have always been fundamental elements in most scientific studies, fine arts and literature (Aras, 2015, p. 251). Aras also adds that by using Freudian psychoanalytic approaches, psychoanalytical critics reflect not only the author's mind and personality, but also the author's works as products or texts of the power of imagination, which is crucial for individuals, including artists and authors, in the process of creation. Within this context, it is critical to emphasize that both literature and psychology appeal to the imagination and sentiments. Psychology plays an important role in literary analysis, and each area places the individual at the center of their research and analyses. Psychoanalytic criticism is concerned with characters that serve as symbols of the world and existence and are offered as example individuals in order to reveal the meaning of life. The author's views, dreams, conscious or unconscious thoughts, and discrepancies between the author's personality and the author in the work are all taken into account (p. 252).

In other words, at the same topic, Tyson (2015) explains two important grounds in analyzing the behavior, which are:

(1) when we psychoanalyze literary characters, we are not suggesting that they are real people but that they represent the psychological experience of human beings in general; and (2) it is just as legitimate to psycho-analyze the behavior represented by literary characters as it is to analyze their behavior from a feminist, Marxist, or African American critical perspective, or from the perspective of any critical theory that analyzes literary

representations as illustrations of real-life issues (p. 34).

As a result, both literature and psychology have a good compatibility since the way they see characters in literary world is comparable and may borrow concepts from one another to provide different interpretations and viewpoints. It is detectable; thus, the ability of each field to apply diverse methodologies and approaches to analyze human nature and existence is a shared trait of psychology and literature (Aras, 2015, p. 256).

In other words, literature is more than simply an emotional assault. Emotions are not just expressed in excellent writing (Skelton, 2003, p. 211). Literature impacts our emotions, which many people believe is its most important quality. However, the power of the arts is ambiguous. It has the potential to blind the reader to emotive garbage (p. 212). One of the primary functions of literature is to put order on life and death, providing both significance (p. 213). However, death serves numerous purposes in literature. In other words, death and dying have several functions in literary context (p. 215). In this paper, the researcher explains the characteristics of the main character develop in the novel. Furthermore, the researcher also examines the meaning of life and death through the main character in the novel.

## DISCUSSION

### The Beginning of Life

After analyzing the novel, the researcher finds that the character of Edna is shaped through her environment. The environment here is the other characters in the novel. First

environment is her family, which is her husband and her children. Her husband, Mr. Pontellier, is a sarcastic person. In the beginning of the story when the Pontelliers spend their summer holiday in Grand Isle, the family stays at one of the cottages there. Because it is summer, Edna spends most of her time at the beach. There, she meets Robert Lebrun who teaches her to swim in the sea. However, Léonce, the husband, does not seem to be interested in spending the holiday with the family. When Edna and Robert come back to the cottage from the beach, her husband seems to not like it. He says,

> "What folly! to bathe at such an hour in such heat!" exclaimed Mr. Pontellier. He himself had taken a plunge at daylight. That was why the morning seemed long to him.
> "You are burnt beyond recognition," he added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage (Gilbert, 2002, p. 39).

As husband, Léonce seems upset that her wife spends her time at the beach in a very hot weather for swimming until Edna's skin turns to red. Léonce throws sarcastic words as an expression that he does not like what his wife does. However, Edna does not care about what her husband says. She keeps talking to Mr. Leburn. That situation makes Léonce bored. Therefore, Léonce decides to go to Klein's hotel to play billiard. He also asked Robert to come with him, but Mr. Leburn seems to be interested in chatting with Mrs. Pontellier.

> "What is it?" asked Pontellier, looking lazily and amused from one to the other. It was some utter nonsense; some adventure out there in the water, and they both tried to relate it at once. It did not seem half so amusing when told.

They realized this, and so did Mr. Pontellier. He yawned and stretched himself. Then he got up, saying he had half a mind to go over to Klein's hotel and play a game of billiards.
"Come go along, Lebrun," he proposed to Robert. But Robert admitted quite frankly that he preferred to stay where he was and talk to Mrs. Pontellier.
"Well, send him about his business when he bores you, Edna," instructed her husband as he prepared to leave.

Before he goes to Klein's Hotel, Edna still asks him if he wants to come back for a dinner. Mr. Pontellier answers with his body which telling her that he might come home for a dinner, or he might not (Gilbert, 2002, p. 40). Upon the chatting between two of them, Mrs. Pontelliers says,

> …about her father's Mississippi plantation and her girlhood home in the old Kentucky blue-grass country. She was an American woman, with a small infusion of French which seemed to have been lost in dilution. She read a letter from her sister, who was away in the East, and who had engaged herself to be married.

She tells it to Mr. Leburn as if they have known each other for a long time. Mr. Leburn is interested and curious about Mrs. Pontellier at the same time (Gilbert, 2002, p. 42).

After analyzing Edna's first environment, Edna begins to develop a character of being ignorant. It is seen as a defense mechanism of Edna toward her husband. The initial conflict begins when Mr. Pontellier comes back home from Klein's hotel. He is very talkative telling his wife about what has happened at Klein's hotel. Meanwhile, Edna has slept and wakes up directly because of that. However, the wife ignores the husband. Mr. Pontellier forgets to

bring candies for his children, but he does not forget to check them at their room where they sleep. Then, Léonce comes back to his room again telling Edna that one of the children has a fever. Edna ignores him because she is sure that no one has any fever because they feel asleep well. However, Mr. Pontellier wants his wife to wake up to check on the kids. The author states in the story that

> He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself had his hands full with his brokerage business. He could not be in two places at once; making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell them. He talked in a monotonous, insistent way.
> Mrs. Pontellier sprang out of bed and went into the next room. She soon came back and sat on the edge of the bed, leaning her head down on the pillow. She said nothing, and refused to answer her husband when he questioned her. When his cigar was smoked out he went to bed, and in half a minute he was fast asleep (p. 43).

Actually, Edna does not completely asleep. She is half awake and she starts to cry. She has not felt that kind of feeling before since they are married and have kids. She does not understand what kind of feeling she has, but she also feels oppressed.

> She could not have told why she was crying. Such experiences as the foregoing were not uncommon in her married life. They seemed never before to have weighed much against the abundance of her husband's kindness and a uniform devotion which had come to be tacit and self-understood.
> An indescribable oppression, which seemed to generate in some unfamiliar part of her consciousness, filled her whole being with a vague anguish. It was like a shadow, like a mist passing across her soul's summer day. It was strange and unfamiliar; it was a mood (Gilbert, 2002, p. 44).

The morning after, Léonce goes back to the town for his business leaving Edna and the children in the Grand Isle to spend the rest of summer holiday there. Mr. Pontellier always leaves some money for his wife, and it improves Edna's mood. The night before, she cries, but after her husband gives her some money, her mood suddenly changes. Her satisfaction increases when she receives a packaged from her husband filled with fruits and sweets (Gilbert, 2002, p. 45). Many people say that Mr. Pontellier is a good husband, and because of that, many ladies are envious toward Mrs. Pontellier.

Edna is not only being ignorant but Edna also being careless. In the story, Mrs. Pontellier is not the kind of woman who always takes care of her husband and her children in many ways. The author explains that

> If one of the little Pontellier boys took a tumble whilst at play, he was not apt to rush crying to his mother's arms for comfort; he would more likely pick himself up, wipe the water out of his eyes and the sand out of his mouth, and go on playing. Tots as they were, they pulled together and stood their ground in childish battles with doubled fists and uplifted voices, which usually prevailed against the other mother-tots. The quadroon nurse was looked upon as a huge encumbrance, only good to button up waists and panties and to brush and part hair; since it seemed to be a law of society that hair must be parted and brushed.
> The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with

extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood. They were women who idolized their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels (p. 46).

Unlike Mrs. Pontellier, Madame Ratignolle, her best friend, really likes to take care of her family. She loves the duty of being a wife. She loves sewing, too, and sometimes, she likes to ask Mrs. Pontellier to join her. At Grand Isle, Mrs. Pontellier, Mr. Leburn, and Madame Ratignolle form a small club where they always hang out together every evening to do something. Madame Ratignolle will sew while Mrs. Pontellier and Mr. Leburn will just chat as they have always done (p. 48).

**The Main Character Development**

The initial conflict is actually one of the clues for Mrs. Pontellier to be awaken. Because she spends so much time to be with Robert, she enjoys his company. The author explains

> In short, Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her. This may seem like a ponderous weight of wisdom to descend upon the soul of a young woman of twenty-eight—perhaps more wisdom than the Holy Ghost is usually pleased to vouchsafe to any woman (p. 52).

When Mrs. Pontellier and Madame Ratignolle spend their time at the beach with their kids, Mrs. Pontellier recalls her childhood memories when she used to live in Kentucky. She feels happy back then when she was a child. Now, she is married to her husband, she kinds of lose that happy feeling. It does not the same anymore.

According to Aras (2015), Psychoanalytic criticism is concerned with characters that serve as symbols of the world and existence and are offered as example individuals in order to reveal the meaning of life (Aras, 2015, p. 252). Mrs. Pontellier depicts her life when she was a kid as one of the happiest children. For her, it is really meaningful because she is able to recall those memories when she spends her time at the beach. However, after going through many things in her life and after becoming an adult, her view of life changes, and it is not the same anymore as it used to be. It leaves a meaningful point, also, as it comes to her thought. It means that the character of Mrs. Pontellier has been developed through the changes of her view of life when she was a child and when she has been married.

Mrs. Pontellier meets another person who becomes her role model who is Mademoiselle Reisz through Robert Leburn. Because Robert has to leave to pursue his dream in a far-away town, Mrs. Pontellier loses her company during the summer holiday. Therefore, she decides to hang out with her new best friend, Mademoiselle Reisz, a lot until one day she forgets her duty as a wife. Mademoiselle Reisz introduces her to arts and music which makes Mrs. Pontellier able to express herself more. When Mr. Pontellier finds out about her going out during the day, he feels upset.

> "Tired out, Edna? Whom did you have? Many callers?" he asked. He tasted his soup and began to season it with pepper, salt, vinegar, mustard— everything within reach.
> "There were a good many," replied Edna, who was eating her soup with evident

satisfaction. "I found their cards when I got home; I was out."

"Out!" exclaimed her husband, with something like genuine consternation in his voice as he laid down the vinegar cruet and looked at her through his glasses. "Why, what could have taken you out on Tuesday? What did you have to do?"

"Nothing. I simply felt like going out, and I went out."

Mr. Pontellier is upset, and he does not stop right there. He even complains about the soup Mrs. Pontellier made. He states that the soup is almost difficult to prepare; it is a surprise that a woman has not learnt to create a nice soup yet. A better one may be found at any free-lunch booth in town (Gilbert, 2002, p. 102). It becomes their second conflict which makes Mrs. Pontellier sad again. Also, she thinks about Robert, her former companion. Even though after she talks to Madame Ratignolle about some of her sketches, she does not even feel too happy toward the compliment.

> Edna felt depressed rather than soothed after leaving them. The little glimpse of domestic harmony which had been offered her, gave her no regret, no longing. It was not a condition of life which fitted her, and she could see in it but an appalling and hopeless ennui. She was moved by a kind of commiseration for Madame Ratignolle,—a pity for that colorless existence which never uplifted its possessor beyond the region of blind contentment, in which no moment of anguish ever visited her soul, in which she would never have the taste of life's delirium. Edna vaguely wondered what she meant by "life's delirium." It had crossed her thought like some unsought, extraneous impression (Gilbert, 2002, p. 109).

The visit at Ratignolle's family does not cheer her mood up. Instead, Edna fights with

Léonce telling how depressed she is, indirectly. Léonce senses that his wife has an imbalance mental health, but he does not understand why that happens to her. At the same time, Edna does not really understand about what actually happens to her situation.

> There were days when she was very happy without knowing why. She was happy to be alive and breathing, when her whole being seemed to be one with the sunlight, the color, the odors, the luxuriant warmth of some perfect Southern day. She liked then to wander alone into strange and unfamiliar places. She discovered many a sunny, sleepy corner, fashioned to dream in. And she found it good to dream and to be alone and unmolested.
> There were days when she was unhappy, she did not know why,—when it did not seem worth while to be glad or sorry, to be alive or dead; when life appeared to her like a grotesque pandemonium and humanity like worms struggling blindly toward inevitable annihilation. She could not work on such a day, nor weave fancies to stir her pulses and warm her blood (p. 111).

Mrs. Pontellier can only think about one person who will make her understand about herself. That person is Mademoiselle Reisz. Moreover, she wants to find out about Robert's situation, too. Mademoiselle Reisz tries to give her the idea that everything she has now is not actually hers, but her husband's. Edna has an idea to begin her independent life. She decides to move out from the house leaving her husband and the kids behind.

> Without even waiting for an answer from her husband regarding his opinion or wishes in the matter, Edna hastened her preparations for quitting her home on Esplanade Street and moving into the little house around the block. A feverish

anxiety attended her every action in that direction. There was no moment of deliberation, no interval of repose between the thought and its fulfilment (p 145).

Then, she moves out to begin her independent life without thinking about Léonce. She just wants to be happy by her own.

Aras (2015) mentions that psychoanalytic criticism is concerned with characters that serve as symbols of the world and existence and are offered as example individuals in order to reveal the meaning of life. The author's views, dreams, conscious or unconscious thoughts, and discrepancies between the author's personality and the author in the work are all taken into account (p. 252). In this story, the researcher sees some personalities changing in the main character of Edna Pontellier. In the beginning, she still feels right for what happens to her. She accepts that she is a wife and a mother of two children. Although, she is not the mother-woman type, but she still cares toward her children. Even though her husband sometimes does not respect her in some ways, but she is still happy when she receives money and gifts from her husband. However, after she meets new people during her summer holiday at the Grand Isle, she feels different. She feels confused about her own self. She feels like her situation is not ideal, yet she still does not understand why she still accepts it. After her conversation with Mademoiselle Reisz, she decides to be rebellious. She moves out from her old house to a small apartment leaving her husband and the kids behind. The act of her being rebellious is the development of the Edna's character throughout the story. The development of Edna's personalities means

to show the reader that this novel is worth to read and unique.

## Life and Death Meaning

Edna is married to one of French Creole families in New Orleans. Even though she is married to Léonce, she has never felt she belongs to the community. According to the analysis, Mr. Pontellier is one of Edna's environments which has turned Edna into being ignorant and careless. Then, she develops her character into becoming a rebel woman who wants to celebrate her freefom. In contrast, her best friend, Madame Ratignolle is a really dedicated wife for Mr. Ratignolle and belongs to the French Creole Community as well. In other words, Edna does not feel that attached to the community compared to Madame Ratignolle. According to Debois and Melançon (2000),

> Creole identity could refer to descendants of the original European colonists in Louisiana - White or Black, slave or free. White descendants of French and Spanish settlers, as well as the descendants of the German, Irish, and Acadian immigrants who came to the state prior to its purchase in 1803, could legitimately call themselves "Creole." In addition, Creole identity could be applicable to the descendants of the gens de couleur libres, the free people of color or "colored Creoles" who were considered the "elite" class of mixed ancestry in New Orleans for several generations (p. 238).

As has been mentioned earlier that Edna is not really into the community, but she is shock due to the fact that many of Creole women are like a pure and unmistakable woman.

> There were only Creoles that summer at Lebrun's. They all knew each other, and felt like one large family, among whom existed the most amicable relations. A

characteristic which distinguished them and which impressed Mrs. Pontellier most forcibly was their entire absence of prudery. Their freedom of expression was at first incomprehensible to her, though she had no difficulty in reconciling it with a lofty chastity which in the Creole woman seems to be inborn and unmistakable (Gilbert, 2002, p.48). However, the problem is also located in the hand of her husband which is too Creole. As the Ratignolle's family who is also Creole, people judge Pontellier's the same. The husband who is always been good to his wife and the wife who dedicates her life for her husband because it is one of the forms to connect themselves with God.

The first argument is that Edna has never been belong to Creole community even though she marries to a Creole husband. It is not because she does not like it, but she just does not enjoy it because she thinks it is not her. She is not like Madame Ratignolle, a mother-woman, who enjoys her life being a wife and a mother. Edna is also a wife and a mother, but it does not mean that she enjoys being at home and taking care the children. Her identity makes her really confused. Therefore, she wants something different. Thankfully, because her family stays at the Grand Isle during their summer holiday, she meets new people from different background. She also learns a lot of things from those people she meets. She feels joy and happy at the same time because she finally gets something she desires. She wants her independency because she cannot take her husband anymore from treating her disrespectfully. She makes a sacrifice leaving her husband and her children to gain her independency.

Her independence life is good. She expresses her sexual desire with a man named Alcée Arobin. However, it is just to satisfy Edna's desire. When Robert Leburn comes back from his long journey, they fall in love again. One day, Robert asks Edna to marry him, but Edna completely refuses his proposal.

"Something put into my head that you cared for me; and I lost my senses. I forgot everything but a wild dream of your some way becoming my wife."
"Your wife!"
"I realized what a cur I was to dream of such a thing, even if you had been willing."
"You have been a very, very foolish boy, wasting your time dreaming of impossible things when you speak of Mr. Pontellier setting me free! I am no longer one of Mr. Pontellier's possessions to dispose of or not. I give myself where I choose. If he were to say, 'Here, Robert, take her and be happy; she is yours,' I should laugh at you both." (Gilbert, 2002, p. 177).

After rejecting the proposal, Edna decides not to be with anyone since she breaks up with her husband, too. She does not want to belong to anyone because she wants to be by her own self.

The second argument is that the decision that Edna has made is also something that makes Edna depressed. Edna really loves Robert. She loves her, but she does not want to be married to him. She just wants to be with him, but Robert thinks differently. After that, Robert decides to leave to take a long journey again. Edna feels upset and depressed. It is like the world does not support what she wants. Her independency is what she wants, but she also wants Robert to be his love. Edna travels back to Grand Isle. She wants to reflect about what actually

happens to her life. She goes for swimming in the ocean. She goes further and

> She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father's voice and her sister Margaret's. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air (Gilbert, 2002, p. 187).

Edna thinks that because the world does not support her, she wants to leave the world. She also wants to find another way so she can be herself. This can be seen from the ending of the story. There has no further explanation for Edna goes for swimming. Because she swims too far, in the story, she never comes back.

The researcher also believes that Edna has died in the ocean because she does not come back to the sore in the end of the story. The researcher thinks that the act of Edna going for a swimming in the ocean and never going back has a function to communicate her will of freedom. Edna feels like the community that she belongs to does not support her. She always wants a freedom, but Edna does not see a chance to do it inside the community. Hence, she chooses to end her life by swimming in the ocean.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Edna Pontellier's personality has changed and developed. throughout the story. The development of her personality happens because of the people or environment she encounters during her vacation at the Grand Isle. She learns so many things from them. She finally feels the happiness that she has almost forgot about. She meets Mademoiselle Reisz who inspires her to become independent. She falls in love with Robert Leburn even though they do not end up together in the end.

The development of Edna's character in the story is also causing her decision to end her life. Although she marries a Creole man and gets what she wants, which is a freedom, but she has never belonged to the community. She takes it into personal account. Therefore, she decides to try finding a way to seek her freedom by swimming at the ocean than being alive.

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# AMERICAN INFLUENCE THROUGH YOUTH CULTURE: REPRESENTATION ANALYSIS ON PUNK SUBCULTURE IN INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

As globally sprung up, punk subculture is evidence of how American influence has penetrated many life facets, including through youth culture. Indonesia becomes one of many countries that accept and practice the subculture. The discussion of the punk subculture in Indonesia can reveal the relationship between both countries, in which America becomes the powerful party while Indonesia is the submissive one. To find the American influence in the spread of punk subculture in Indonesia, Hall's representation theory is applied in the research. The theory is used in observing the punk community in both Indonesia and the US on Instagram platforms, particularly some posts that contain punk elements. By using qualitative method, the result of the research uncovers that Indonesia absorbs American punk elements in two ways: By assimilating it without adding other elements outside of punk and by integrating it into the Indonesian context. Both ways show the submissiveness of Indonesia in absorbing the foreign subculture. Yet, especially for the latter, it shows how Indonesia still has the power of resistance in accepting punk subculture by still maintaining mother cultural elements in practicing it, and in the end, it adds a new different color to the global punk scene.

**Keywords:** *American influence; Indonesia; punk subculture; representation theory; youth culture.*

## INTRODUCTION

With the solidification of identity, the urge to define the future, and increasing mobility, youth or adolescence becomes a crucial period for a human being. The term 'youth' itself is fluid, arbitrarily defined, and varied across cultures and eras (Brown et al., 2002), but, according to the United Nations

(n.d.), the youth category is individuals who are 15 to 24 years. In the period of youth, they oftentimes question their identity as well as existence since they live in a society with a number of norms and rules they have to obey. Those who obey the norms and have similar values to their surrounding will accept how the system works, but those who do not will find their way out to find places that suit their vision and state. The latter is the grounded reason for how youth culture is established around the world.

Youth culture is a cultural practice that centers on youth's physical health and beauty, values, tastes, and needs, in the forms of dress, speech, music, and behavior (Ayuningtyas & Adhitya, 2021, p. 154). It is born both as the extension and resistance of the wider culture of society (American Psychological Association, n.d.; Buchmann, 2001; Steinberg et al., 2006). The crucial part is that even though there is the term 'youth' in it, youth culture is not only special for a particular age group, instead, it focuses on 'youthfulness'.

Claydon (2005) mentions that in most ways, global youth culture is originally established in America. It is because the development of youth culture gets high exposure to the influence of American culture, especially in this era of globalization or "Americanization". Having such a role in the establishment and development of the global youth culture can be seen as evidence of how American influence also penetrates youth culture in particular and the global world's culture in general.

A source of influence, America utilizes soft power as a tool to spread its culture. Nye (2008), who first coins the term, states that

soft power is the ability to affect others to gain particular outcomes that one wants from another. In soft power, charms and appeals are exploited rather than coercion and force. Soft power is used to make other countries follow, admire, emulate, or aspire to a powerful country. In the context of America, the nation applies soft power through culture to hegemonize other countries. To be the most powerful country in the world is maintained through American products such as McDonald's and credit cards that have been globalized (Dukut, 2015). Furthermore, other products, such as film, music and arts also play a role in it. It requires two parties in the practice of influencing and hegemonizing other countries. In the case of American cultural influence, the nation becomes the ruling party that leads the process of accepting cultural meaning, value, and products while another country that is influenced by America is called the subordinate party (Pramono, 2013).

Many life facets have been influenced by America. Particularly in Indonesia, one of which can be seen through youth culture as punk. Punk is known as part of youth culture (Mattson, 2001; O'Connor, 2004; and Worley, 2015) and gets its huge popularity among Indonesian youth. This is proven by the fact that the Indonesian punk subculture has thousands of members and makes it the largest punk movement in Southeast Asia and one of the largest in the world (Wallach, 2008; Munn, 2014).

Punk (Public United Not Kingdom) itself first appears as a loud and aggressive music genre. It is known for its fast-paced songs and hard-edged melodies. Punk is originally established in London, England, in the late 1970s as a resistance of the working class

towards the government and aristocrats. The music is born as a sentiment on Elizabeth II Queen that is accused of the cause of economic inequality towards the working people. The existing monarch system is seen only to give benefits to the upper-class society. Furthermore, the music hugely grows because of Thatcher's controversial policy that suffers the working-class people (Pickles, 2000; Patton, 2018; Grimes & Dines, 2020).

In general, punk exists as the antithesis of sociocultural norms (Marchetto, 2001; Whiteley, 2012; Ambrosch, 2015; Wilujeng, 2017), which are made by the dominant culture to be reinforced to the whole society. Punk becomes the group that is against this kind of system. In this case, punk subculture existence can be seen in the context of power relations. Punk subculture grows as the medium of voicing political and social issues, and also those who want to express themselves as an individual. Since it is dominantly followed and practiced by the youth, punk is used by them to "escape" (Tucker, 2008; Prasetyo, 2017 Billet, 2020), meaning that through the subculture, they can chase as well as build their identity by themselves. This is done by practicing the principles and ethos of punk as the DIY culture punk subculture has built.

DIY ethos in punk is seen as a form of resistance towards mainstream society. It becomes the medium to express the community's political voices. DIY ethos become an important part of the punk subculture. The ethos itself is manifested through fanzine, underground music venues that can be used for performers of all ages, the network of independent music and fashion labels, and also the structure of punk

bands (Schmidt, 2006; Savage, 2016; Williams, 2016). Those elements contain ideology and principles of punk. According to Kahn-Egan (1998), there are five key principles of punk:

1. The Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethic centers on self-independency;
2. A sense of anger and passion;
3. A sense of destructiveness to deliver the voice of the oppressive institutions;
4. A willingness to take others' pain to make them noticed; and,
5. A pursuit of the "pleasure principle".

Speaking of the original countries where punk is born, it is America and England (New York and London to be exact) that are entitled to it (Hebdige, 1988; Ambrosch, 2015; Dunn, 2016; and Patton, 2018). Both countries give such a big influence in developing the music style, ideology, collective identity and community of punk. Most people see that England has the most impactful role in the global punk subculture, which is proven by the abundance of researchers who concern about the development of the UK punk band, like Sex Pistols. Many do not know that American punk also has an important role in spreading both the music and the community's ideology. This happens when some notable American punk bands, such as Green Day, Rancid, NOFX, and the Offspring that are officially commercialized in 1994. Since American punk contains a more universal and without-context-kind-of-punk ethos and mentality compared to Britain (Dunn, 2016), this is why American punk is more accepted by the world. This is emphasized the influential role of America in spreading punk

subculture to the global society, including Indonesia.

Based on the explanation above, it is interesting though to uncover American influence over other countries through punk subculture. In the context of the punk subculture in America and Indonesia, the latter country submissively accepts what America "offers" through punk. In Indonesia, punk itself operates among Indonesian youth to help them find meaning, community, and self-expression (Wallach, 2008), since Indonesia lacks expression media for such things. Furthermore, due to the Indonesian socio-political condition as in Soeharto's Reform Era, making its people, especially the youth, find a medium for them to be able to express their protest and also to find social justice and equality.

With the different cultural and socio-political backgrounds in both countries, America and Indonesia, the accusation that Indonesian punk subculture is influenced by American punk is interesting to be found out. A question arises about how American punk is represented in the Indonesian punk subculture through its elements, either by being fully adopted or hybridized, it needed to be analyzed and discussed. The answer to that question becomes the objective of this research.

This research is conducted under the discipline of American Studies, particularly through the perspective of transnationalism. The perspective of transnationalism in American Studies is used to find out how America's cultural production is reimagined as the result of social and political movements in the twentieth century, and how it travels and is received by other countries

(Rowe, 2010 & Shu & Pease, 2015). Additionally, as mentioned previously, to achieve the main objective, the researcher applies Stuart Hall's Representation theory to see how the Indonesian punk subculture reflects American punk. Hall (1997) explains that language is defined as the medium in which we understand something as making sense. Language operates as a representational system that appears not only in form of spoken or written words, but also in form of signs, symbols, images, musical notes, and many else. Through language, meaning is eventually produced and exchanged.

Hall, (1997) mentions that meanings are made. It is also added that giving meaning means identifying oneself, specifically in terms of who he or she is, where one is from, or to which group one belongs. Meaning is produced and exchanged on a personal level or through social interaction. Through meaning, rules, norms, and conventions are arranged. This concept is manifested in language as the media of culture and summed up in a flow chart called 'the Circuit of Culture' that consists of five elements: Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption, and Regulation. Further, to know how representation through language works in Hall's Representation theory, three approaches can be applied: Reflective, intentional, and constructionist approaches. The first is referred to as mimetic, seeing that language functions as a mirror or to reflect the true meaning. The second approach focuses on the language spoken and how the speaker imposes their unique meaning through language. Finally, the third one centers on those who construct the language meaning by using representational systems as concepts and signs.

This research employs a qualitative method. It is done by interpreting the data based on a particular perspective, strategies of inquiry, and methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). The analysis is done inductively and interpretatively, meaning that the researcher does the observation by building themes from the bottom up, interpreting what they see, hear, and understand, and developing a complex picture of the problem or issue.

The material object of this research is the punk subculture in Indonesia and America. The data will be gotten from the social media platform Instagram. As the first step in collecting data process, the researcher obtains the data from several Instagram accounts which include punk bands, individual members of punk, and punk communities, in both Indonesia and the US. In addition, the researcher also gets the data by tracing some hashtags as #indonesian punk, #punkindonesia, #americanpunk, #jakartapunk #anakpunk, #punkjalanan, #punkpeduli, #punkbukankriminal, #crustpunk, and #crusties. Since the posts are unlimited, therefore, the uploaded content from the past seven years, 2015 to 22, are chosen as the data.

## DISCUSSION

### The Assimilation of American Punk Elements by Indonesian Punk Subculture

Being globally spread, punk subculture in every country does have its regional flavor or accent (Dunn, 2016), but, they still share similar elements. Being directly interacted with American punk communities (Baulch, 2007 and Wallach, 2008), Indonesian punk is assumed of having similar elements to what is used and practiced in the punk subculture

of America through adopting, replicating, or mimicking the elements.

### *The Adoption of American Punk Fashion*

Fashion is a language of non-verbal communication (Wiana, 2016). It reflects what is "inside" to be "spoken" visually. As a subculture, punk has its unique characteristic in terms of fashion that can identify the members as part of the subculture as well as differentiate them from any other groups. Fashion is the most significant symbol for the members to identify themselves as part of the subculture and also to express rebelliousness and independence (Cunningham & Lab, 1991).

Punk fashion in general includes layers of dayglow fabrics; ripped clothes held together by safety pins or wrapped with tape and hand-written with marker or paint; leather, rubber, and vinyl clothing; tight "drain pipe jeans"; T-shirt with provocative texts or images; Converse sneakers; jackets with slogans which are made on the back with spray paint; pin-back buttons or patches with flaunt taboo symbols as the swastika or Iron Cross; safety pins and razor blades to be worn as jewelry; spiky hairstyle, cut into Mohawk or another dramatic shape, colored in vibrant; or any other kinds of mixed styles (Dunn, 2016 and Sfetcu, 2021). The elements are worn to outrage propriety and conformity.

Among many, the boldest signifiers of punk include tattoos, Mohawk hair, and piercing. Tattoos have different purposes (Oanţă et al., 2014 Faulkner & Bailey, 2019). Oanţă et al. (2014) state that since the 1970s, tattoos in industrialized nations, like the US, is used by particular professions or members of cultural movements. Body art gets its high

popularity among American youth and adults by 1990, and among them, punk becomes the first tattooed group (Greenberg et al., 2009).

In the Indonesian punk subculture, tattoo functions in many ways, one of which is to represent their visual expression. Tattoo is worn by punk members to show their love feeling towards their parent, especially their mother, rebellion against the binding rules, and also the expression of self-identity and idealism (Suriandari, 2015 and Sari & Hanum, 2021). Many members of the Indonesian punk subculture wear tattoos to express themselves, this is as seen in Figure 1. In addition, it is not only the male punk members who have tattoos, many female punks also have it, proving that both genders have equal levels when it comes to self-expression (Figure 2).


Figure 2. A Female Punk with Tattoos


Figure 1. Street Punk in Medan

Mohawk hair also becomes the most visible symbol of the subculture. Similar to tattoos, mohawk hair is adopted from the West, particularly in the US. The name is taken from the Mohawk people, an indigenous tribe who inhabit the Mohawk Valley in Upstate New York. The hairstyle is initially worn by the Pawnee who lives in

Nebraska and North Kansas (Lecklitner, 2019). Mohawk itself is a hairstyle in which the hair is all-shaved except for a single narrow strip of varying length running from the forehead straight back (Falk & Falk, 2005). It is commonly styled vertically or horizontally spike. The length and color are varied, from short to very long, from red to green.

Among Indonesian punk members, the mohawk hairstyle is worn in many forms and colors. It is either long or short and dyed in bold colors like red, yellow, or orange. The hairstyle not only can gain the wearer's self-confidence, further, it also symbolized a particular message. For instance, yellow mohawk hair can be viewed as a resistance towards tough life and injustices. The hairstyle is commonly not dyed fully, sometimes, the wearer lets the natural color hair still remain. This can be seen as a self-strength to fight capitalism norm in society (Putri, 2011).

One of Indonesian punk members who frequently wearing and changing mohawk hair as well as its color is Eenx, the vocalist of Maksiat, a Bandung-based punk band. On his Instagram page, Eenx repreatedly posts some photos of him and also his band in mohawk hair. The colors are varied, from yellow to pink. Further, the motives too are variable, from plain to polkadot (Figure 3 & 4).


Figure 3. The Colorful Mohawk Hair of the

Members of Maksiat Band


Figure 4. Variable Motives and Colors of Mohawk Hair of Maksiat Band Members


Figure 5. The Colorful Mohawk Hair of Eenx 'Maksiat'

Besides tattoos and mohawk hair, there is piercing as the most visible punk element that will catch everyone's attention. Piercing is the practice of making a hole in the surface of the soft tissues of the body to insert or wear adornments (Sheumaker & Wajda, 2008). Piercing is popular in numbers, especially in the community of punk. It is first introduced to the subculture in America and England in the mid-1970s, in which the members prefer to wear non-ear piercings on the lip, nostril, or cheek (Sheumaker & Wajda, 2008 and Steele, 2019).

Piercing in the punk subculture is considered "louder" than piercing in other scenes (DeMello, 2007). The members of the subculture sometimes wear "extreme" jewelry utilizing knives, long chains, and bones. Not only that, but they also wear stretched piercing or multiple piercings on the face. Figure 6, portrays a member of the Indonesian punk subculture wearing a big bone piercing, cutting through the soft tissue

of his nostrils horizontally. Meanwhile, Figure 7 depicts a member who wears multiple piercings made of metal and small-sized.


Figure 6. Piercing Made of A Big Bone on A Member of Indonesian Punk Subculture


Figure 7. Multiple Piercing on the Face of A Member of the Indonesian Punk Subculture

Besides those three elements, the fashion clothes of punk members can also be seen to identify them as part of the subculture. In the Indonesian punk subculture, the styles are divided into some types. There is no fixed categorization of the punk fashion in Indonesia, but it can be classified based on the subgenre of punk the wearer follows or enjoys. As seen in Figure 8 & 9, a Surabaya-based punk band, Radiocase, is portrayed frequently wearing a Hawai'ian shirt in its Instagram posts. Not all members wear that kind of clothes, some still maintain a punk identity which is closely related to dark-color clothes. The combination of the members' style, which includes Hawai'ian shirts and black T-shirts, implicitly can show the band's identity and the subgenre they play, which is ska-punk.
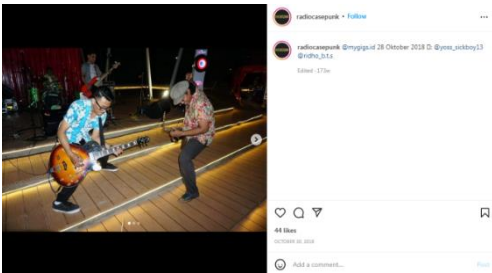
Figure 8. Two of Radiocase Members Wearing Hawai'ian Shirt



Figure 9. One of Radiocase Band Members Wearing Black T-Shirt While Another Member Is Wrapped in Hawai'ian Shirt

Historically, a Hawai'ian shirt is initially created in the 1930s when Hawai'i was an American territory. The shirt is made of textiles with a floral print like tropical flowers as a representation of Hawai'i's cultural and natural diversity. Eventually, the shirt is adopted by surfers and becomes a symbol of a carefree attitude toward life ("Ethnic Dress in the United States," 2015). It is no wonder that the shirt is oftentimes worn on casual occasions, since besides its tropical print, the shirt material is also from light-weighted fabric, as if, adding the casual "vibe" of the wearers.

Among the American punk subculture, there is Reel Big Fish who is also consistently wearing this kind of punk fashion theme (Figure 10). Similar to Radiocase, even though not all members wear similar shirts, the lead singer, Aaron Barrett, "represents" his band to wear a Hawai'ian shirt. His position as vocalist on stage as well as in some photos, in which he is in the center, catches most attention and

becomes the trademark of the band as a punk group who brings Ska as the subgenre.



Figure 10. Hawai'ian Shirt Worn by the Frontman of Reel Big Fish

In the punk rock subgenre, Indonesia has the renowned Superman Is Dead (SID), a Bali-based punk band. Punk rock itself is the mixing of punk and rock n' roll. Many say that SID is the Indonesian version of Social Distortion, a California-based punk rock band (Setyawan, 2021). Not only the music, the fashion look of the members is also similar, especially the one that is shown by JRX or Jerinx, the drummer of the band. JRX is frequently mentioned as resembling Mike Ness' fashion style. Mike Ness himself is the vocalist of Social Distortion and known with his eccentric look. As seen in Figure 11 & 12, Mike Ness and Jerinx are portrayed wearing fashion elements which include white tank-top and black trousers or jeans, that completed with belt, necklace, and formal shoes. Further, the tattoo of JRX is even spelled 'SOCIAL DISTORTION', Mike Ness' band, emphasizing from where he gets the fashion influence. In an interview, JRX admits it that the style inspiration from Ness since it has a bold nuance of rock (Dethu, 2019).

Figure 11. Fashion Style of Mike Ness 'Social Distortion'
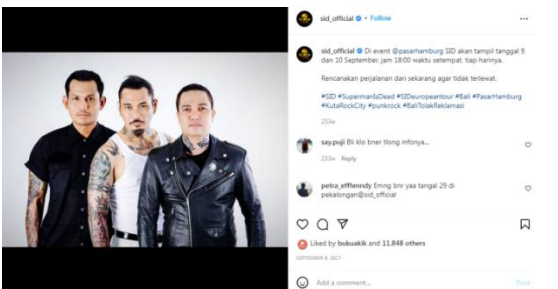


Figure 12. JRX (Middle) Who Resemblances Mike Ness' Fashion Style

As stated by Avery-Natale (2016), punk across local or countries, even though are separated by geographical boundaries, still, share similarities. Therefore, it is no wonder that many elements of Western punk are adopted, worn, or used by Indonesian punk subculture members. It is because both countries' punk communities share the same 'cultural codes' or "sets of concepts, images, and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways" (Hall, 1997). In this context of the discussion, punk elements of America that are represented in punk subculture in Indonesia are similar as the symbol of expression against the mainstream, conformity, and the system (Sklar, 2013).

### English as a Means of Domination

Since the punk subculture is born in the Western, hence, English is highly implemented in its practice of it. Even though many Indonesian punk members come from the middle class with such a low level of education and do not understand any English, yet, its application in the subculture is popular. The fact that Indonesia's national language is Bahasa Indonesia but the nation prefers to use English in the punk subculture's practice is an indication of how the subculture can be seen as a form of domination. In this case, it is American domination over Indonesia. The appliance of English can be found in many forms of elements.

The first form is in terms of band-naming. Indonesia has an abundance of punk bands that are named in English. Some are popular bands like Superman Is Dead (SID), Submission, Stupidity, Total Jerks, Rosemary, and Young Offender and some others are local bands, like Error Crew, Superiots, Radiocase, Dead Germs, Pollution Attack, The Cramsid, The Sabotage, Antiseptic, Closehead, Molotov Cocktail. According to Dwiani (2020), Indonesian punk bands that apply English are way more than those that use Bahasa Indonesia in their band name.

In sum, band names in English can be categorized into some themes. The first is animal-themed. Indonesia has Turtles.Jr is a punk band with an animal containing its name (Figure 13). The band uses turtle in plural forms, added with the abbreviation 'Jr' that refers to the word 'junior'. Another example is Sexy Pig, a Jakarta-based punk band. Pig oftentimes refers to filthiness and dirtiness. Not only in Indonesia, animal-themed band names are also seen in the US punk bands as The Dogs, Reel Big Fish, Cobra Skulls, Gorilla Biscuits, and Rhythm Pigs.

Figure 13. An Indonesian Punk Band (Turtles.Jr) with Animal-Themed Names

The use of animals for band names is to give a unique identity to the band. It strengthens the theatrical identity of the band as well. The idea of giving a band name with animal names can be taken from many sources, including by adopting the previously existing band names. For instance, the band name of Indonesia's Turtles.Jr is assumed to be inspired by Dinosaurs Jr., an American rock band. Even though the genres of both bands are different, yet, the naming pattern is similar. Both use an abbreviation of 'Jr' that is put after the animal name. This indicates how the Indonesian punk band gets influenced by the American band, particularly in terms of band naming.

Besides animals, another band-naming theme can be taken from the names of popular figures. Mad Djanggo, Pee Wee Gaskins, and Squadward are three examples. For the former, it is a Jakarta-based punk band. It is not clear yet from where the name Djanggo is taken, but it is assumed that the name 'Djanggo' is taken from the Western movie entitled Django which is parodied and starred by Benyamin Sueb through Tiga Janggo (Nawi, n.d.). The name is followed by the adjective word 'mad' to describe the Djanggo.

Meanwhile, Pee Wee Gaskins name is inspired by the name of Donald Henry Gaskins, a name of an American serial killer.

While Squadward is taken from the name of a Western character in Spongebob Squarepants animation, Squidward Tentacles. In the American punk scene, this pattern, the appliance of figure's names for band names is also found in many bands. Among them, there are Dead Kennedys (Figure 14) and Reagan Youth. Both get their name inspiration from former American presidents: John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.



Figure 14. An American Punk Band (Dead Kennedys) with Person Name-Themed Name

The use of English for band names is because for some reasons. Besides the origin of the subculture being from the West, another reason is "to form of being well-educated, intention to go international, easily approached by international fans, represent the characteristic or identity by personnel are related of how social prestige depicted band's member on using English", as mentioned by Dwiani (2020). In the end, the final reason is to "attract" the international audiences so that Indonesian punk bands use English.

### The Imitation of American Punk Lifestyle

The term 'lifestyle' in discussing punk in Indonesia, as explained by Wallach (2008), refers to punk's way of life rather than to the term in Bahasa Indonesia 'gaya hidup'. Both terms 'lifestyle' or 'gaya hidup' are oftentimes associated with consumerism, but the reference is way different when talking about punk. The term here refers to some

activities of punk that include "hanging out in public places with other punks, attending punk concert events, drinking alcohol, and wearing punk clothing and hairstyles".

The dominant Indonesian commoners usually refer to punk as 'punk jalanan' or Indonesian street punk who lives, makes money, and hangs out in the street. The street becomes their home to sail through this harsh life and also to help others. As seen in Figure 15, two punk members are captured sleeping on the pavement. Meanwhile, Figure 16 shows punk members who make money by being street musicians.


Figure 15. Two Punk Members of Punk Jalanan Sleep On the Street


Figure 16. A Group of Punk Pengamen Bringing Musical Instruments for Their Street Performance

The life of punk jalanan is presumably adopted from the lifestyle of the punk subculture in America, specifically gutter punk or crust punk. Based on Urban Dictionary, Gutter punk or crust punk is "a member of the subculture of punk, who lives primarily on the streets, and who sleeps in alleyways, bushes, parks, on rooftops, and in friends' homes" (Urban Dictionary, 2005).

They refer to the activities of squatting, panhandling, and voluntary homelessness and are majorly found in U.S. metropolitan areas, such as New Orleans and Texas which have mild weather compared to other states in the US (Cooper, 2019).

Crust punk is also popularly called crusties or crusty kid. The use of crust punk to define such punk is also more popular than 'gutter punk'. This is proven by how frequently the hashtags #crustpunk, #crusties, and #crustykids portray their life and activity on the street. As seen in Figure 17 and 18, crusties are depicted sleeping and making money in the street, similar to activities that are done by Indonesian punk members in the previous figures.


Figure 17. The Life of Crust Punk in America


Figure 18. A Crusty in New York City Making Money as a Street Musician

**The Integration of Punk Subculture into the Indonesian Context**

Western influence is suspected found in the phenomenon of the punk subculture in Indonesia. This is because punk itself is originally born in England and America (Dunn, 2016; Patton, 2018). In this research,

it is found out that there are many negotiations Indonesia does in receiving the subculture. The negotiation is done by accepting the subculture but still maintaining the mother culture and context, making it a unique identity apart from their identity as part of the global punk (Avery-Natale, 2016).

### *Sustaining National and Local Identities*

Maintaining national and local identities in the Indonesian punk subculture is done especially through band-naming that applies Bahasa Indonesia and/or local languages totally, or mixing it with English. Some Indonesian punk bands that use Bahasa Indonesia in their names include Kontrasosial, Alarm Pagi, Krass Kepala, Sosial Sosial, Marjinal, Bunga Hitam, Lingkar Cendala, Berandalan, Kuman Laut, Suntik Mati, Peluru Kendali, Akar Hitam, Desa LukaNegara, Jeruji, Bombardir, Buron Sel, Tendangan Badut, Amook, Krisis Jantung, Saos Tomat, and Maksiat. The numbers are suspected way higher since many regional and local bands use Bahasa Indonesia for the band name.

Indonesian punk bands that use local languages as the Javanese language are Bengax Bengox (taken from the word 'bengak-bengok', which means shouting), Gombal Laplapan (dustcloth), and Lambe Bejat (dirty mouth). Three of them are punk bands from Malang, in which most of its people speak Javanese. Meanwhile, a punk band using the Sundanese language is Ayaayawae (Figure 19), a Karawang-based punk band. The band name is taken from the words 'aya-aya wae' ('ada-ada saja').


Figure 19. Band-Naming in Sundanese Language in An Indonesian Punk Band (Aya-Aya Wae)

In general, band-naming in Indonesian punk subculture, particularly that uses Bahasa Indonesia, can be divided into two big themes: Eccentric and resistance. The eccentric theme can be in form of animal names theme as in Milisi Kecoa, a Bandung-based Indonesian punk band. 'kecoa' (cockroach) is included as an insect which is considered as disgusting and oftentimes is killed, while the word 'milisi' means militia or "a part of the organized armed forces of a country liable to call only in emergency" ("Militia," n.d.). Presumably, Milisi Kecoa is named as a form of mockery towards the military force (represented by the word 'milisi') followed by 'kecoa'.

Another eccentric theme can be in form of geographical-themed band name. One of them is Begundal Lowokwaru (Figure 20). The latter word is taken from the name of a district in Malang, East Java. It is used as a dedication to the band members' friends who get jailed in a regional prison in Malang namely Penjara Lowokwaru. It is stated by the members that the band name is their lucky charm (Tommy, 2011).


Figure 20. Indonesian Punk Band (Begundal

Lowokwaru) with Geographical-Themed Name

Another eccentric band-naming is by applying particular words that sound ear-catchy. Indonesia has Coba Lo Tanya Panitia, or in English, it means 'ask the committee!'. Further, there are also Indonesian punk bands that use an acronym in their name. Two of them are Purbalingga-based punk bands, S.K.O.K (System Kerja Otack Kotor) and TWB (Tinny Winny Bitty). Even the long names of S.K.O.K is as ear-catchy as Coba Lo Tanya Panitia, and TWB is considered unique due to its similar name to an Indonesian snack product, Tini Wini Biti, but both bands are more known by their abbreviated name than their long name.

The second big theme in the pattern of Indonesian punk band names is resistance. Resistance can be seen through the chosen words in the band names that include one or more words. The first common word type that is used in this kind of theme is swearing words. Bahasa Indonesia knows several swearing words including 'bajingan', 'bangsat', 'brengsek', 'edan', 'goblok', 'gila', 'jahanam', 'kampret', 'keparat', 'laknat', 'sialan' and 'tolol', to express anger, annoyed feeling, or furious. Some Indonesian punk bands that apply this theme are Keparat, Durjana, Total Ngehe, Bajingan, and Bangsat Terhormat.

Another word typically used in Indonesian band names considered as a form of resistance is a damage-referred word. The words here can be in form of command words, single words, or groups of words. According to Merriam-Webster, damage means 'loss or harm resulting from injury to person, property, or reputation' ("Damage," n.d.). Some Indonesian punk bands that use

this type of word in the band names include Rusak Moral, Bakar! (Figure 21), Keotik, Bombardir, Hantam Rata, and Brontak.



Figure 21. Indonesian Punk Band (Bakar!) with Damage-Referred-Themed Name

Besides through band names, maintaining national and local identities in punk is also done by injecting Indonesian cultural elements into the subculture's practice. This is seen in Serdadu Bambu Tradisional Punk, a punk band from West Java. The band uses angklung as their trademark represented not only through its name but also in their musical performances (Figure 22 & 23). Angklung itself is a traditional musical instrument, originally from West Java. The instrument is made of two or more bamboo tubes attached to a bamboo frame and tied with rattan cords. It is played by shaking or tapping it (Indonesian Angklung, n.d.).



Figure 22. A Graphic of Mohawk Punk Bringing Angklung Instument in Serdadu Bambu Band Logo
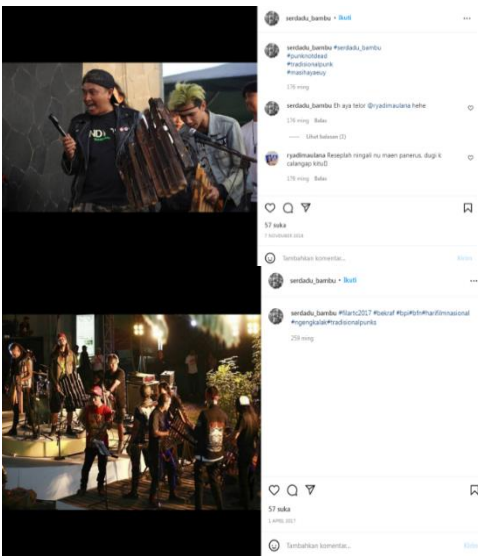
Figure 23 & 24. Angklung Instrument in the Performances of Serdadu Bambu Punk Band

There must be some reasons why local cultural elements, like language and musical instruments, are injected into the practice of Western punk in Indonesia. The common reason is to show the local culture to an international audience by using Bahasa Indonesia or local languages in their songs ("Maha Band Ingin Lestarikan Bahasa Bali Lewat Bermusik," 2017) and also traditional musical instruments in their performances. Music as the global universal language can be the medium to reach more people as well as expand their understanding of the language and culture in Indonesia (Zu-Xiang, 2021).

### The Adaptation to Indonesian Socio-Political Situation

As a safe place to give voice to the voiceless, punk communicates their message through fashion, music, and other leisure goods to transmit ideology and also protest statements. As Hebdige (1979) mentions, "anxieties concerning class and sexuality, the tensions between conformity and deviance, family and school, work and leisure, were all frozen there in a form which was at once

visible and opaque". One of the most visible mediums to shout a protest out is fashion, particularly through lettering or urban graffiti as typography and social statement about a property and public expression written or drawn on it (Sklar, 2013).

In Figure 25 & 26, two Indonesian punk members are portrayed wearing jackets with graphic image on the back side of it. In Figure 25, the jacket contains of writing statement 'freedom' on the upper side and 'sawah habis di negeri agraris' on the lower side, while a graphic image of a female wearing farmer hat and gas respirator mask. Assumably, the female figure is a farmer who are protesting, especially since gas respirator mask itself is a common tool to be used in a protest action (Wibawa, 2019). Meanwhile, Figure 26 shows Munir Said Thalib is drawn on the back part of the studded leather jacket the punk member is wearing. Munir Said Thalib or Munir is known as an Indonesian human right activist who is murdered (Sixteen Years On, How Many More Years Before Munir's Killers Are Found?, 2020). Until today, the suspect of his murderer remains unsolved. As a form of honor, Munir is frequently found not only in the community's fashion statements but also in posters and song lyrics.



Figure 25. A Protest Statement ('Sawah Habis di Negeri Agraris') and A Graphic Image of A Female Farmer Protestor Emblazoned on the Back Side of A Punk's Jacket

Figure 26. Protest Statements ('Masih Ingat Saya' & 'Dibunuh Karena Benar') and A Portrayal of Munir Said Thalib Emblazoned on the Back Side of A Punk's Jacket (Right)

### Negotiating Islamic Identity

With more than 87 percent of its population considering themselves Muslim, Indonesia is entitled as the largest Islamic population in the world and is known as a Muslim nation (Statista Research Department, 2021). Hence, it is no wonder that Islamic values have been internalized in enhancing national morality in Indonesia.

There is a unique interaction between this music-based subculture and Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia (Wallach, 2008). Being seen as morally destructive, the Indonesian punk subculture does not want to keep that entitlement any longer. Some of the members establish a sub-community called 'punk Muslim' (Figure 27), that combines punk and Islam religion. Punk Muslim is a community consisting of a group of punk who consistently practice Islam religion (Hidayatullah, 2014). They try to restore faith in the punk subculture that is associated with a permissive, hedonistic, bohemian, and anarchy lifestyle. Punk here is used as the medium of da'wah and to strengthen their identity as Muslims. It is a way to lead their previous harsh life to the more positive one. The activities of its members are surely related to Islam, starting to transform their appearance to be more modest, reciting Qur'an, and also doing salah (Figure 28).
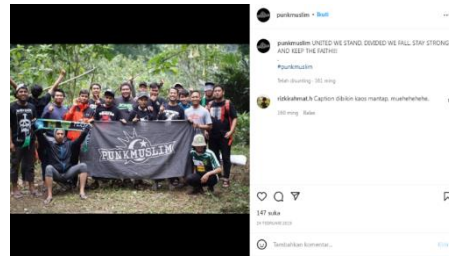


Figure 27. The Community of Punk Muslim



Figure 28. Punk Muslim Portrayed Doing Islam Praying

The negotiation for Islamic identity is also manifested through solidarity acts, like giving free takjil (snacks consumed right after fast-breaking). As shown in Figure 29 & 30, both are flyers of the upcoming agenda of punk groups in Bengkulu and Rembang to give free takjil. Their involvement in this kind of program is to show some respect to Muslim people as the majority in the nation. Further, the groups try to build a good relationship with organized religion, especially Islam, with a motto to "respect the religious" (Wallach, 2008). Presumably, this act is done to gain some respect from society since along this time, they oftentimes are seen by just one eye.

Figure 29 & 30. Flyers of the Giving Free Takjil Upcoming Agenda of Punk Groups in Bengkulu and Rembang

## CONCLUSION

American punk elements are represented in many local, regional, and national punk scenes around the world in many forms. It can be assimilated into the punk scenes without injecting other elements outside of punk. Yet, the different cultural and socio-political situation makes cultural hybridity very likely to occur. Indonesia absorbs the subculture in two different ways. The first is by completely assimilating American punk elements to be practiced by the Indonesian punk subculture while the second is by integrating the elements into the Indonesian context. In the end, either by assimilating or integrating, both ways are not only to see how American punk is represented in Indonesia. Further than that, it also attests to how the phenomenon of punk subculture can be viewed as America's domination over Indonesia, revealing how the former country is so powerful that it can penetrate its cultural element to other countries and how the latter country is powerless in accepting it.

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# POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN STEPHEN CRANE'S *MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS*: A NEW-HISTORICISM STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

This paper will analyze poverty and unemployment in America that is portrayed in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and the parallels connection between the story and the era in the US at that time. The researchers apply the Neo-Historicism approach to analyze the issue since it helps the researcher answer the research problem by analyzing the historical event, social problem, time and place that become key components. The researcher also employed a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the primary data, that is the novel by Stephen Crane entitled *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, while the supporting data were taken from books, articles, journals, online sources, and other sources. The outcome demonstrates the existence of societal problems like unemployment and poverty, which Stephen Crane makes the novel's primary problem. Researchers discovered a resemblance between Maggie's poverty and unemployment and the historical period in the USA at the time. What Crane shows in his novel is that not all Americans, especially those in New York during the industrial revolution, have happy lives. Moreover, a large number of people experience unemployment and poor condition, which is made worse by the industrial revolution and the American Panic of 1893. These issues resemble the societal issues that are presented in the book.

**Keywords:** *Maggie; Neo-Historicism; Poverty; Stephen Crane; Unemployment*

# INTRODUCTION

When we talk about literature, it can also be regarded as the chief of art that is transmitted through spoken or written words. Literature contains the record of the values of people with their thoughts, problems and conflicts, in short, their whole life. It is also an imitation of the variation of experiences of people. Literary studies provide a window into a region's culture and conditions. Although the author of a novel creates a story through fictional characters to pique the reader's interest, the characters in the novel also represent a depiction of a real issue that exists in human daily life. Wellek stated "literature represents life; and life is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary imitation" (1956, p.94).

Based on the statement above, literary studies become one of the windows into understanding and interpreting the culture and situation of society. For example, American society at a given time, particularly minority issues. That is why in American Studies, literature, such as novels, short stories and poems. can be used as mental evidence to analyze the society in America. Literature can be used to understand the issues in society, especially in the US, such as poverty, civil war, Native Americans, abolished slavery, the women's movement, and others.

The story in literature, such as novels, is affected by many things, for example, the era in which they are created and published by the author, such as Naturalism. Emile Zola, a French novelist, proposed and formulated Naturalism, which was introduced to the US by American novelist Frank Norris. It is a harsher, new realism. Naturalism became a literary movement that used detailed realism in social conditions, heredity, and environment that inescapable force in shaping human character. In naturalism, characters can be studied through their relationships with their surroundings. Naturalists in American literature questioned the validity of comforting moral truths. They attempted to achieve extreme objectivity and frankness by portraying characters from lower social and economic classes who were influenced by their environment and heredity. Naturalism's pessimism and deterministic ideas pervaded the works of writers, such as Stephen Crane (Zhang, 2010 p. 195).

Crane was one of the most famous writers in American history. On November 1, 1871, Crane was born in Mulberry Place, Newark, New Jersey. His father died in 1880, and the family relocated to several locations in New Jersey. The Cranes eventually relocated to Asbury Park, New Jersey, where Stephen matured into his adolescence. Crane, the ninth child of Methodist parents, began writing at the age of 4 and had numerous essays published before the age of sixteen. Crane was a reporter for his brother's news agency in Asbury Park during the summer of 1891. In his leisure time, he also created drawings and stories. Crane lived in New York after his mother died and temporarily worked in a commercial enterprise and did some freelance writing (Britannica, 2022).

One of Crane's novels that belong to the naturalism era is his debut *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. In fact, it belongs to a modern novel presenting naturalism. After his mother died, Crane spent his fortune on the publication of the novel in 1893. The novelist

is often regarded by critics as the pioneering work of American literary Naturalism.

The novel is an observation of real life and the story's characters, which are depicted from their childhoods to their adult lives to better present the elaborating incidents of real life. The characters in the stories become victims of circumstance, struggling to overcome the social and economic problems that they were born with. Maggie's life turns tragic when she runs into problems in her bad environment, and she eventually commits suicide. Because of that researcher was interested in the issue of social problems, such as poverty and unemployment in the US during that era, and the parallels connection between the story and the era in the US at that time. Researchers will use the New-Historicism approach to analyze the problem.

## DISCUSSION

Literature is a social expression. Many researchers believe that literature reflects or expresses life. A writer frequently reflects on his or her own life experience and perspective. Literature such as novels can be a representative of age and society, this concept can be analyzed by using the Neo-Historicism approach.

New historicism is a literary theory that emphasizes the idea that all works of literature should be studied and understood in light of their context, such as the author, politics, economy, or history. Stephen Greenblatt, a critic and English professor at the University of California, Berkeley, invented the term "new historicism". Greenblatt created the term when he assembled a collection of articles and, in a desperate attempt to write the introduction, stated that the writings demonstrated

phenomena he referred to as the new historicism. New historicism rejects the idea of someone being able to know and draw a picture of an entire age; rather, new historicism believes that age is created by many cultural contexts and frequently leaves untold stories from the powerless (Mambrol, 2016).

New Historicism recognizes that a work of literature is influenced not only by its author, times and circumstances, but that any literary works also has time, place, and thus a historical event as key components, and that the key elements can be deciphered from the literary text following careful analysis of the text, even if these elements are not depicted by a writer in his or her work. In short, the new historicism also acknowledges that literature is "affected" by culture and environment. Tyson (2016 pp. 291-292) stated that,

> For new historicism, the literary text and the historical situation from which it emerged are equally important because text (the literary work) and context (the historical conditions that produced it) are mutually constitutive: they create each other. Like the dynamic interplay between individual identity and society, literary texts shape and are shaped by their historical contexts.

She (2016, p. 295) also further explains that,

> For new historical literary critics, then, the literary text, through its representation of human experience at a given time and place, is an interpretation of history…That is, the literary text shaped and was shaped by the discourses circulating in the culture in which it was produced. Likewise, our interpretations of literature shape and are shaped by the culture in which we live.

Based on the explanation above, a New Historicist examines literature from a broader

historical perspective, looking at both how the writer's times influenced the work and how the work represents the writer's periods, but also acknowledging that contemporary cultural settings distort the critic's judgment. New Historicism utilizes the poststructuralist theory that reality is created and multifaceted, as well as the Foucauldian understanding of power's involvement in knowledge creation (Harpham, 1991, p. 370). So, a parallel reading of a text with its sociocultural and historical conditions is very important in understanding literature from a Neo-historicism perspective. Because literature, for neo-historicist, has its own relationship to the larger culture, in analyzing literature we need to understand what "things" shaped the literature, such as history, culture, politics, economy, etc. The approach will be used by the researcher to find social issues, like poverty and unemployment, inside the novel that becomes the main problem in the story. This approach also will be used to analyze the economic and political condition of the US during that era.

**Poverty**

The first problem that appears in the novel is poverty. To examine the issue, the novel is set between 1880 and 1900 when the US population increased because of immigrants. The increased demand for municipal services, housing, jobs, and educational facilities overwhelmed the local government. Tensions between various groups erupted into violence, which local police were unable to contain. The definition of Poverty refers to having too little income to buy the necessities of food, shelter, clothing, or health care (Britannica, 2020).

The novel centers on Maggie, a young woman, who struggles to survive the harsh environment of the Bowery, a nineteenth-century New York City slum. Her father and mother are both alcoholics, and both are unemployed. She and her two brothers, Jimmie and Tommie, lived in poverty and were raised in an abusive household. Just like the following quotations.

> The girl, Maggie, blossomed in a mud puddle. She grew to be a rare and wonderful production of a tenement district, a pretty girl. None of the dirt of Rum Alley seemed to be in her veins. The philosophers, upstairs, downstairs, and on the same floor, puzzled over it. When a child, playing and fighting with gamins in the streets, dirt disgusted her. Attired in tatters and grime, she went unseen." (Crane, 1893, p. 21)

Maggie's family life is difficult (poor) because her parents are unemployed, based on the quotation above. Moreover, her parents do not have enough money to buy food, shelter, and clothing and are unable to obtain a good job because they are uneducated. Her parents have no experience or skills to work in a factory because, as we know, this story takes place at the end of the nineteenth century in New York City, during the era of industrialization. This era has an impact on the lives of people in the society at the time. Her parents are unable to support their children's lives due to a lack of funds. That is why their children have a negative attitude. Parents cannot be idols to their children. The poverty can be seen in the quotations below.

> A glow from the fire threw red hues over the bare floor, the cracked and soiled plastering, and the overturned and broken furniture. In the middle of the floor lay his mother asleep. In one

corner of the room his father's limp body hung across the seat of a chair." (Crane, 1893, p. 13)

It is also illustrated in the following excerpt,

Maggie broke a plate. The mother started to her feet as if propelled. "Good Gawd!" she howled. Her glittering eyes fastened on her child with sudden hatred. The fervent red of her face turned almost to purple. The little boy runs to the halls, shrieking like a monk in an earthquake. He floundered about darkness until he found the stairs. He stumbled, panic-stricken, to the next floor. (Crane, 1893, p. 10)

Those quotations above show that Maggie comes from a poor family. Her home has been shattered, with shattered door panels, cracked and filthy plastering, and overturned and damaged furniture. This narrative may have a poverty issue.

Above all, one could argue that Crane brings alcohol into play as an emphasis on the explication related to a cycle of poverty, since Brennan (1962) measures that the symbolic meaning behind the use of alcohol is to put into light that one's destiny, as well as the condition of the characters' lives, cannot be changed. As mentioned earlier, it is evident that Crane portrays Maggie's mother, Mary Johnson, as a tangible demonstrator of the destructive power of alcohol. When Mrs. Johnson is in her drunken rage, she is described as a violent person who has the heart to abuse everyone including her own children – let alone things, as she is breaking everything around her.

In fact, a plate is more valuable to her than her daughter to her mother because her mother knows she doesn't have enough money to buy a new one. That is why when Maggie broke one of the plates, she was very

afraid. Because her parents are very alike, they do not have a proper job and are constantly fighting. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* shows the poverty problem in American society at that time. The reason why Maggie's parents and other Americans during that time were stuck in poverty was Maggie's parents' unemployment. Other reasons are they lack skills because they are uneducated, they are extremely lazy. As a result, all they can do is drink alcohol, get angry, and fight. The fact that Maggie's parents are alcoholics makes them too lazy to help their families. Moreover, when they are in their cups, Mary Johnson is recklessly condemning Maggie in front of the public's eye and thus isolates her daughter from the community. One could agree that Mary Johnson's drunken rage is what causes Maggie to live on the street because she feels alienated.

**Unemployment**

Another problem that we can find in the novel is unemployment. Unemployment happens because of the labor surplus and lack of job field, in the end, many labor rejected because of age, competition of younger workers, technical changes in the industry, merging of computations, business depressions and illness. It is very clear to see the unemployment problem as a social problem revealed in this novel. The following quotation will make it clear.

In the street infants played or fought with other infants or sat stupidly in the way of vehicles. Formidable women, with uncombed hair and disordered dress, gossiped while leaning on railings, or screamed in frantic quarrels. Withered persons, in curious postures of submission to something, sat smoking pipes in obscure corners. A thousand

odors of cooked food came forth to the street. The building quivered and creaked from the weight of humanity stamping about in its bowels. (Crane, 1893, p. 5)

Maggie's parents are uneducated. They lack work experience. It renders them jobless and prevents them from doing everything. Aside from that, they live in the tenements of the Bowery, a slum area of New York City, making it difficult for them to find work. As good parents, they must do everything possible to provide for their children's daily needs. But the truth is that they are too lazy to look for work. They give up on their real life, and as a result, they have no responsibility as a good parent. They tried to find work, but they were unsuccessful because they lacked quality, and their living situation shows the general economic problem in that era. They are depressed and unable to think correctly. They give up on their normal lives, it makes them careless. They turn to alcohol and waste their time by drinking alcohol until they are drunk.

Even more, in accordance with the discussion related to one's being uneducated, the characters in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* are all stuck in the prejudice of their fate with no way out because of the inability to think further in a more critical way to see the other perspective in a solutive manner besides their own. Critic Don Dingledine (2006) points out how the behavior and actions of the characters in the novel are all closely related to their condition of being in poverty. Maggie specifically, is one of the subjects of this environment as it has already molded the outgrowth of her life despite her best effort to improve her lie of the land by marrying Pete. Don Dingledine examines this issue which shows that there is a socially-

constructed behavior as the reason why they are impoverished.

> During the evening he had been standing against a bar drinking whiskies, and declaring to all comers confidentially, "My home reg'lar livin'hell! Why do I come an'drin' whisk' here this way? Cause home reg'lar livin' hell"!. (Crane, 1893, p. 12)

Actually, not only Maggie's parents are unemployed in that slum, but so are many others. The novel reveals that the old woman in Maggie's parents' neighborhood is also unemployed. Every day, she takes a seat on Fifth Avenue's stones. She is a beggar there, and she receives a small sum in pennies every day from people who walk in front of her. She will go to any length to obtain money. The difficulties in her life lead her to believe that everything is fair. She will try a variety of methods to obtain food, clothing, and shelter, and then she will survive. Just like being stated by the quotation below.

> The old woman was a gnarled and leathery personage who could not at will an expression of great virtue. She possessed a small music box capable of one tune, and a collection of "God bless yehs" pitched in assorted keys of fervency. Each day she took a position upon the stones of Fifth Avenue, where she crooked her legs under her and crouched, immovable and hideous, like an idol. She received a small sum in pennies daily. It was contributed, for the most part, by persons who did not make their homes in that vicinity." (Crane, 1893, p. 11)

Unemployment is widely regarded as a significant global social and economic issue. The majority of people who become unemployed remain unemployed for only a short time. However, there is a hard core of unemployed people who have been out of

work for extended periods. Maggie's family lives in a rough, poor, and filthy neighborhood. Families in that area are unemployed and impoverished. Their daily suffering causes them to be unconcerned about themselves and their surroundings. They do not have enough money to buy clothes, repair their damaged home, or further their education.

Maggie's parents and the elderly woman are willing to go to any length to obtain what they require for themselves. For example, the old woman will do anything to get money although what she did to the young lady belongs to criminal action. She doesn't think that what she does will risk her own safety because all she needs is money. At her age, where most women will avoid doing things that belong to criminal action, but she does the other way. Because the suffering of life makes everyone do bad things although it can bring them to jail. Just like described by the quotation below.

> Once, when a lady had dropped her purse on the sidewalk, the gnarled woman had grabbed it and smuggled it with great beneath her cloak. When she was arrested she had cursed the lady into a partial swoon, and with her aged limbs, twisted from rheumatism, had kicked the breath out of huge policeman whose conduct upon that occasion she referred to when she said, "The police, damn'em!" "Eh, Jimmie, it's a shame," she said. "Go now, like a dear, an' buy me a can, an' if yer mudder raises'ell all night, yehs can sleep here." (Crane, 1893, p. p.11).

The unemployment problem in America during that era is depicted in the story, As a result of their lack of education, the majority of people living in the Bowery tenements are unable to obtain employment. The majority

of them do not attend school due to financial constraints. Maggie's parents spend all of their time smoking pipes and drinking alcohol until they forget everything. The elderly woman then becomes a beggar to earn some money and purchase alcohol to drink. Because of that, everyone who lives in the Bowery must do everything to survive, even though it means they must be criminals or fall into prostitution. Through their performances of class problems, poverty, unemployment and prostitutes, Maggie exposes urban savagery in the New York slum area at that time, the place that is known as a hard place to live (von Cannon, 2015, p. 43).

## Parallel Connection between the Story and the Era

When using the Neo-Historicism approach, researchers need to analyze external aspects, such as history, politics and economy. Because in Neo-historicism, this aspect has a vital role and parallel connection in shaping the story of the novel. It is in accordance with Tyson (2016, p. 291-292),

> For new historicism, the literary text and the historical situation from which it emerged are equally important because text (the literary work) and context (the historical conditions that produced it) are mutually constitutive: they create each other. Like the dynamic interplay between individual identity and society, literary texts shape and are shaped by their historical contexts.

The parallel connection between the novel and the era can be seen from the time settings of the story. It represents the industrialization era in America, especially in New York and the Panic of 1893. Crane reacted to this romanticized and homogenized view of American life, in his

novel Maggie, by showing New York that he had seen himself. It was a New York of the poor, the drunken, and the desperate, people blinded by hypocrisy or driven by necessity, profane and corrupted. Crane saw this portrait of New York as necessary honesty; most of his contemporaries thought it was improper, even scandalous. The story of Maggie is also influenced by the story of his life, Stephan Crane is not a lucky and rich kid; he lives during the revolution industry and the panic of 1893. Yet, his father passed away when he was still a child and he lives with his single-parent mother, just like Maggie. As we know, Maggie in the story is very unlucky, born into a poor family, her father and brother die so she needs to live with her drunken mother.

With that being said, as the US gained ground as an industrialized nation, "an unprecedented influx of immigrants contributed to a boom in population," (Holton, 1972, p. 54). The influx directly affected the number of populations, meaning that more people have to compete even rigorously to get what they need to survive. These alterations are closely related to the core cause of poverty; illustrating that the majority of the US population was skeptical about the dependency on the fluctuation of the global economy.

> Crane did not have an easy childhood. The family moved often, and his father died, of what seems to have been a heart attack, in 1880. In 1886, the local paper reported that his mother was "suffering from a temporary aberration of the mind… He explored New York in for two years, while living with his brothers upstate (Crain, 2014).

The parallel condition of social problems in the novel and the era can be seen at the beginning of the industrial revolution, industrial workers have been critical to the survival of the American economy. The lives of American industrial workers have always been difficult, but between 1865 and 1900, their lives were made both easier and more difficult by the impact of technological changes, immigration, and labor unions. Between 1865 and 1900, technological advancements had an impact on American industrial workers. Technology made certain jobs easier and faster to complete, allowing more to be produced in less time. Because of the invention of electricity and lamps, work could be done at any time. However, as a result of these technological advances, workers had much less job security, and their wages became lower than the standard of living at the time. Skilled artisans, who were once high valued tasks, were now replaced by machines. And these things became the reason for the increasing poverty and unemployment in America during that time.

> Skilled workers proved remarkably successful at maintaining their position through the 1880s, but they had to fight to do so. The relatively high wages for skilled workers led employers to seek ways to replace skilled with unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Mechanization provided the best tactic for deskilling work and lowering wages. Many of the bitterest strikes of the period were attempts to control working rules and to maintain rather than raise wages (Hine, 2011).

The problem is not just for those who find it hard to make money because they need to compete with machines and technologies. But, also for those who are still working, the workers were underpaid.

> In 1890, 11 million of the nation's 12 million families earned less than $1200

per year; of this group, the average annual income was $380, well below the poverty line. Rural Americans and new immigrants crowded into urban areas. Tenements spread across city landscapes, teeming with crime and filth. Americans had sewing machines, phonographs, skyscrapers, and even electric lights, yet most people labored in the shadow of poverty. (pbs.org)

The statement shows that during 1890, many American workers were underpaid, even though most of them were classified below the poverty line. During that time the average income of Americans was $380. That is way too less to fulfill their daily life. it becoming worse with the wave of immigrants that come to the US for the American Dream, to get a better life. During that time the US as a nation almost had everything, including technologies, machines, skyscrapers, and resources, but their workers are stuck in poverty. Some of them also conducted criminal action because of their life in the shadow of poverty.

Another parallel between the story in the novel and the political and economic problems in that age is the Panic of 1893. It was one of the worst in American history, with unemployment exceeding. The Panic of 1893 was a national economic crisis precipitated by the failure of two of the country's largest employers, the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad and the National Cordage Company. The failure of these two companies triggered a stock market panic. Stevens (1894, p. 121) states,

> Leading railway securities traded in at the New York Stock Exchange declined sharply, the months of November and December in 1890 presenting marked panic symptoms in Wall Street.

Moreover, he also explains that

> The stock market showed extreme nervousness. Gold was going abroad freely, and banks were finding it important to be more conservative in making discounts as well as collateral or stock market loans. Meanwhile the cloud which hung over the trade situation darkens (Stevens, 1894, p. 124).

Many companies go bankrupt because they cannot afford to pay their laborers. So this problem then created poverty and unemployment in America during that time became worse. In the story, Maggie's parents are unemployed, they do not have work to do because of their lack of skills they have. During that time when workers compete with machines, skills are very important to help people to get jobs and better lives. However, Maggie's parents failed to do so; they lived in poverty and failed to raise their children properly.

Stephen Crane created this story to show us that not all Americans, especially during the industrialization in New York, can get a good life. Many of them then become unemployed and live in (poverty), it also becomes worse, with the Panic of 1893 that happened in America. This economic problem then created many companies bankrupt and their workers became jobless and increasing the poverty in America at that time, just like what happened to Maggie's parents and the people who lived in his area.

## CONCLUSION

In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Crane employs sarcastic approaches that come under naturalism to convey topics of societal issues. The connections between the novel and the period can be seen by employing a new historicism perspective. Maggie's main focus is on social issues like unemployment

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and poverty. Problems with class, gender, and identity then intersect in the New York slum region at that time. Maggie and her family can survive in the Bowery, which is described as an 'amoral' environment where the struggle for identity and validity begins at a young age, despite their struggles from the start of their lives to the end. Crane argues through realistic language that Maggie's family lives in a world of dread, rage, and evil where morality has no place. The socioeconomic issues of poverty and unemployment that Maggie's narrative highlights are also prevalent in that period in American history, which coincides with the industrial revolution and the Panic of 1893. Crane shows via Maggie that not all Americans, especially those in New York during the industrial revolution, lead happy lives. After then, a large number of people experience unemployment and ill health, which is made worse by the industrial revolution and the American Panic of 1893. These issues are comparable to societal issues that Maggie's parents and residents in her neighborhood dealt with. In the narrative, Maggie, her parents, and her neighbor are mostly jobless and without employment, which keeps them in poverty, mirroring the situation of the majority of Americans at the time.

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# WILLIAM LUTHER PIERCE'S *THE TURNER DIARIES* ON *NEO-NAZI* VIOLENCE LANGUAGE USAGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA PROPAGANDA "UNITE THE RIGHT" RALLY

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## ABSTRACT

The US has a long history of revolution where the ideological and cultural systems are deep rooted in the people. Apart from its democratic system, the country is also full of conservative ideology of racism, where one of them is Neo Nazi. This article employs in-depth method using Structural-Functional Approach to describing how *neo-Nazi* compiling their power as a group, Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze how William Luther Pierce's *The Turner Diaries* can make impact of the movement, and *Neo-Nazi* as a white supremacy ideology based on post-nationalism concept showed that the similar norms and perspective in different countries can lead to unity and integration as well as omit borders from Germany to the United States. Moreover, factors of language and government system can also intensify of the method result. From the confederation and *The Turner Diaries*, the ideas of white supremacy were disseminated and manifested through the parade and Jason Kessler's propaganda in social media towards the campaign of anti-Jewish, Asian, and black people. All the factors matter for the *neo-Nazi* movement to run the rally and the fuel for defending their identity.

**Keywords:** *Neo Nazi; Post-nationalism; The Turner Diaries*

## INTRODUCTION

On August 11 and 12, 2017, the "Unite the Right" rally occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia; This was one of the largest, most violent gatherings in the United States in decades. The rally brought together various racist, anti-Semitic, white nationalist, and White Supremacist groups, including the alt-right, *neo-Nazi*, and the Ku Klux Klan (Macfarquhar, 2021). Kessler, the rally organizer, claimed that the rally's goal was to save the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee symbolized the triumph of white people during the Civil War. During the rally, hundreds of people came to Charlottesville to march and show their anti-Semitic and racist views. Protesters chanted

"you will not replace us", "Jews will not replace us", and "blood and soil" (Jake, 2018), directly echoing the chants and slogans used in Nazi Germany. Many brought full battle gear, including torches, weapons, shields, and flags with Nazi and Confederate insignia. Many openly gave Nazi salutes during the marches (Jake, 2018). There were numerous fights with counter-protesters throughout the day.

The Daily Stormer, a *neo-Nazi* news site, used meme *Jews will not replace Us* to drum up enthusiasm for the demonstration. GoDaddy initially provided the Daily Stormer's domain name before moving to Google; both companies eventually revoked the website's registration (Sharwood, 2018). Furthermore, just as the violence was unfolding in Charlottesville, the Guardian published a story about how young white men are becoming radicalized through YouTube videos that uploaded by *neo-Nazi* and White Supremacist (Sharwood, 2018). The videos contain the ideas that idea that white people are oppressed by non-white groups such as Jews. The demolishment of Statue Robert E Lee can be portrayed a disgrace to White Pride heritage as their symbol of their freedom history. The Internet has helped White Supremacists' ideas and organization.

Along with the racist movement and ideology, the people apparently adhere to various White Supremacist and Nazi ideology references, of which is *The Turner Diaries* (Boucher, 2021). The novel is written by Spencer William Pierce focusing on how white people must raise against non-white people. Its presence of shapes the form of US society based on racial discourses and messages. Thus, this research attempts to

analyze the use of social media and its influence the movement.

## DISCUSSION

### Effect of the Literature

In modern fascist propaganda, novels have replaced political manifestos, Military manuals, and missionary testimonies (Robert, 2004). This type of didactic fiction is written in a realism loop through modes and increasingly plausible *neo-Nazi* terrorism and guerrilla scenarios of rebellion, fierce ethnic conflict, and fascist dictatorship. It can dodge avoiding censorship and punishment, these fictions belong to the moment of a fascist strategy of "leaderless resistance". The influential ideology wrote the terrorist organization, activation of the movement from a legally protected distance, and their role as literary writers, magazine editors, and religious prophets. After the surge of far-right authoritarians' recent domestic terrorism and social mobilization, those concerned about democracy and tolerance can no longer afford to ignore this phenomenon.

These fictions share a very similar starting point for a fictional dystopia. Includes democratic constitutional efforts to curb fascist uprisings and Separatist rebellion. However, they fan out to cover the most crucial religious terrain Far Right in America: More on Nazis, the Christian identitarian movement, and anti-Christian Neopaganism (Barkun, 2018, p. 1–19).

This Journal focused on millennial religion's centrality towards neo-Nazism is in stark contrast—ultranationalist and pseudo-evolution of classical Nazi politics. Dystopia, a scenario detailing the neo-Nazi imagination,

explains why. The Nazi religion sacrifices violence and sanctifies the elite. It is a valuable review of Racist Rights Literature and Millennium Existence (Kaplan, 2018, p. 503).

They do not propose sanctification as idealism and find this in the function of neo-Nazi religion or systematic historical issues with the effect of fascist promotion. To motivate this research acceptance of this hypothesis, start by contrasting classical and modern Nazism along the axes changed for obvious reasons-neo-Nazism. This significant and unavoidable fact poses a severe problem for fascist promotion—recruitment of fascists. In the literary expression that spreads neo-Nazi politics, Nazi religion has emerged as a solution with the effect of fascist promotion. To motivate this research acceptance of this hypothesis, start by contrasting classical and modern Nazism along the axes changed for obvious reasons neo-Nazism. This significant and unavoidable fact poses a severe problem for fascist promotion—recruitment of fascists. In the literary expression that spreads neo-Nazi politics, Nazi religion has emerged as a solution with the main idea of the politics such democracy or socialist. Neo-Nazi spread their ideology on this as their acceptance of influence.

**Fascist Literature for Propaganda**

The publication of *The Turner Diaries* showed a marked change in far-right message distribution. J.M. Burger, who studies extremist ideology, said Pierce and the National Alliance downplayed swastikas and instead focused on creating propaganda that could bypass mainstream media gatekeepers and appeal to more viewers. It is

rarely found in *The Turner Diaries* due to explicit conversion. Instead, it embeds the reader in a story popularized by decades of dystopian fantasy. Pierce himself is a sci-fi fan, and his novel uses the intersection of sci-fi and far-right conspiracy theory to make White Supremacists, many books, movies, and cartoons (Aja Romano, 2021).

Fascism is part of a popular imagination that can be difficult to recognize accurately or efficiently reject. It tells a story we already know. When Congressman Marjorie Taylor Greene says a Jewish-controlled space laser is the cause of a wildfire in California, it is easy to dismiss it as a stupid pulp fantasy. However, *The Turner Diaries* show that our dreams are not necessarily innocent, no matter how stupid or familiar. They can lead us to hatred and murder.

**Critical Discourse Analysis on Internalized Ideology**

Pierce's attempt was written in *The Turner Diaries* under Andrew Macdonald's pseudonym. Combine visionary statements about recruitment campaigns, rebellion manuals, and fascist utopia into one piece. These three intents are one after another. Inspector Earl Turner defines a plot of books based on the adventures of participating in a fascist movement called an organization and discovering its secret directorate, the religious order.

Due to the popularity of *The Turner Diaries*, William Luther Pierce endured the ideology of perhaps the most influential modern fascist in the US. Turner's story is studded with commentary by a fictional editor writing in the distant future, from the armed and advancing gun control rebellion to the heroic suicide bombing of the Pentagon.

This figure proudly fills the story of the world history of millennium origin.

The description of the story of *The Turner Diaries* novel above requires a social dimension, namely the first dimension of the text, the second dimension of discursive praxis, and the third dimension of socio-cultural praxis.

**Text Dimension**

In the novel, there are ideological words that are fought for. Through these words, the author wants to convey his ideology. The author invites the reader to be able to interpret the ideological words that are often used.

> What's happening now is reminiscent of the media campaign against Hitler and the Germans back in the 1940s stories about Hitler flying into rages and chewing carpets, phony German plans for the invasion of America, babies being skinned alive to make lampshades and then boiled down into soap, girls kidnapped and sent to Nazi "stud farms." The Jews convinced the American people that those stories were true, and the result was World War II, with millions of the best of our race butchered—by us—and all of eastern and central Europe turned into a huge, communist prison camp. (Peirce, 1978, p. 19)

The word 'Jews' shows a relation of ideological meanings about how the Jews when they can take over a country will only create a war in which they deliberately use their power and authority. The power and authority are not based on the task assigned but on personal ambition. Sometimes more on the interests of the group when needed. It is even worse when power and authority are used for personal and group gain.

> For now, we mustn't let them know that they are all inevitably headed for the gallows. Let them think they can make a deal with us and save their necks when the System falls. Only the Jews are under no illusions in this regard. (Peirce, 1978, p. 24)

The data shows how the author writes that if the group referring to is for white people to stay strong, they must work together to bring down the system the Jews gave them. It reinforces an ideology that creates a slogan that exists today, such as "Jews do not replace us". These are also the slogans they spread on social media and the internet to grow hatreds among the white Americans. Furthermore, a desirable interest in the quote above is reinforced by Macdonald's statement (2019, p. 11).

> We are building the core of a new society, a whole new civilization that rises from the ashes of the old. Moreover, since our civilization is based on a very different worldview than today, we can only replace other civilizations in a revolutionary way. There is no way for a society based on Aryan religious values and Aryan worldview to emerge peacefully from a society that has succumbed to Jewish spiritual corruption.

The discourse of how cruel the Jews are is also explained in detail in the novel so that in this case the word 'Jews' intended for the Jews as a whole has an ideology where American society is required to fight the Jews for what they do.

> The subsequent interrogation sessions were worse—much worse. Because a public "show trial" was planned for me, presumably in the Adolf Eichmann manner, Rubin avoided the eye-gouging and finger-cutting, which would have disfigured me, but the things he did were full as painful. (Note to the reader: Adolf

Eichmann was a middle-level German official during World War II. Fifteen years after the war, in 39 BNE, he was kidnapped in South America by Jews, flown to Israel, and made the central figure in an elaborately staged, two-year propaganda campaign to evoke sympathy from the non-Jewish world for Israel, the only haven for "persecuted" Jews. After fiendish torture, Eichmann was displayed in a soundproof glass cage during a four-month show trial in which he was condemned to death for "crimes against the Jewish people.")" (Peirce, 1978, p. 34)

The word 'Jews' used by the author is still consistent to describe how racist or cruel the Jews were at that time in giving torture to a World War II criminal named Adolf Eichmann, amid the efforts of neo-Nazi to defend their ideology so that Jews could not pit each other against each other (Lippman, 2002).. From their point of view as a neo-Nazi group, the Jews have historically done many ways to be able to control countries. This point of view is the scenario of the Nazi party campaign that incites the German people to hunt down the Jews because the German people feel that the Jews control the economy and society of the German people. For the neo-Nazi, the US is also in grave danger because the evilest kind of Jewish nation has come there.

The author holds interactional control in determining ideological words. The 'in-text' readers and 'out-of-text' readers are controlled by the Author in their interactions. The author is dominant in determining interactional. When being read, the identity of the author in constructing the readers appears through the language used.

**Dimensions of Discourse Practices**

Through this novel genre, the author can develop critical discourse and ideas of ideological progressive resistance. The author fights and stands tall to change the social order. readers can easily interpret word for word that is woven by the author. The choice of ideological words that are common and often heard in everyday society, in this novel makes it easy for readers to digest and understand them.

The author is observant and understanding in exploring and explaining his ideological discourse of hatred towards Jews based on history in the past and the presumed-fairness for white people in peace. As citizens of the nation who represent the collective subject of their society through the discourse genre of this novel, the reader is presented with ironies that question the reader's self-awareness of the political condition of the US.

All the liberals and the Jews had to do was begin screeching about "inhumanity" or "injustice" or "genocide," and most of our people who had been beating around the edges of a solution took to their heels like frightened rabbits. Because there was never a way to solve the race problem which would be "fair for everybody or which everyone concerned could be politely persuaded into accepting without any fuss or unpleasantness, they kept trying to evade it, hoping that it would go away by itself. And the same has been true of the Jewish problem and the immigration problem and the overpopulation problem and the eugenics problem and a thousand related problems. Yes, the inability to face reality and make difficult decisions, is the salient symptom of the liberal disease. Always trying to avoid a minor unpleasantness now, so that a major

unpleasantness becomes unavoidable later, always evading any responsibility to the future— that is the way the liberal mind works. (Peirce, 1978, p. 16)

The novel sentences presented are no different from informative sentences which have the function of telling strengthening the reader's understanding. In this perspective, the reader is invited to realize how the world of politics in the country where they live is shameful, disgusting, and has no pride for American society. The appearance of direct sentences in this novel as grammatical sentences is very easy to understand by the reader, allowing readers to develop their interpretations with the end forming hatred towards government officials, political parties, high-ranking institutions, cronies, friends, colleagues, and even administrators of other related organizations. with the government system in the US as liberals who like to avoid problems. The dichotomy of 'Institutional injustice' is built so that it creates hatred from readers as a social representation of the collective people who live suffering against state officials who live in arbitrariness.

**Dimensions of Sociocultural Practice**

This dimension focuses on the social struggles that occur and determine a discourse. It is assumed that texts and social structures are mediated by the social context of the discourse. The novel is composed from a Nazi understanding into a neo-Nazi who felt oppressed by the Jews. neo-Nazi groups argue that most non-Jewish Americans are people who have felt and survived the chaotic government in the United States caused by Jews, political parties, and high-ranking institutions.

But there's more than one kind of quality that's important to us. Most Americans are still coping, some barely and some quite successfully. They haven't dropped out, because they lack a certain sensitivity—a sensitivity which I believe we in the Organization share with Elsa and the best of her friends—a sensitivity that allows us to smell the stink of this decaying society and which makes us gag. The copers out there, just like many of the non-copers, either can't smell the stink or it doesn't bother them. The Jews could lead them to any kind of pigsty at all, and as long as there was plenty of swills they would adapt to it. Evolution has made skilled survivors of them, but it has failed them in another respect. (Peirce, 1978, p. 32)

The data excerpt informs the reader of the binary opposition between neo-Nazi and Jews. The author assumes that there are still many Americans who struggle to survive in society. They are said to be people who survive the decay of society but have a sensitivity to the dangers in it. The author adds that those who are strong enough to persevere can eventually be led to the plans or agenda of the Jewish people although there are those who survive but also many who fail in the experiment.

There is also a struggle between the author's ideology and the ideology of state officials. The democracy adopted by high-ranking officials is transactional democracy, which is based on buying and selling (means of exchange of interests). Social justice embraced by the authorities is liberal social justice. On the other hand, the author defends the people who are in a position of being oppressed, suffering, and powerless to fight back. This ideological struggle is what builds the literary discourse of this novel. The social struggle of the American non-Jewish

community, the 'oppressed' community with the 'oppressor' community, is the main problem in this novel. The contradiction between what is enjoyed by the ruler and what is experienced by the people. This is an expression of the author's anger in the production of this novel because of social inequality and the indecisiveness of the leader of this country. The leader of this country is not in line with his attitude and actions. The author also confirms that state or government officials only prioritize the interests of the Jews who will rule the world. These statements and views cannot be considered true in their entirety just because of hatred for groups like Jews. This pattern of thinking is no different from the ideological thought of fascism which has been buried deep in the dark history of world wars.

There is only one fascist utopia, a destructive orgasm motivated by other hatreds where satisfaction and destruction are the same. Destruction and reconstruction, on the other hand, merge into an indefinite "transformation" that invites believers to "force the millennium" through political violence. This is very devastating from the bondage of oppression. Introducing ferocious champions like chastity belts and whiplash torchbearers who give up their instinctive satisfaction read in the secrets of nature. "Inner knowledge carved into our souls by the Creator": The instinct of life is death. Suicide is associated with authoritarian discipline in life. Mental impulses are spelled out in catechism as "a man who has not mastered this. The chaos of conflicting forces within itself cannot do full service" (Pierce, 2013).

The affinity of such authoritarian doctrine for terrorist activity is apparent, but what does it have to do with fascist violence in particular? Against this background, the purpose of the fascist religion is to provide ideal comfort and imaginary solidarity. "Boobus Americanus" connects 1% and 99% Fascist Religious Express. It does not provide universal social glue or popular political justification. Instead, nationalism plays this role temporarily and generously in the transition from authoritarianism—populism for the holistic system and populism for the full-scale war. Instead, the fascist religion is a "spiritual person" or superman, believing in this choice and oppression, the force necessary to carry out suicide bombings and atrocities.

*The Turner Diaries* says so explicitly. Earl Turner starts at important points Order, a religious order with esoteric teachings, leads to an organization inside. While the story of *The Turner Diaries* concerns the historical achievement of the fascist utopia through an orgiastic release of apocalyptic violence, the novel's plot formally resembles a tale of redemption. The sparse details of this religious experience is in line with Macdonald's remark (2019, p. 71).

> What I had read . . . had lifted me out of this world, out of my day-to-day existence as an underground fighter . . . and it had taken me to the top of a high mountain from which I could see the whole world, with all its nations and tribes and races, spread out before me. And I could see the ages spread out before me too, from the steaming, primordial swamps of millions of years ago to the unlimited possibilities which the centuries and the millennia ahead hold for us. … For the first time, I understood the deepest meaning of what we are doing. I understand now why we cannot fail, no matter what we must do to win and no matter how many of us

must perish in doing it. Everything that has been and everything that is yet to depend on us. We are truly the instruments of God in the fulfillment of His Grand Design.

When the mob invaded the Capitol in the wake of President Trump, some saw something chilling in parallel with the events described in the novel. Experts of the far-right rhetoric notes the book has long been a reference point for White Supremacists who see the government as a repressive force that must be overthrown.

**Cons of The Discourse**

*The Turner Diaries* contains content that is contradictory with people of certain identities, one of which is Jews (McAlear, 2009). The discourse in this novel certainly has an effect or consequence for those who read and hear it. With hate speech and incitement to fight, the effects of this novel's discourse are counterintuitive to American society. In this meme, it can be seen that there are contradictions from society, such as one of the memes that reads "IT'S ALL IN THE TURNER DIARIES" which illustrates that the person who believes everything in the book is nothing more than an innocent and ignorant child. With the presence of this meme, it becomes an illustration that not all Americans agree with the contents and ideas contained in the novel.

**The Relationship of Post-Nationalism with Neo-Nazi and White Supremacy**

The emergence of neo-Nazi and White Supremacy in the concept of post-nationalism does not seem to have a strong stance in a country. Compared to other movements such as Feminism and LGBTQ, the existence of neo-Nazi and White Supremacy have a very limited support or power to sustain their campaign (Rudy & Adhitya, 2022, 334). Basically, although they have some supporters from other countries, but their movement cannot drive or control the opinion or perspective of the government. First of all, it is related to the level of mass where this movement tends to be selective in choosing their followers, especially those who are Caucasian and white. Meanwhile, Feminism and LGBTQ cover almost the whole backgrounds of people around the world (Motta et al., 2011). Then, neo-Nazi and White Supremacy cannot adjust their goals to the system of the government. Although the US is a free speech and expression country, this country doesn't tolerate violence and racism because these things would destroy the true meaning of democracy. Thus, this movement is a utopian from the glory of German Nazi that had gone long time ago. That is why this movement would never get support from any country.

This term of utopia, however, does not mean that it cannot stimulate the fanatic of this ideology, as hatred towards Jewish does not fade hitherto. For instance, neo-Nazi in Germany launched its action during the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur in Eastern Germany. He attempted to bomb the synagogue but failed and eventually killed a passerby (Kahn, 2021). This occasion could be traced back to the times of the US free speech about neo-Nazi and the Berlin Wall where West Germany also tried to 'denazify' its country and the people. The US free speech became an obstacle as well as the support of neo-Nazi to grow bigger.

Even though the US is the receiver of the Nazi ideology influence, this country also spread it to other countries, including

Australia (Hutchinson et al., 2022). The case of Dingocon in Australia by Mike Peinovich showed that the influence of this ideology from the US could affect any country. However, it would happen if the targets have similar characteristics with the influence, which is the movement. Since many of Australians are identified as white men, then this country is suitable to the vision of neo-Nazi and White Supremacy. Additionally, Australia and The US as western nations have the same language that enables them to interact and communicate easily. *neo-Nazi* and White Supremacy can be very limited in their scope of ideology spread where they will apply a strict selection to the targets.

## CONCLUSION

Regarding the inclination of contradicting, certain social movements can be influenced with a perspective or ideology, analyzed in this research. As the neo-Nazi ideology is rooted in the US through social movements such as White Supremacist, Alt-right, and KKK. These groups are in attempt to raise the hatred and oppositions towards other groups, including those considered as Jews. In social media, they use words to persuade the readers. Furthermore, *The Turner Diaries* is based on three dimensions has encouraged the people to spread their ideology and belief about neo-Nazi. Based on the dimensions of text, this novel uses the word 'Jews' several times and frames the group as vicious and brutal. First of all, this novel denies the history where Nazi tortured and killed Jews by blaming that the history was lies of Jews. This novel also cites an example of Adolf Eichmann who was kidnapped and executed. Based on the dimensions of discourse practices, this novel pertains to the condition of the US where the government and Jews

have collaborated on the basis of liberalism to avoid minor problems and create bigger problems. The last, this novel also states that the Jews have created a decayed society and endangered the white people. As for the social-culture practice, the novels ask them as survivors to unite and keep strong as survivors to fight against the Jews. Apart from the dimensions, this novel apparently got counter-attack from memes in the internet. One of the memes shows a picture that has a message that people who believe in the novel are just children without knowledge and sensibility.

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# THE THOUGHTS CONSTRUCTION OF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IN MAKING FOREIGN POLICY TO END THE WAR BETWEEN THE US AND TALIBAN

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## ABSTRACT

The war between the US and the Taliban began after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. President Bush immediately sent US military troops to Afghanistan to capture the leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist group, Osama bin Laden. It is known that President Obama was sheltered by the Taliban in Afghanistan. During the Obama's administration, bin Laden was successfully killed in 2011. The war between the US and the Taliban will continue until President Trump's leadership. He considers that the goals of this war have been realized, targeting Al-Qaida leaders and that nothing is profitable for the US in continuing the war. According to Trump's thinking, in 2020 there will be a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban. To answer this fact, this article will use constructivist theory to explain the construction of Bush's thoughts, the result of which is the United States' political policy towards the war in Afghanistan. Therefore, this journal will discuss the construction of Trump's thoughts on ending the long war between the US and the Taliban. So that this paper can see how Trump's thought construction can end the war and what the real impact is for the US. From this, it can be concluded that the result of Trump's thought construction is to protect US citizens and interests in the economic and military fields.

**Keywords:** *9/11 attack; peace agreement; terrorist; thought construction; war*

## INTRODUCTION

The United States of America had a dark history on September 11, 2001. Terrorist attacks damaged the Pentagon Building and the World Trade Center (WTC), two symbols and hubs of US activity. (Kean, 2004) The attack killed 2,977 people in Washington, D.C, Pennsylvania, and New York and was successful in instilling fear and a sense of menace in American citizens. (CNN, 2022) The attack happened in two phases. Hundreds of people perish on the plane and nearby when the first attack destroys the structure on the north side. The second

assault then struck the building's south flank. The attack resulted in a huge explosion, which left the road underneath the WTC building and the surrounding buildings covered in debris. Most of the victims—including hijackers and crew members as well as passengers—were on board aircraft. When two commercial jets that had been hijacked by terrorists collided with the WTC skyscraper, which had become a symbol for the United States and was believed to be sturdy and resilient, it was instantly destroyed (Hakim, 2019).

After 9/11 attacks, when President George W. Bush was leading the US, Bush hurriedly put together a war cabinet that included Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Chief of Staff Andy Card, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Finding and addressing the source of attacks is the main objective of US military intelligence. Direct efforts by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) led to the identification of Osama bin Laden's militant Islamic terrorist group, Al-Qaeda (Ilardi, 2009). On the other hand, bin Laden is protected by the Taliban, Afghanistan's hardline Islamic regime, and Al-Qaeda trains battalions of terrorists in its facilities. Bin Laden utilized his personal riches to assist the Taliban in exchange for safety. Bush also gave a statement, "Every country and territory must now make a choice. You either support us or you support terrorists", which became known as the Bush Doctrine (Byers, 2002).

Terrorist groups in Afghanistan are totally controlled by the Taliban, which is bin Laden's hiding spot and where he fully funds this group's financial demands and military weapons for carrying out its terrorist acts. The Al Qaeda network has expanded its links and schemes against the US and its allies while avoiding punishment or sanctions for terrorist acts committed (Benjamin & Kirby, 2006). After 9/11 attacks, the Bush Administration decided to militarily overthrow the Taliban when it refused a U.S. demand to extradite Bin Laden. President Bush articulated a policy that equated those who harbor terrorists to terrorists themselves, and asserted that a friendly regime in Kabul was needed to enable U.S. forces to search for Al Qaeda members there. Major combat in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF) began on October 7, 2001. The US effort initially consisted primarily of US air-strikes on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, facilitated by the cooperation between reported small numbers (about 1,000) of US special operations forces and Central Intelligence Agency operatives. The purpose of these operations was to help the Northern Alliance and Pashtun anti-Taliban forces advance by directing US air strikes on Taliban positions (Thomas, 2017). The war between the US and the Taliban continued even though President Bush's administration ended in 2009 after leading for two terms.

President Obama, who was elected as the 44th President of the United States in 2009, continues to manage the United States. Under Obama's presidency, there was a strong trend toward centralized US policymaking with thorough consideration and prudence, as well as personal control over every facet of policy. Obama's decision-making mindset, like that of most other new presidents, was influenced by his learning from the previous administration's mistakes. As a result, Obama attempted to carry out a policy by directly focusing on the issue of terrorism in order to

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*the War Between Us and Taliban*

combat the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, which was believed to be the foundation of terrorism, while minimizing Afghan victims (Husna, 2012).

Obama promised in a speech on August 1, 2007, that he would bring change to the US in response to 9/11 attack by boosting civilian capability, in contrast to President Bush, who used military operations as a strategy against terrorism. Obama has a different perspective than Bush, in which the theme of President Bush's War on Terror has been replaced with a strategic commitment against the new danger of terrorism, which is summarized in Obama's thoughts, namely Smart Power foreign policy. If the military strategy is known as hard power, then this is a change from the old hard power strategy to a new smart power strategy, a combination of hard power and soft power, which strengthens the civilian role while using hard power as a supporting instrument (Valdes & Duarte, 2012).

From Obama's smart power strategy, one of the goals to find Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, to be responsible for the 9/11 attacks was not in vain. President Barack Obama made an announcement that the American people had waited almost 10 years to hear,

> "I can report to the American people and to the world, that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda and a terrorist who is responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women and children," Obama said. (VOA News, 2011)

Osama bin Laden's death proves that the US goal to punish the Al-Qaeda former leader responsible for the 9/11 attacks was

successful. However, the war between the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan was not finished until the second terms of President Barack Obama's administration. And Donald Trump, who was elected as the next President of the US, will automatically maintain the policy of sending US soldiers to Afghanistan.

Trump succeeded Obama as the 45th President of the United States on January 20, 2017. During his campaign, Trump questioned the US government's military policies and promised to end conflicts and focus more on domestic economic growth. However, even after being elected president, Trump has continued the war on terror, which began with the 9/11 attacks. (Trump, 2018) Terrorism issues were addressed directly by Trump, who stated his controversial position. Many of Trump's speeches contained violent and racist content. His statement regarding the issue of terrorism and radical Islam, for example, received a negative response from Muslim circles in the US and internationally. Trump is known to be outspoken on the subject of radical Islam and terrorism; he even promised not only to limit but to prohibit the entry of immigrants from Islamic countries suspected of being the origin of terrorism (Berman, 2015).

Not only is Trump focusing on fighting terrorism in the country, but he also sees the reality of what is happening in Afghanistan. According to Trump, the long war between the United States and the Taliban has been too long and has cost the United States a lot in various sectors. From Trump's thoughts, the United States immediately observed the United States' shipping policy in Afghanistan. After observing the situation in Afghanistan, the US abruptly changed the pattern of

interaction with the Taliban in Afghanistan by initiating peace talks, despite the fact that deploying American soldiers to Afghanistan has been ongoing since 2001, following the attack of the 9/11 attacks. After nearly two decades of war in Afghanistan, the US and the Taliban signed a peace treaty. The discussion process carried on extensively until a peace accord was signed between the United States and the Taliban on February 29, 2020, in Doha, Qatar (The Washington Post, 2021). After the peace agreement was implemented, the two parties immediately realized the contents of the agreement that had been agreed upon.

Trump is known to be very anti-Muslim and the president who fights terrorism. This article is included in the post-nationalist scope as a section of American Studies since it tries to understand American identity and culture. On the other hand, some cultures will undoubtedly alter as a result of changing times, which will be followed by some key studies on gender, ethnicity, postmodernism, and post colonialism. (Rowe, 2000) Looking at the changing times as well as American identity and culture, which develop and alter through time, this research is classified as post-nationalist and will focus on Alexander Wendy's Constructivism method, which claims that national interests are produced from the views of state leaders. This study then will employ a constructivism approach to examine the various perspectives of the US president in deciding Trump's policies against terrorism.

However, Trump has his own conception of thoughts regarding the US policy towards a long war with the Taliban in Afghanistan. For Trump, it is time for this long war to end because the main goal of finding Osama bin Laden has been accomplished, and if the war continues, it will be detrimental to the US from various sectors. Therefore, this article will discuss more clearly the policies of Trump in resolving the long war between the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan. And the construction of Trump's thoughts so that he can generate ideas for peace is seen in his background, character, and leadership style in realizing the peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban. As well as the impact of this long war will be seen from the aspects of domestic politics, economic, and military conditions.

## DISCUSSION

From the background of President Trump, it will be seen that the POTUS's background will influence the construction of his thoughts to determine a policy for the United States in various fields. In this paper discussing the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, it will also be seen that President Trump's background influenced the realization of the peace agreement carried out in Qatar in 2020.

**Travel Ban Policy: Fighting Domestic Terrorism**

The presidential administrations of Bush and Obama have shown notable strategic coherence in the 15 years following the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, Trump, the next president, is in charge of the counterterrorism operation. Trump's beliefs and opinions differ from those of prior presidents. The previous president's policies, according to Trump, were a failure of American strategy. Trump evaluates everything that has been said about the failure of the anti-terrorism effort under Bush and Obama (Azmi & Aulia, 2019).

Before becoming president, Trump highlighted the love for one's country by offering numerous opportunities to even put American interests ahead of those of other countries through the concepts of "America First" and "Make America Great Again". This idea emphasizes the morality of the attitude of the spirit to make the country better by emphasizing the identity and interests of the country through the main features that underlie the regime. The executive order has delivered a proclamation of truth as well as reinforcement of Trump's spirit of nationalism as President. This policy is a systematic attempt that departs from the nationalism of a US president in reaction to mounting concerns and Trump's concern that the refugee acceptance program may allow terrorists to enter the US (Scribner, 2017).

Trump's travel ban policy against immigrants who want to enter the country is not without reason. The detrimental potential of immigrants seen by Trump, as someone who has nationalism, provides space for him to provide real solutions through his policy authority so that the country is not disadvantaged. The primary goal of this order is to ensure that people who are not in line with the US will be prevented from entering US territory for the protection of citizens (Lopez, 2019). This is an effort by Trump's protective attitude, through the authority of his leadership role as President, to defend the interests and lives of American citizens. The American public's interest is seen to have a detrimental impact on the entry of immigrants. Trump's protection of the US is a visible aspect of the existence of measures affected by his nationalism to safeguard his population from the threat of terrorism.

On January 27, 2017, Trump signed the Executive Order (EO) No. 13769 known as "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States." The executive order set a "Travel Ban" for 90 days, forbidding citizens from 7 primarily Muslim nations from entering the US, which was later lowered to 6 and included North Korea and Venezuela by Executive Order No. 13780. Additionally, it forbade residents of those nations from reentering, even if they had legal visas and green cards. Also, the order prohibited all Syrian refugees for an undisclosed amount of time while suspending the U.S. Refugees Admissions Program (USRAP) for 120 days (Lopez, 2019). The executive order's primary goal is to ensure that unfriendly persons won't be allowed to enter US territory. The order also hopes to protect the American people from foreign terrorist attacks and the use of the country's immigration laws for nefarious reasons. However, several protests and complaints were lodged against Trump's policies and its claimed breach of international law. From this, it can be seen that Trump is anti-terrorism and that various methods will be taken to protect US citizens from the threat of terrorism.

**Peace Agreement between the US and the Taliban after 20 Years of War**

Trump is also thinking about the policy of sending US troops to Afghanistan, which has been going on since 2001 after 9/11 attack. As in 2017, Trump agreed to send 4,000 additional troops to Afghanistan, where there were already 8,400 troops in the nation. Trump believes that the US stay in Afghanistan is counterproductive since it has not seen success in a long time. According to Trump, it would be foolish if the US left

abruptly, fearing that it would leave a hole that terrorists could exploit. This anxiety stems from the deterioration of conditions in Afghanistan. According to General John Nicholson's report of, the US military leader who served in Afghanistan, Afghanistan required thousands of additional troops. The US troops are expected to train Afghan troops more intensively so that they can balance Taliban fighters and combat the Taliban.
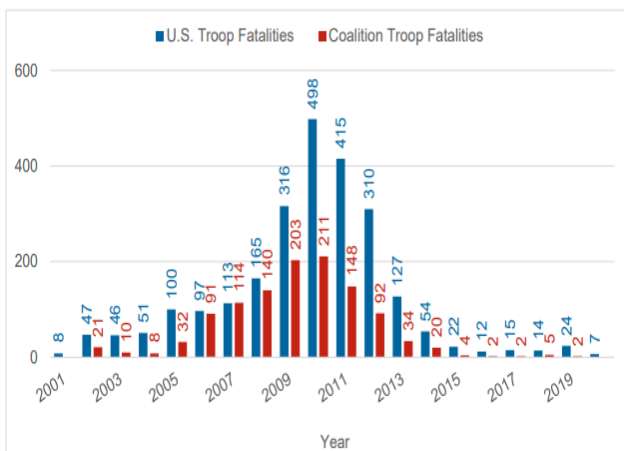


Figure 1. Total US and allied troops killed in Afghanistan (Brooking Foreign Policy, 2020)

However, there was something interesting in 2018, President Trump made the decision for the US Armed Forces serving in Afghanistan to return to their home countries, and the idea of withdrawing military troops from Afghanistan began in 2018. In the same year, Trump stated he would only withdraw half of the total number of troops in Afghanistan. At the beginning of his presidency, President Trump said that their presence in Afghanistan had consumed a lot of time, energy, money, and lives, especially for US troops in Afghanistan. Based on the graph above, from 2001 to 2019, the war in Afghanistan killed 2,434 US troops and 1,139 coalition troops (Gollob & O'hanlon, 2020).

Despite Trump's hard stance against terrorism, there were disagreements in US foreign policy toward Afghanistan near the end of his presidency. If the past presidents did not reach a deal to actually make peace, Trump's leadership reached an unexpected agreement. During Trump's presidency, there was optimism for peace in Afghanistan, and when the President of Afghanistan met Trump at the White House, Trump stated that he preferred conversation over combat. "If we want to fight and win, we will be defeated in one week, Afghanistan has the potential to vanish off the face of the earth", Trump stated (Utomo, 2019). However, Trump does not want to go down the path of war because it could kill millions of people.

After observing the situation in Afghanistan, the US abruptly changed the pattern of interaction with the Taliban in Afghanistan by initiating peace talks, despite the fact that deploying American soldiers to Afghanistan has been ongoing since 2001, following the attack of the 9/11 attacks. After nearly two decades of war in Afghanistan, the US and the Taliban signed a peace treaty. The discussion process carried on extensively until a peace accord was signed between the US and the Taliban on February 29, 2020, in Doha, Qatar (The Washington Post, 2021). Finally, a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban has been signed in an effort to put an end to the 18-year conflict in Afghanistan, but there are a number of factors that could derail the peace effort. The agreement addressed four issues: reducing violence, removing foreign soldiers from Afghanistan, starting intra-Afghan dialogue, and making sure that Afghanistan would also not serve as a safe haven for terrorists (Bimo, 2021).

The Doha summit generated four papers from the draft peace deal titled "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, known as the Taliban, and the United States of America". The agreement's four parts are as follows: 1) Guarantees and enforcement procedures that will prevent any group or individual from using Afghan soil to undermine the security of the US and its allies; 2) Guarantees, enforcement measures, and the proclamation of a date for all foreign forces to leave Afghanistan; 3) After the announcement of guarantees for the complete withdrawal of foreign troops and a timetable in the presence of international witnesses and guarantees and an announcement before international witnesses that the land of Afghanistan will not be used against the security of the US and its allies, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which is not recognized by the US as a state and is known as the Taliban, will start intra-Afghan negotiations with the Afghan side on March 10, 2020; and 4) A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire will be one of the agendas for intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations. The participants in the intra-Afghan negotiations will discuss the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including a joint implementation mechanism announced alongside the completion and agreement on a future Afghan political roadmap (US Embassy, 2020).

After the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban is reached, it automatically ends the long war that has been going on. The war in Afghanistan should have ended long ago, considering the main purpose of sending US troops to Afghanistan was to punish Osama bin Laden. However, bin Laden was killed in 2011, during Obama's time. Trump also sees that there will be a lot of losses for the United States if this war continues. Therefore, from the construction results, his thinking has succeeded in achieving peace between the US and the Taliban after 20 years of war. This was done to show that the US interests in Afghanistan had been achieved and to end the war, which would be detrimental to the US from a political, economic, and military perspective.

**Impact of the War between the US and the Taliban Domestic Political Conditions**

The Peace Agreement was signed by Taliban and the US during Trump's presidency. There was intense disagreement about the nature of the conflict between the US and the Taliban in Afghanistan during Trump's presidency, which caused turbulence in internal politics in the country. Many Americans believe that it is no longer worthwhile for the US and the Taliban to continue their conflict in Afghanistan from a domestic perspective. The majority of Americans believed that the war in Afghanistan was not worth continuing and regretted the US' decision to continue its battle with the Taliban after nearly 20 years in Afghanistan (Hubbard, 2021).

Hamid (2021), a prominent American lawmaker in charge of Middle Eastern-specific foreign policy, agrees with this claim. He contends that the Taliban are more knowledgeable about Afghanistan than the US. The Afghan people do not require the ideal that the US pursues in that country. The Taliban are more knowledgeable about what Afghanistan needs and the best type of government to impose. Even worse, he said

that the failure of the Afghan government, which the US supported, did not only affect Afghanistan. On the other side, the US' ignorance of and hostility toward Afghanistan also contributed to this failure.

Every US presidential candidate of the president-elect has vowed to finish the fight with the Taliban and return US army who have fought in Afghanistan (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019). During their presidential campaigns and tenure, they kept such commitments. However, it was only under Trump's leadership that the Taliban and the US began the process of establishing a peace agreement. The peace accord was initiated on July 28, 2018, and it was signed on February 29, 2020. Unlike President Obama, who campaigned on a wise power policy in every decision to tackle Afghanistan's problems, Trump demonstrated that his harsh attitude may lead to a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban. The peace agreement was never struck while Obama led the US.

It can be concluded that the war in Afghanistan for the US and its citizens is no longer needed. Given that the main purpose of sending US troops to Afghanistan is to capture bin Laden, that goal has been realized during the administration of Obama, which led to bin Laden's killing. Even though bin Laden was killed during Obama's era, the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban was implemented at the end of Trump's era. As a result, it is no longer necessary for the war to continue during Trump's administration. If the war continues, the US will suffer in a variety of ways. The government and citizens of the US recognize this. That it becomes a domestic issue as well and the community supports the

implementation of the peace agreement between the US and Taliban in Afghanistan.

**Economic and Military Conditions**

Furthermore, the 20-year conflict in Afghanistan between the Taliban and US has resulted in a large number of casualties. Following the end withdrawal of US soldiers from Afghanistan, Biden estimated that the US had likely spent more than $2 trillion on the Afghan war. While the majority of the anticipated spending is for US military operations, the US is also actively investing in rehabilitation efforts.
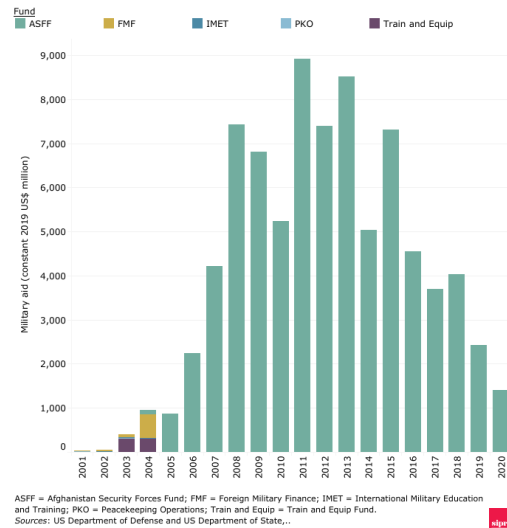


Figure 2. US military aid to Afghanistan, 2001-2020 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2021)

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) views five budget lines—out of the total amount of reported US security-related reconstruction spending in Afghanistan—as military assistance. The Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of State are two sources for late. These five funds made payments to Afghanistan totaling $72.7 billion in current dollars (or $81.6 billion in constant 2019 values) between 2001 and 2020. A separate

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Train and Equip Fund ($440 million in current dollars) and the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF; $71.7 billion in current dollars), which were both established by the US Congress, provided the majority (99.2%) of this military assistance. Equipment, supplies, services, training, funding for salaries, facility and infrastructure repair, renovation, and building were all provided by the two funds together to the ANDSF.

The Department of State provided $564 million in current dollars' worth of military assistance to Afghanistan through the International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Finance (FMF), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) grants. The initial level of US military assistance to Afghanistan was quite minimal; between 2001 and 2005, the combined DOD and DOS budget was less than $1 billion per year. Annual aid expenditures increased to $7.4 billion by 2008. This surge in assistance occurred at the same time that the US started to provide a sizable number of troops to multinational peace operations, showing increased US commitment in Afghanistan. The global financial and economic crisis, however, temporarily reduced aid, and by 2010, it had decreased to $5.2 billion for Afghanistan.

The amount of military assistance provided by the United States to Afghanistan reached a peak of almost $9 billion between 2011 and 2013. The United States and its NATO allies have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the ANDSF so that it will be fully in charge of maintaining national security by the end of 2014. This increase in military support is related to that commitment. One well-known aspect of US military assistance is the wide variety of heavy munitions that are shipped to Afghanistan. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) estimates that between 2005 and 2021, the ASFF gave the ANDSF about $18.6 billion in military equipment.

**Soldiers killed in action in Afghanistan 2001-2021**

Number of fatalities among Western coalition soldiers involved in the execution of Operation Enduring Freedom from 2001 to 2021

| Year | Total* | U.S. | UK | Other |
|------|--------|------|-----|-------|
| 2001 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| 2002 | 70 | 49 | 3 | 18 |
| 2003 | 58 | 48 | 0 | 10 |
| 2004 | 60 | 52 | 1 | 7 |
| 2005 | 131 | 99 | 1 | 31 |
| 2006 | 191 | 98 | 39 | 54 |
| 2007 | 232 | 117 | 42 | 73 |
| 2008 | 295 | 155 | 51 | 89 |
| 2009 | 521 | 317 | 108 | 96 |
| 2010 | 710 | 498 | 103 | 109 |
| 2011 | 563 | 415 | 46 | 102 |
| 2012 | 402 | 310 | 44 | 48 |
| 2013 | 162 | 128 | 9 | 25 |
| 2014 | 75 | 55 | 6 | 14 |
| 2015 | 26 | 22 | 2 | 2 |
| 2016 | 15 | 13 | 0 | 2 |
| 2017 | 17 | 15 | 0 | 2 |
| 2018 | 19 | 14 | 0 | 5 |
| 2019 | 26 | 24 | 0 | 2 |
| 2020 | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| 2021** | 13 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| **Totals** | **3,609** | **2,465** | **455** | **689** |

Figure 3. The estimated death toll for US troops and their coalition in the war against the Taliban (Statista Research Department, 2022)

Not only is the budget amazing, but the battle in Afghanistan between the US and the Taliban has also killed numerous US military personnel and civilians. The US invasion of Afghanistan claimed the lives of over 2,000 US servicemen as well as tens of thousands of civilians (Gollob & O'Hanlon, 2020).

Furthermore, several US economic practices, like errors in budget allocation, have facilitated confrontation with Taliban. The closest comparable is US, which doubled its spending for the Taliban battle in 2007–2008. This seems rash given that the US was in the midst of a catastrophic economic crisis known as the Great Recession in 2006–2008 (Bennet & Kochhar, 2019). Despite decreasing funds in 2009 and 2010, the US

increased its spending on the Taliban campaign considerably in 2011. This is as though the United States did not learn important lessons from the previous economic crisis, and it continues to highlight its struggle with the Taliban, despite the fact that it is considered perpetual and has no beneficial implications for the US.

The US figure of two trillion dollars and the accompanying number of deaths is inflated, given that the budget allocation is mainly geared at Afghanistan's own security. The US efforts to preserve Afghanistan from the Taliban appear overbearing, because the Afghanistan's security should be the responsibility of the local nation, not the US. Finally, this diverged from the initial goal of establishing the War on Terror strategy, which was supposed to conclude with bin Laden's murder.

From a military standpoint, the struggle between the US and the Taliban does not benefit the US. Many US adversaries are actively researching and implementing new technology to make their conventional troops significantly more effective in conflict. China, Iran, Russia, and North Korea may demonstrate that other nations have made significant investments, upgraded their military capabilities, and equipped their military forces with cutting-edge technology. In the global order, the US military capability remains quite capable and advanced. Few, if any, believe that the United States' ambition of global dominance is made attainable by its technological capabilities. However, the battle undertaken by the US and the Taliban did not reflect US technological gains. In this fight, the public culture of guerilla warfare conveys the sense that the US is not progressing beyond this conventional war.

As a result, the battle with the Taliban is no longer important and can be utilized to highlight the US military's accomplishments and stability in other countries.

## CONCLUSION

The findings from the points of the US peace deal with the Taliban discussed related to 1) efforts to progressively withdraw US and coalition troops; 2) conducting a ceasefire ceremony; 3) Intra-Afghan talks to thoroughly review Afghanistan's security; 4) The last point as an expected goal is to make Afghanistan a safe environment from terror groups so as not to disturb the security stability of Afghanistan, the US, and also their allies. From the peace agreement that has been implemented, it can also be concluded that President Trump is very concerned about the US condition and the pride that must make the US greater than other countries in various sectors. Even though President Trump is considered tough and different from previous presidents in handling cases of terrorism and the war in Afghanistan, they have the same goal, to protect US citizens from terrorism and safeguard the US interests both domestically and abroad. The construction of President Trump's thoughts in making policies is in the US interest, so that it continues to be considered a strong country in the eyes of the world.

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# REMEMBERING BARAKA'S *DUTCHMAN*: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ABSURD DRAMATURGY ON THE RACIAL ABSURDITY

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## ABSTRACT

*Dutchman* belongs to Afro-American Drama. In its portraying of racial problem, *Dutchman* is different from other black American plays as it has largely moved to the abstract and symbolic form. While *Dutchman* strongly indicates segregation and a kind of open conflict with the white society, many others black literature largely focus on Black Society or family's internal conflicts. Goes along with its abstract presentation, *Dutchman* tends to represent the general and 'eternal' blacks rather than the blacks framed in social institution such as family, job, and others. Despite common accepted classification that separates ethnic literary work as strongly political and absurd theatre as metaphysical, *Dutchman*'s technique is strikingly similar to the absurd where content and form/technique blends. This study is to explore the tension in *The Dutchman* by showing its similarities and differences from both the conventional absurd play and Black literary work and to propose possible literary and social background that explain such phenomenon, which is, a racial play that takes absurdist style or as a literary act of continuing absurdist style on the racial ground. In doing so, this study uses a comparative literature approach by comparing The Dutchman with Eugene Ionesco's *The Lesson* and Edward Albe's *The Zoo Story*. In afro-american drama, there was a time when racial conflict was a condition that created a movement to a more abstract/ symbolic form similar to the Absurd play . It's a kind of reminder for the metaphysical dramatist, a reminder of what really matter in the real world.

**Keywords:** *Absurdity; Afro-American Race; Metaphysical vs Real drama*

## INTRODUCTION

*Dutchman* belongs to Afro-American Drama. It is still phenomenal. In its portraying of racial problem, *Dutchman* is different from other black American plays. It has largely moved to the abstract and symbolic form. Just like the absurd play, it largely constitutes an image rather than a story and a basic situation rather than a plot development. The previous Afro-American drama largely has a realistic form. Its content is also different. Where *Dutchman* strongly indicates segregation and a kind of open conflict with the white society, many others black literature largely focus on Black Society or family's internal conflicts. Goes along with its abstract presentation, *Dutchman* tends to represent the general and 'eternal' blacks rather than the blacks framed in social institution such as family, job, and others. Despite common accepted classification that separates ethnic literary work as strongly political and absurd theatre as metaphysical, *Dutchman*'s technique is strikingly similar to the absurd where content and form or technique blends.

In *Dutchman* the racial conflict is the main conflict and the main presentation. Some essays had been conducted to analyze racism in *The Dutchman* like in "Racism in the "Dutchman" by Amiri Baraka Essay" (Review) and **"**Symbolism and Race in Amiri Baraka's Dutchman" by Dr. Hoda Abdel Ghaffar Salem. Discussing about racism, the hatred or the conflict is not framed in a certain context background. The reason or background existed can be anything outside the drama, but inside the drama, there is only the essence, which is the conflict or the hatred. Lula's attitude toward the blacks is not because something told

within the play. It just happens. The black is killed by the white. The whole play can be seen as a process of intensifying the situation through the state of hate, anger, oppressed. Through the conversation, the racial conflict or oppression appear and got intensified through movements, voice's tone, the degree of mocking, and finally the lack of killing. For example, oppression firstly appears as everyday joking, with smile. Therefore, it is not even clear whether it is a kind of oppression. However, the final moment or the culmination is usually very clear and can be used to trace back the initial process.

Different from previous essays, this essay will first of all find position of *The Dutchman* in absurd drama by comparing it to two other absurd plays, *The Lesson* and *The Zoo Story*. *Dutchman* is quite similar to plays commonly accepted as Absurd Play. It is mostly similar to Eugene Ionesco's *The Lesson* and Edward Albe's *The Zoo Story* (though Esslin rather reluctantly puts this play under absurd play. Albee is put under the heading 'proselytes' meaning a new follower (of the absurd)). All of them superficially are about two people meet. They Talk. At the end, one of them kills the other by using a knife. In this part, I want to argue that *Dutchman* can't be seen as less absurd than *The Zoo Story* in its blend of form and content. The similarity between *Dutchman* and *The Lesson* is relatively greater than to *The Zoo Story*.

In term of forms that is the intensification through the growing voice-tone and movement rapidity that reveals the growing power between the two people, *Dutchman* is similar to *The Lesson*. It is also seen that language plays very important role in both two plays. In *Dutchman*, Lula

initially forces Clay to use her concept. She dictates what to say for Clay. In *The Lesson* too, the professor forces the pupil to use his concept. It is the inability of the pupil to understand the professor's concept that raises the professor's power.

> During the course of the play she (the pupil) progressively loses the lively rhythm of her movement of her carriage, she becomes withdrawn. From gay and smiling, she becomes progressively sad and morose; from very lively at the beginning, she becomes more and more fatigued and somnolent. Toward the end of the play her face…express a nervous depression (Ionesco, p. 45)

Having lack knowledge of what may happen, the Professor grows more confident on himself. He becomes more aggressive and dominating.

> During the course of the play his timidity will disappear progressively, imperceptibly… From a manner that is inoffensive at the start, the Professor becomes more and more sure of himself, more and more aggressive, dominating, until he is able to do as he pleases with the Pupil, who has become, in his hands, a pitiful creature. (Ionesco, p. 46)

In *Dutchman*, Lula and Clay's conversation is initially soft, a normal conversation between two strangers meeting on the train. At the end both of them scream. Lula is hysterical and Clay is in exploding anger. In *The Lesson*, this too prevails:

> Of course the voice of thee professor must change too, … from thin and reedy to stronger and stronger, until at the end…extremely powerful, ringing, sonorous, while the Pupil's voice changes from the very clear and ringing tones … until almost inaudible (Ionesco, p. 46)

In term of 'content', that is the purpose or intention of the speaker and the idea within the conversation in which one is provoking the other's anger through mocking and showing irritating attitude, *Dutchman* is similar to *The Zoo Story*. It might indicate that American absurd are largely on form while the content or dialogue is still realist. It touches social problem, such as the inability of Jerry to make a social contact. Not a metaphysical problem as often found in European tradition

> Lula: (mocking him, in wild dance). Christ. God. Get up and scream at these people…. Clay, Clay, you get to break out. Don't sit there dying the way they want you to die. Get up. (Baraka, p. 965)
> Jerry: (slapping Peter on each "fight") You fight, you miserable bastard; fight for that bench; fight for your parakeets: fight for your cats, fight for your wife; fight for your manhood (Albee, p. 1410)

The ending of *The Zoo Story* in which Jerry kills himself through the knife on Peter's hand and then thanks Peter for helping him, his confession that he was actually afraid of being left by peter, his confession that he plans this happening, his asks for peter to leave that place before people comes, his great painful effort to wipe out Peter's fingerprints from the knife despite the closing death, his last words that remain peter about his parakeets, cats make the play melodramatic. It is this melodramatic ending that makes Zoo story less absurd (Esslin, pp. 225-6). This is confirmed by Hayman (p. 12) who says that Zoo story is a moral play. Another critic (Zimbardo) even says that the self-sacrifice is typically Christian (Hayman, p. 12). It is also worth noting that *The Zoo*

*Story*'s problem (social alienation) is a typical problem in the era of lost generation such as in Hemingway and others.

Albee (his general works, not only *The Zoo Story*) is considered as absurdist by Esslin (ibid), -despite the realism of the dialogue, and the subject matter (social alienation), because his work attacks the very foundation of American Optimism. If this is the case, then the attack from *Dutchman* is greater. For the American optimism of the melting pot and of the assimilation is simply destroyed. Clay says that when the white has accepted the blacks, blacks will murder them. For black artist, killing white people is a kind of art. It cures their neurotic, composing art is no longer needed. Baraka himself on hie essay 'revolutionary theatre' mentions that this is a theatre of assault. This Revolutionary Theatre will be called the destruction of America. The political content in Dutchman is not a strange thing in the tradition of the absurd. Ionesco's other plays such as *The Lesson* and *Rhinoceros* are highly political. *Rhinoceros*, in its sub-title, is described by Ionesco as 'an anti-Nazi play'. In *The Lesson*, the maid (the servant but more powerful than him) gives him a Nazi swastika to protect the professor because the professor is afraid after killing the pupil.

> Maid: (she takes out an armband with an insignia, perhaps the Nazi swastika) Wait, if you're afraid, wear this, then you won't have anything more to be afraid of. (She puts the armband around his arm). That's good politic. (Ionesco, p. 78)

Some critics, for example Styan and Small, see the absurd characteristic lays on its illogical plot and background-less character.

> "It naturally follows that if the absurdist rejects the logic of the world about him, then he will also reject the traditional dramatic technique of development. Hence, absurd plays may not build to a climax, present a discernible protagonist or antagonist, be divided into three acts, present well-rounded, full dimensional characters, or create traditional dramatic plots. Indeed, the absurd plot is usually anything but dramatic in the customary sense" (Small, p. 623).
> "They are no logical plot, or characterization in any conventional sense. Their character lack the motivation found in realistic drama, and so emphasize their purposelessness. The absence of plot serves to reinforce the monotony and repetitiveness of time in human affairs" (Styan, p. 126).

In that perspectives, *Dutchman* suites well. Just like the character in *The Lesson*, the characters of *Dutchman* are without background (family or social). The conversation between Lula and Clay in *Dutchman* does not reveal who they are. As can be shown in the previous quotations, they are talking about 'now 'their own situation at that time and talking about general and not personal/ individual quality, for example that "you are fool", "What we will do….?", "Black people is like 'that' while white people is like 'this". In *The Lesson*, they talk about the origin of a certain language (p. 61) and how to pronoun a certain sound (p. 64). For example, these quotations will how professor has become rather powerful:

> Professor: And this, too, is fundamental principle, every tongue is at bottom nothing but language, which necessarily implies that it is composed of sounds, or…

Pupil:     Phonemes..
Professor: Just what I was going to say. Don't parade your knowledge. You' do better to listen.
Pupil:     All right, professor. Yes, Professor. (p. 62)

The characters in both *The Lesson* and *Dutchman* are really more background-less than Peter and Jerry. If their conversations are put together, plotted story cannot be made (even with inferences). The best causal story can be made from their conversation is, more or less, refers to a changing topic conversation.

But in *The Zoo Story*, Peter and Jerry's conversations reveal much of their past times, especially Jerry. Their conversation can really be constituted to an adequate plotted story. The story can be long enough. Jerry's problems (therefore, and his being) have a background, have a past time that constitutes the problem as it is now (audience learn the background from the character's story). For example, his problem which appears 'now', that is, his insisting to have a contact/ problem/ engagement with Peter is a continuation of his inability to have a good relation with other being. So far, Jerry's relations with his room-owner and with the dog are a bad relation or unsuccessful relations. The pattern of contact/ relationship with peter is similar to that of the dog. From smooth to the harsh. Only now, having learned from his experience with the dog, he let himself be killed.

In short, In *The Lesson* and *Dutchman*, there is only now (repeated now/ recurrent now). In absurd tradition, this 'now' conventionally serves to represent the whole history. The now-ness is needed to represent

human condition/ situation that transcends cultural time/ social agreement. But In *The Zoo Story*, the characters have background. Audiences are not just dealing with 'the present moment', 'the eternal now' but also with past times. This dealing with past times/ background makes the plot possible to be recreated. The constructed plot makes the event logical/rational and therefore it reduces its absurdity.

After showing the close similarities between *Dutchman* with *The Lesson* along with *The Zoo Story*, this paper wants to show that *Dutchman* also has the general characteristic of the absurd theatre.

**Review of Related Theories**

In principle, the discipline of Comparative Literature is a method in the study of literature which conveys two ways; firstly, it refers to the knowledge of more than one national language and literature, meaning the knowledge and application of other disciplines in and for the study of literature, and secondly comparative literature refers to an ideology of inclusion of the other, be that a marginal literature in its several meanings of marginality, a genre, and various text types. The term 'Comparative Literature' is difficult to define for it evolves not one but two or even more than two literatures in comparison at the same time. It becomes still more difficult task when the comparatist has to take into consideration the multi-dimensional aspects of comparative literature such as-linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, social and historical factors of different societies.

Like other critical approaches of a particular literature, Comparative Literature deals with a literary product. What makes it

different is that in comparative study two or more than two literatures are being analyzed side by side. In this way, the subject matter becomes vaster and its perspective becomes wider. Boundaries of comparative literature have to be extended to encompass the entirety of human life and experiences in one's embrace. Bijay Kumar Dass defines Comparative Literature as a simple way to compare the two literatures. Comparative literature analyses the similarities and dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures (Dass, p. 1). Comparative method is used as an attempt to understand human literary behavior by examining two or more texts. The writer sorts, analyzes, compares the literary works in various contexts to create meanings, convey their emotions, feelings, and ideas towards the writer as a reader.

## DISCUSSION

**Concrete act or Movement over Abstract Speech**

In the absurd theatre, what is done transcends what is said. The more separated they are, the more perceivable the emptiness/ meaningless/ the untrue-ness of what is said. In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (p. 60) the character says that they will move but they remain unmoved. Another character says that tomorrow Godot will come but until the play ends, he hasn't come.

In *Dutchman*, finally the Negro threats the white lady. He is assuring that he and the other black men can kill her. According to him, the black art/ high art is actually a kind of sublimation of the instinct/ the longing for killing the white (p. 966). But right after that 'speech' he is the one who is killed by the white lady. In contrast to what he has said,

the audiences see that the white woman stabs the knife on his body. She does it without ever mentioning her intention or explaining why she should kill. Contrary to what the Negro has said, the opposition is not between the only white lady with the black society or in other words 'They will murder you' (p. 967), it is the victim who is alone, while the lady is helped by many people in that train. They are in her order. They just do her order, as seen from their actions, but never talk with Lula.

Those happenings show that the words are different from the thing or the event which is being talked. Through those happenings, the audience is forced to learn that to believe in the spoken words of the character means to be lied by the play itself. Because character's words conceal what really happens on the stage, their physical movements are much more important. (Esslin, p. 9).

**Having No Clear Solution**

Another result of the structure that has no line of successive development falls upon the conflict or problem solution in the play. The most problems seemingly appeared in the beginning of the play are usually left abandoned at the final moment or the end of the play. Rather than having no clear solution, from the final moment (the end) audience will learn that actually the play can also be said as having no problem at all since the very beginning. In Ionesco's *The Bald Primadona*, the characters merely sit and talk nonsense. The pseudo-problem appears in the beginning of the play is actually a kind of tool for making the audience engages in the play (instead of going home before the play ends). In *Waiting for Godot;* the waited never

comes. In *The Chairs* the long waited universal message is never spoken. In End Game, the character's attempt to leave their place is unsuccessful. At the end, they still there. In Ionesco's *The Lesson*, The student never learns. She is still ignorant to the concept of subtraction.

In *Dutchman*, the Negro never goes along with the white lady (to the party or to one of their own apartment) to do something sensual as their conversations initially indicate such invitation. The initial pseudo-problem is whether they ever met each other or not, who the lady really is (because the lady seems to have known the black boys by guessing his name, his home, etc). But then as the Young Negro indicates a kind of acceptation to the lady's invitation, the conversation jump to the racial matter. The black boy gets angry. Then the Lady kills him.

Those happenings in the play and the happenings in the reality are much alike; the end of the problems sought by men and those characters are still hidden. Racial problem too, haven't had any solution yet.

**Degrading the (Spoken) Word**

As the absurdist believe in the incapability of language in representing something, they make the audience understand that the spoken words of the character are just some sounds which refer to nothing, just like music. To strengthen the impression that words or language has a negative side, the theatre of the absurd associates words to some sounds worse than music. According to Styan (1988, p. 126). "The dialogue is commonly no more than a series of inconsequential clichés which reduce those who speak them to talking machines." The example can be found in *The Bald Soprano*, in the middle of the dialogue, the four characters scream to each other: "such caca, such caca, such caca, such caca,", "B, c, d, e, f, g, I, m, n, p, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, z!", "From sage to stooge, from stage to serge!"," [imitating a train] Choo, Choo, Choo, Choo", (Ionesco, 1958, pp. 40-1). In *The Chairs*, the words of the old woman turn to echo and barking; 'Old Man: little children, I implore you. // Old Woman [echoing]: Plore….Plore….// Old Man: Your servant, your slave, your dog, arf, arf, your dog. // Old Woman: [barking loudly like a dog]; Arf….arf….arf (Ionesco, pp. 148-149).

In *Dutchman*, some conversation/ statements serve to have a self-referential meaning. Lula said, 'I lie all the time. The content of the words is largely (not all, it is impossible) reduced to its function, as an act. Also in another part she says, 'I lie a lot It helps me control the world' (p. 961). Some words/ statements reveal her conversational nonsense tendency, "Red trains cough Jewish underwear for keeps! Expanding smells of silence. Gravy snot whistling like a sea birds (p. 965)

In Theatre of the Absurd, language is used as any other elements in performing the play, such as costume, light, sound effect or properties. According to Esslin (p. 297) this fact adds something new to the theatre by putting the language of a scene in contrast to the action, by reducing it to meaningless pattern, or by abandoning discursive logic for the poetic logic of association or assonance, the theatre of the absurd has opened a new dimension of the stage. *Dutchman* (the whole play) is not really on this level, but *Dutchman* has that characteristic.

## A Presentation of Basic Situation

Instead of communicating event in the developing line of movement, either chronologically or causally. Absurd play presents a basic and static situation of mankind. These situations appear from the beginning until the end: In *Waiting for Godot:* the act of endless and hopeless waiting. In Ionesco's *The Lesson*, the inability of the student to grasp the concept (the lesson) dictated by the professor. In *The Zoo Story*, conflicting Conversation in the park indicates the act of searching engagement and the act avoiding engagement with other.

In *Dutchman*, the basic and static situation is the situation of the black being dominated / oppressed by the white lady (Lula). From the very beginning, in their conversation, it is revealed that the answer from the black boy is dictated and framed/ shaped by the woman's thought. Even the anger of the black boy is a reaction toward the lady's humiliating mocks. At the end the audience learns that such situation is cyclic situation/ repeated situation. It means that the lady has prepared everything, she does it on purpose. The ending, which is the killing action, signifies the total suppression: the black defeated to die.

## Dynamic Development in poetic sense

The constant situation doesn't mean that the play lacks of dynamic movement. Constant situation means there is a basic situation to be communicated. To build the basic or main situation, the period of time should be filled with many activities indeed. The situation in absurd play and the atmosphere in poetry are really alike. Indeed, Esslin asserts that abandoning plotted events,

absurd play is three-dimensional poetry projected on the stage (Esslin, p. 192). Each line of poetry doesn't have to be chronologically or causally linked, but together they compose certain situation or feeling.

In *The Chairs;* the movement of the character grows from slow movement to the rapid one, then becomes slow again in order to give an impression that on the stage are coming some growing number of invisible people. The number of the guests who come that the room also increases, from individuals (one by one) to several groups. The time-distance (the pause) between each arrival is also getting shorter. In *The Zoo Story*, Jerry's action toward peter is getting intensified, from merely talking, touching, and then fighting. In *The Lesson*, the condition of the professor and the students' are reversed. The student is getting weaker, the professor is getting stronger. This is not merely my interpretation but this process is indicated clearly in the stage direction (Ionesco, pp. 77-78)

In Dutchman, Lula's provocation or her mocking toward the black boy increases in its content. Her physical movement is also increase, from merely asking a question, touching, grabbing, dancing, then finally killing. The Negro's attitude moves from passively accepting and saying the dictated answer from Lula, to an exploding answer of hatred to her. This situation goes in accordance with the increasing number of the people in that coach/ train and the development of their attitude. First other people are none inside that coach (only Lula and the Negro). Then several people come. Those people are initially indifferent to both Lula and the Black boy. Then, they pay

attention to them, from merely seeing them, laughing at them, even there is one who also engages to Lula's singing and dancing. Finally, they help Lula getting rid the stabbed black boy off the train. Note that the room/ the coach/ is also getting more widely depicted (in the scene two). The depicted space grows from merely around Lula and the Negro's seat to the several seats around them.

The form goes along with the content. The growing perspective of the spaces, the growing number of the people, the growing attitude/ interest of the people toward them correspond to the growing aggressiveness of Lula. All of those growing situations signify the powerlessness of the black boy despite his final anger. This is because even in his anger, he is in fact under the power of Lula. He is surrounded by Lula's people, and furthermore, he is just part of the Lula's routine.

So far, the discussion is about how *The Dutchman* becomes a racial play that uses symbolic presentation very similar to that of absurd play. Next discussion is about Psycho-historical background that makes such phenomenon necessarily prevail.

## The Necessity for Presenting Racist Oppression with Absurd Dramaturgy

When the absurd Theatre came, its aim is to unveil the illusion. Human believes in the logic and understandable reality. This belief finally forces human to always rationalize everything. The world or reality is reduced to the rational/ human understanding. Therefore, they live not in reality but in their hope, their concept. This attitude helps to create (transcendental, emotional, and rational) fear, pain, and

fatigue every time they have to confront reality beyond their expectation/concept. Absurd theatre wants to make the audience familiar once more with situation they always want to forget, avoid, repressed, etc. The Absurd theatre wants the audience to embrace what is actually part of them. Therefore, the play does not argue or teach about a certain situation, it directly presents the situation. A situation people are no longer aware. In the case of absurd play, it is human absurdity (of course different plays create different situation, example relentless waiting in *Waiting for Godot*, the futility of longing the ungraspable universal message in *The Chairs*). In the case of *Dutchman*, it is the racial oppression, people are no longer quite aware of the disintegration between black society and white society.

## The image of Integration and Its Possible Economical Background

It is worth noting that the many numbers of drama which portrays racial conflict is just a part of the big internal problems are not necessarily reflects the real situation. One among many problems for the black dramatist is to consider the potential audience. Who will watch the play? Black man or white man? Barnet (p. 1313) quoting Johnson, writes, 'the black writer's audience "is always both white and black America". Considering this situation, it is more acceptable to write the themes that does not reduce the audience. If a Black play is considered successful, meaning being performed many times, the consideration is the number of the audience who comes. Another consideration is who will pay the production. Klaus (p. 957) and (Hill, p. 122) gives an example that reveals the government help/encouragement in black play production

through The Federal Theatre project around 30s. Hughes, Ward, Wilson, Fisher, Browne, and others are some dramatists that are sponsored by Federal Theater. It is logical that integrationist / pro-assimilation attitude more promoted. It is probable that Baraka's dissociation with the integrationist is part of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, a time when the accepted values are questioned.

## Confronting the Already Accepted idea of Peaceful' Integration

The idea of living in peaceful harmony without racial conflicts is a good one. But it can become domineering illusion. The idea of assimilation and harmonious relation has been highly valued or promoted so that people is possibly lured and then they forget or unconsciously repressed the very fact of their Racial conflict. In the beginning of this paper, it has been shown that many of black dramas try to make smooth the racial conflict or segregation attitude by showing them as merely a part (probably a small part) of internal conflicts. Racial oppression is probably really small problem for those dramatists. But this already small image of racial oppression in the Afro-American Dramas is likely to be smaller, lessened by other dominant idea, for example Christian idea of loving each other and accepting the suffering. To mention an example, Martin Luther's speech (p. 81), says he has a dream to reveal its engagement in Christianity by using allusion from Isaiah. His peaceful ideas are certainly neither to distrusts all white people nor to have non-violent creativity. In *Fences*, Rose who can accept and forgive the hard life and the injustice, and who also promotes an alternative idea that her husband (troy) possibly does not play in major league

because he is to old and not because he is black, is aligned to the church.

It is in the possible forgetfulness of the very racial conflict that the image of racial oppressions needs to be shockingly presented without any euphemism. The absurdist dramaturgy that can perform a basic and constant image is really helpful. This basic image serves to make sure that the audience will not miss this point, the very situation of their life. This kind of play makes it possible to merely perform the racist oppression without any explanation. Because "Explanation is useless but the sensation remains" (Camus, p. 87). Because Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and so Clay in *Dutchman* has talked, but they die.

The play has showed that in the case of racism (or anything), word and explanation mean nothing if go along with the happening. The idea of black integration is not really important if that is just only an idea. It is even worse when that idea makes people forget reality. Lula kills the black, that is the point. Even Clay's word, which probably arouses pleasure for those who hate white become insignificant compare to his death

> ..And you tell this to your father . Tell him not too much preach so much rationalism and logic to these niggers. Don't make the mistake, through some irresponsible surge of Christian charity, of talking to much about western rationalism, or the great intellectual legacy of white man. … (p. 966)

## Underlining and Accommodating the State of Being Victim

By presenting the very image of victim, of course the audience still can interpret that image, but the victimization of black people will not disappear. It is what they see. And

this is also among Baraka's intention, "Our theatre will show victims so that their brothers in the audience will be better able to understand that they are the brothers of victims, and that they themselves are victims, if they are blood brothers. Clay, in *Dutchman*, Ray, in *The Toilet*, Walker in *The Slave* are all victims."

As shown in that quotations, and in the whole of his essay 'revolutionary theatre, Baraka seemingly wants to make sure that the fact of being victim is shared.

To accommodate Baraka's idea of seeing Black people merely as a victim, realism will not be really suitable for several reasons. First, Realism wants to picture human as similar as possible to the real life. And in the real life, there no such 'merely' or 'only'. In reality human identity is partly conditioned/ built by many institutions such as job, family, religion, class, etc (a worker could be a victim his working hour, but he can be a victimizer at home). Second, to relate the situation on the stage to all of the audience from many different backgrounds, the background should be dropped. It is impossible to accommodate all backgrounds attached in each audience/individual. Applying some detailed background/ context to the stage will limit the stage's power to represent a wide range of reality or a wide range of individuals. Third, because realism depends so much on the spoken word of the character (to represent a large part of reality that cannot be presented on the stage), the underlined victim-quality/ the victim-ness will be obscured by several divergent images and several divergent points of view and thoughts of the characters. To concentrate on a specific image or state of affair absurdist

dramaturgy is more reliable than realism and others.

**Keeping the Violence Effectual**

Baraka wants to use violence or hatred as a shocking therapy for the black society. It seems like the black society hasn't come to know 'what the world is', whether it is the very reality of racial conflict or hatred spread over society. Consequently, they also do not know what the world should be. By presenting hatred, probably society will realize its existence in the real life. Only after that, the attempt to start improvement can be ignited.

Because they have been trained to hate, The Revolutionary Theatre must hate them for hating. It must crack their faces open to the mad cries of the poor. And what we show must cause the blood to rush, so that pre-revolutionary temperaments will be bathed in this blood, and it will cause their deepest souls to move, and they find themselves tensed and clenched, even ready to die, at what the soul has been taught. We will scream and cry, murder, run through the streets in agony, if it means some soul will be moved, moved to actual life understanding of what the world is, and what it ought to be. (The Revolutionary Theatre).

In the realist tradition, the theatre fails because they want to be similar to reality. In trying to present reality, realism can only present external appearance. States of mind such as hatred can hardly be presented merely through outward resemblance. Esslin shows how external portrayal of a conflict such as in fighting and duel are no longer effectual. He underlines the changing perception on society in accepting realist

portrayal as a result of technological development in the media of art.

In The Elizabethan and Shakespearean era, the fights, the duels were regarded by the audience as a high point of the acting. Actors have special technique of using blade and performing bleeding fight. These skills were popular that English actors were touring the whole of the continent and making a lot of money –from audiences who didn't understand a word they were saying –simply because of this kind of spectacle. In an age of photographic mass media this doesn't work anymore (p. 160).

He further explains that it is because the audience has known too well that the actor are taking care not to hurt each other. The fights on the theatre have become embarrassing. Therefore, to preserve the same effect (felt as real) the presentation should be on the symbolic level. The growing intensification that can be found in *Dutchman* and other absurd plays serves to increase the psychological state of mind, whatever it is, it depends on the playwright's construction, of hate or irrationality that explodes at the final moment. For transplanting a dense of feeling in an abstract form (because it want to be transplanted in the various mind of the audience), Absurdist technique is probably the proper choice. Historically, modern drama largely moves into this style. *Dutchman* and absurd theatre continuing such movement within their particular/ specific environment.

## CONCLUSION

Absurd drama attacks abstract or 'unreal' enemy such as God, logic, language and literary convention while racial/ ethnical play commonly shows its own ethnicity or attacks the enemy of its ethnic, their oppressor. Absurd play rarely shows strong anger toward its enemy because the enemy is so powerful and therefore the only chance to win is to disregard the enemy in a tragicomically manner. The ethnic/Afro-American's 'enemy', however strong it is, is considered as an earthly creature/ less than God/ metaphysical system therefore more optimism can be found and anger is common for showing its power. However, in the era of metaphysical decline, where gods or other metaphysical system are no longer a big enemy (god turned out to be language), the absurd also loses its power because there is nothing high to degrade anymore, there is nothing great to be disregard anymore. Racial oppression and another recurring cultural disease become the greatest matter/ enemy.

*Dutchman* really exists between Black American Drama and the Absurd. In its form, the growing intensification to create an image of hatred and oppression is strikingly similar to the Absurd play. In its content, the support for segregation and open conflict exceeds the common Black American drama that focuses on the internal conflicts in Black society. In doing so, *Dutchman's* presentation turns to symbolism. The numbers of the passenger, their attention, the degree of mocking and hatred in the characters' conversation, their physical contact/ movements are getting more and more intensive. The intensification continues growing until it produces (has result in) the act of killing the black man.

In that killing process, the *Dutchman* revealed to be similar to *Ihe Lesson* and *The Zoo Story*. *Dutchman* is similar to The Lesson in its growing intensification that includes the changing in power relation

between two people. In comparing *Dutchman* to *The Zoo Story* and *The Lesson*, the characters in *The Zoo Story* have more background and the story is more plotted. The problem in *The Zoo Story* and *Dutchman* is more realistic than the problem in *The Lesson*. The problem in *Dutchman* is racial oppression and the problem in *The Zoo Story* is social alienation. The problem in both plays directly appears from their conversation. The problem in *The Lesson* is more symbolic, for example. The inability of the pupil to follow the professor's concept due to her toothache may represent the supremacy of flesh over thought.

In comparing *The Zoo Story, The Lesson,* and *Dutchman*, there is an impression that American Absurdist (if any, because Albee himself is less absurd) still touches the daily ground, they cling to their social or racial perspective (and not metaphysical). While the European Absurdist uses superficially unreal characters such as: animal-like men (Pozo and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*), half-body person (Nag and Nell in *End Game*), man turned to rhinoceros in *Rhinoceros*, a lady with three noses in Jack or the submission, or a corpse growing to a gigantic posture in *Amedee* (Esslin, p. 205), American Absurd play's characters are still a complete and physically realistic human beings.

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# REPRESENTATION OF NCLB IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM AND ITS IMPACT ON HISPANIC STUDENTS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON MEDIA REPORTS

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## ABSTRACT

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) aims to improve US education system. Every student in the US must have the same rights to get a quality education. The state is responsible for providing fair, equitable and quality educational facilities to the community. In reality, however, the NCLB was not entirely successful. While the law stipulates equality for underprivileged students, in reality, the richer students get better facilities and the best teachers. In addition, not all school teachers meet the standards. Based on these problems, this study aims to examine the challenges NCLB faced. It also intends to investigate the ideal implementation of NCLB and its effectiveness for students in the United States. This research also explores minority groups, like Hispanics. They are the largest minorities in the US. This research seeks to answer (1) How is the NCLB implementation reported in the media? and (2) What are the impacts of the NCLB implementation on Hispanic students?. This study uses the theory of Critical Discourse analysis from Norman Fairclough and Jager with news articles as data sources. The news articles were taken from the New York Times, usnews.com, dailynews.com, fivethirtyeight.com, and CBS News. The results found that the NCLB is still problematic that still there are achievement gaps, protests, and low performance. In addition, there are still wrong beliefs, discrimination, and dishonesty regarding the implementation of NCLB. Through some possible ways to solve the problem, like supervising and revising NCLB.

**Keywords:** *Critical Discourse Analysis; effectiveness; implementation; NCLB*

## INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important parts of every country. Education will make people a wide knowledge that would be very useful for the future. Among the benefits of education is it helps improve communication skills. Being educated will make people can write, read, and speak (Abelencia, 2021). In addition, the common reason why people need education is that they need a job to continue their life, usually, people who have a high education will get better jobs than lower-educated people. Education also promotes gender equality because education teaches us that everyone has the same right to get a good education (Adhitya, dkk, 2022, p. 262).

The United States is not only a superpower in technology and industry but also in education. There are some world-ranking universities in America, such as Ivy League campuses. (Mauk & Oakland, 2009). Those colleges bring many students from other countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and soon. It is proven that the US has a very good quality of education and a great influence on other countries (Ayuningtyas & Adhitya, 2021, p. 154).

In the history of education in the US, which started in the colonial period, the puritan asked the parents to teach their children to write and read. They learn the alphabet of theological series and they learn to read the bible. At that time, education was mostly only for the elite group and the planter's sons. Gender and class differences in school were also in existence (Mauk & Oakland, 2009; Rudy & Adhitya, 2022, p. 334).

Immigration is one of the important parts and the central aspect of US history. Immigration to the US was divided into several stages, for instance, the colonial period, the first wave of immigration (1680-1776), the second wave (1820-1890), the third wave (1830-1930), and the fourth wave (1965-present). In the colonial period, the people who established the colonies are considered the founders rather than the immigrants, because they created customs, laws, and institutions (Mauk & Oakland, 2009). In the colonial period, there were also several Spanish populations, that came to America in the 1500s-1600s. The Spanish people first settle in Florida, followed by others in New Mexico, California, Arizona, Texas, and Louisiana. Hispanic Americans are the American people who have descendants from Spain. They usually use the Spanish language to interact with each other. The states from which Hispanic Americans originate include Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Chili and Colombia. For Hispanic, no separate racial category because they do not constitute a race or national group. The main religion they embrace is Roman Catholicism. Hispanic Americans also get education in their country of origin, both formal and informal education (Al Fajri, Atmantika & Adhitya, 2022, p. 245).

The US provides both formal education and informal education. Education in the US starts from childhood education, elementary and secondary education, vocational and technical education, and postsecondary education. Primary and secondary school in America spans about 12 years of education; the four last years are called 'high school'. Students get the facilities to join the

extracurriculars provided by the school (US Department of Education). Nowadays, education in America is a massive social institution that includes millions of people and spends billions of dollars. More than 75 million of the US population, or one-fourth of the population, are attending schools.

In the US, primary and secondary schools also have a good quality education because America has good regulations. In 2001, President George W. Bush drove an act called as No Child Left Behind Act for advancing the quality of education in primary and secondary schools in America. The act gives the rules for all students in America by making the change of concept in the school's curriculum, making a standard test for the student and each student has to pass the standard mark, in addition, this act also helps the disadvantaged students to get the chance to study in the school. NCLB has four important pillars that become the foundation of its act. Those are accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific results, expanded parental options, and increase local control and flexibility.

In 2015, President Obama change the name of NCLB and revised some policies in the NCLB Act. This act was being revised because the government see that the implementation of the NCLB was still not fulfilling the target. President Barrack Obama changed the name of NCLB to become the Every Student Succeed Act (ESAA). By revising this act, it was expected that the poor and disadvantaged students can get a better and equal education. It is also expected that the student get their dream.

The goal of NCLB is to develop existing education in America. Every student in America is expected to have good quality education so that no students are left behind. The act stated that the act must provide fair, equitable, and quality educational facilities for all students, in points 1 and 2 of the act it is stated that the objectives of this act are first, to meet the educational needs of low-achieving children in schools with the highest poverty rates in the US, children with limited language skills, children with disabilities, etc. Second, the Preparation of teacher training and accountability systems.

However, in reality, the practice of NCLB has not been completely successful. This Act mentions equality for disadvantaged students but in fact, the students from the rich class get more of the best facilities and the best teachers. In addition, the teachers who teach in schools have not all met the standards of good quality teachers. From these problems, the researcher wants to dissect why the application of NCLB is not that easy and not in accordance with what is in the act. The researcher wants to investigate How the real implementation of NCLB in students in America. The objectives of the research are first, to describe the effectiveness of NCLB's implementation as reported in the media, and second, to describe the impact of NCLB's implementation on Hispanic Students in America as reported in the media. This research particularly answers the two research questions: 1) How does the implementation of NCLB as reported in the media? and 2) What are the impacts of the implementation of NCLB for Hispanic Students?.

This research is conducted under the qualitative method. The purpose of Qualitative research is to understand and

interpret social interaction. In addition, it is used to understand concepts, opinions, and experiences. (Cresswell, 2009) The type of data in qualitative research is in the form of images, words, and objects. Because the data of this research is media and in the form of a sentence, this research is included as qualitative research. The final reports of qualitative research are in the form of a description.

Some previous studies have the same topic as my research, the previous studies also have the topic of the implementation of No Child Left Behind and a certain group of people. To mention some of them are written by Kinnucan et al (2012), Veney (2013) and Hursh (2007).

These previous researches also have differentiation from my research, in Kinnucan, the study is limited to the students of Alabama, while my research will investigate Hispanic students. The novelty of my research stands on the object of the research. In the previous studies, most used students and data reports as the object of the research, while my research will use the media or online news that will be used as the object to be analyzed in the research. The differentiation also stands on collecting the data, I will collect the data by searching the media or online news from the internet, while the previous studies used the interview.

This research will analyze the news from some media such as New York Times, Washington Post, CBS News, Fivethrityeight.com, and USNews. Then the news will be analyzed by using Critical Discourse Analysis (from Fairclough) and use the American studies framework (theory of representation). The aspects of CDA are

social wrong, obstacle to addressing the social wrong, place of social wrong, and some possible ways to solve the problem.

The data analysis in this research will be through some steps. The steps are analyzing the news, and article by using CDA, writing important notes, correlating the news and articles with the aspect of Fairclough's CDA, and the last is concluding.

## DISCUSSION

### The Implementation of NCLB as Represented in the Media

This research analyzes the news from The New York Times, entitled "No Child Law is not closing A Racial Gap" written by Sam Dillon. The second one, "No Child Left Behind Worked," was authored by Ben Casselman and published on Fivethirthyeight.com. Then, the third article entitled "Teacher Protests No Child Left Behind Test" was taken from CBSnews.com. The fourth article entitled "No Child Left Behind Law Faces Its Own Reckoning," written by Motoko Rich and Tamar Lewin, was taken from The Washington Post.

By using Fairclough's CDA, it can be found the effectivity of the implementation of No Child Left Behind in America as reported in the media. It can be found the social wrong, obstacle addressing to social wrong, Place of social wrong, and the possible way to pass the obstacle.

Several social wrongs have been found in the news. These social wrongs are the Achievement Gap between the colored student and the white student (from New York Times); No Child Left Behind is still questioned and the school in Beverly

Massachusetts has failed to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" in standard tests (from fivethirtyeight.com); the protest done by the teacher in Madison toward the No Child Left Behind test (from CBS news); schools in the USA are recognized as low performance and failed under the No Child Left Behind Act (from Washington Post). The social wrongs that have been mentioned indicate that the implementation of No Child Left Behind is still problematic and it is not quite effective.

In the first news from New York Times, it can be found that the social wrong is the achievement gap between colored students and white students. According to the news, the colored student got a score that was very far behind white students, and the issue was described several times in the news. Black people were always got a bad stereotype in the US. Throughout its history, they have always been seen as dirty, poor, and uneducated, eventually, racism still existed in the US. The achievement gap between colored students and white students might be the result of racism toward black people.

In the second news, from fivethirtyeight.com, the social wrongs are the NCLB is still questioned and the school in Beverly failed to make AYP in the standard test. From the news, it was presented that 17 percents of students (who came from a poor family) are proficient in English. Also, the implementation of NCLB in Beverly failed within one year.

In the third news from CBS News, the social wrong is the protest done by the teacher in Madison toward the NCLB. the protest was done by a teacher named David

who thought the high score standard on tests breaks the human conscience and it will be difficult for the students.

In the fourth news from Washington Post, the social wrong is that schools in the USA are recognized as having low performance and failed under the NCLB. The news mentions that in one of the schools in the US called Ginn Academy, 88 percent of the students passed the test but the school is still claimed as failing and not meeting the standard set by NCLB. The high standard of AYP and the penalty for the school drive the protest both from teachers and students.

The obstacles to addressing social wrong are also found in the news. The obstacles include the problem that obstructs the implementation of No Child Left Behind. Based on the news, the obstacles are The big amount of colored students with low scores, old-fashioned thoughts of black people, Discrimination, Weaknesses in presenting data, lack of funding, Unsent voice, No-revised NCLB, and Divided parties. These obstacles indicate that solving social wrong of NCLB Act is quite difficult.

In the first news, the obstacles are the big amount of colored students and the old-fashion thought. It was called an old-fashioned thought because based on the news, black people tend to think that "it is not cool for human to be smart", this thought can hinder the development of human resources in the US.

The second news from fivethirtyeight.com, the obstacles are Discrimination, weakness in presenting the data, and lack of funding. Discrimination is

the different treatment toward a particular group with another. In the news, discrimination occurred toward poor students and colored students affected their achievement.

The obstacles of the third news from CBSnews.com are unsent voice and no-revised NCLB. The unsent voice means that if the message of the protest cannot be sent to the government, it can prevent the cessation of the protest. The no-revised NCLB means that if the government does not change the NCLB rule (the high standard of AYP), so the protest will always continue.

In the fourth news from the Washington Post, the obstacles are no-revised NCLB and divided parties. The revision of NCLB is needed because not all schools are in line with the NCLB program. Then the divided parties also hamper the resolution of the social wrong because if it wants to revise NCLB, it needs the agreement from the government so the resolution will be done.

In the place of social wrong, the NCLB gives a bad impact on the students in the US. From the first news, it can be explained that the Achievement gap between colored student and white students make a significant difference; in the second news, the unsuccessful of NCLB in school in Beverly make NCLB is claimed as failed and give a new method in collecting data; in the third news, the protest toward standard test was done by some people and trigger the repair of NCLB; and in the fourth news, the failed of NCLB in school cause the act from the government to reauthorize the law.

To make social wrong clear, there must be some possible ways to pass the obstacle. There are also some possible ways to solve the problem. The possible ways are to Supervise the implementation of the NCLB Law and the education system; Make a new law called "ESSA"; and Revision of NCLB law by giving flexibility in standards for each school.

In the first news from New York Times, the solutions are to supervise the implementation of the NCLB Law and the education system. Supervision is needed so that there are no errors in the implementation of NCLB. Supervision can make the distribution of quality people will be distributed fairly, for the poor and the rich so all the students can have good achievements.

In the second news from fivethirtyeight.com, the solution is to make a new law called ESSA. This solution was clearly stated in the news, ESSA could replace the position of NCLB and it was assigned on October 10, 2015.

In the third and the fourth news, from CBSnews.com and Washington Post, the solution is Revise of NCLB law by giving flexibility of standards for each school. This solution was delivered by Obama in his speech. Flexibility means that the government let the school choose what is the best rule or method for the students to study, and the method could make the students reach the achievement of the NCLB.

An American figure, George Miller also presents his concern about NCLB implementation. In addition, in a news from Washington Post (2020) entitled "18 years

ago, Mike Pence voted against No Child Left Behind. So did Bernie Sanders. Their reason weren't the same". also presents its concern. By using CDA from Jager, the analysis will be framed as below:

1. Context

NCLB issue is also brought by an important figure, George Miller. Through his speech on Youtube entitled NCLB hearing: Chairman George Miller and also by reading the transcript. In the video, Miller told that NCLB has a good hope for America that will provide equality for every segment. But, in fact, since its implementation in 2001, No Child Left Behind did not run well. George Miller regrets this case as he stated :

> … are telling us that No Child Left Behind is not fair, not flexible, not adequately funded, we will not waver when it comes to accountability to setting high goals and standard of the current law that not negotiable …

The article from washingtonpost.com presents that NCLB has become the pros and cons for the government in the United States. Each government figure has its own perception of the NCLB law after it was released in 2001. Joe Biden support and is optimistic that NCLB will be a great law that can bring education in the US better. Meanwhile, Mike Pence and Bernie Sanders did not support the ratification of the No Child Left Behind.

> Critics warned that using test scores for high-stakes purposes was a misuse of the exams and that NCLB had set an impossible goal by declaring that virtually all students would be "proficient" in reading and math by 2014. The law's authors knew that was unrealistic but assumed the law would

be rewritten in 2007. It wasn't. Increasingly, schools — including high-performing ones — were considered failing because of peculiarities in the law's language and the way states implemented it.

Regarding the speech and the article, if compares with the previous four articles, it can be found that the position from both speech and article are in line and have similarities with the four previous articles. Those speeches, articles, and four previous articles assess that No Child Left Behind has not been implemented perfectly, there are still too many problems faced by the government, society, parents and students in the US.

2. Surface of the Text

The speech is structured by some elements. The first element is the screen of the speech which presents a picture of Miller who gave the speech in a huge room. Under the screen, there is a space for the title of the video and there is the transcript. The news from Washington Post is structured by 13 paragraphs. Before entering the paragraph, it is started with the picture of Bernie Sanders. The first paragraph tells about the NCLB ratification in 2002 which was assigned by President Bush. Then the next paragraph tells about the NCLB vote from an important figure in the US. The important figures were Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders and Mike Pence.

3. Rhetorical Devices

The NCLB issue has become a serious concern. There are problems faced by the government regarding the NCLB implementation. The four previous news stated the problem of No Child Left Behind.

The news describes NCLB issues such as the achievement gap between colored students and white students, schools that cannot meet the AYP standards, then there are still protests that allude to the standard of tests given to students and the last one is the low ability of students. The failure of the NCLB was also reinforced by figures, such as Miller, In his speech, George Miller argues that NCLB is not fair and not flexible.

To handle these problems, it should have a solution. It was stated that it will have the revision toward NCLB Act immediately. For the Democrats, the Act should be changed into a new act called "ESSA". As Obama stated, the law must give flexibility to states in innovating how to improve the student's abilities.

## 4. Content and Ideological Statement

In the first news from New York Times, the media seems to portray NCLB inequality. In the news, it is stated that students still have gaps, especially for minority and poor students, they have not performed well since the NCLB enactment. The news shows the NCLB weakness. It can be concluded that the New York Times does not support NCLB since New York Times is siding with the Democratic party, while No Child Left Behind was created by the Republican government.

While in the second news from Fivethietyeight.com, the media seems to support the NCLB existence, despite its failure, still shows positive rights. Then the news from CBS News does not support NCLB because it invites the audience to say "yes" to the NCLB failure. On the other hand, CBS News is siding with Democratic

Party since NCLB is siding with the Republican government.

Then the next news from washingtonpost.com displays NCLB weakness. The media gives the failure of NCLB too much. The media performs criticism toward NCLB. Washingtonpost is the media that is built by the Democratic party, so this media is indeed an opposition toward NCLB.

## 5. The Article Peculiarities

The speech of George Miller also has peculiarities. The peculiarities of the speech are the government's persistence to provide a good education for students in the US by improving the NCLB Law. The other peculiarity of the article from the Washington Post is that NCLB got controversy about its policy. This will emerge in the debate among the people in the United States.

## 6. The Article Position and Messages

The speech position is in line with the 4 previous news and it goes a line with the article from the Washington Post. Then, the message from this speech is that education is an important part of our lives, and all part of people in the world should get an equal education no matter they come from, how poor they are, what color of their skin, in addition, the government should review NCLB policy, so there will be the advancement of the education. Then, the message from the article from the Washington Post is that the government must work together to build a better American education. Criticism from various parties is needed to revise No Child Left

Behind which will become a learning reference for all students in America.

## The Impact of NCLB on Hispanic Students

The education of Hispanics in the US is a disadvantage, according to Schneider, Martinez & Ownes (2006), the activity in the home also influences the education of Hispanic people. Most Hispanic families do less literacy toward their children because they only speak one language, Spanish language. There are two news used to analyze. The first is from usnews.com entitled "Gain in Reading for Hispanic Students Overshadowed by Achievement Gap", and the second is from dailynews.com entitled "Academic Achievement Gap Persists for Hispanic Students".

In usnews.com, the social wrong is Underachievement in reading for Hispanic students. Based on the news, Hispanic students have left three places lower than the other students. This is like a threat because Hispanics are the largest minority in America that have a big influence on the progress of America. The news explained that only 2% of Hispanic students can speak English, which is troubling. This emerges the achievement gap between Hispanic students and white students.

Then, in the news from dailynews.com, the social wrong is different treatment in education for Hispanic students resulting the achievement gaps for Hispanic students. The news told that Hispanic students face unfair treatment, for example, they get the minimum facilities than white students. The funding for Hispanic students is also less, and as a result, it creates achievement gaps

between white students and Hispanic students. A Washington Post article (2020), mentions that there is a "funding gap" for African and Hispanic students, they need more money but they get less. Hispanic and African get an average fund of about $5,000 for each student. People also tend to see that colored students have fewer competencies than others, it is called racial profiling toward Hispanic students and it should not happen.

Then, the next is the obstacle in addressing social wrongs. Based on the news, the obstacle to addressing social wrongs that can be found in the low performance of Hispanic students and low motivation from the student. The ability of Hispanic students is still minimum and it can make them difficult to understand the lesson. Second, low motivation hinders the learning process, based on the news, many Hispanic students do not understand the materials that were given by the teacher because they lack motivation.

In the news from dailynews.com, The first obstacle is the racist thought and lack of attention toward the Hispanic students. The racist thought has been mentioned in the article clearly, it explains that the people in the US have the understanding that Hispanics and other colored people have a lower status in society and lower competencies than white students. So they think that white people are better than colored people. The second obstacle is the lack of attention toward Hispanic students. The lack of attention has been presented clearly in the article, the examples are the lack of funding for the Hispanic students so they cannot get good facilities in education,

and the Hispanic students are also taught the easier material than the white students.

The possible ways to solve the problem are also found in the news and some articles. The possible ways are motivating Hispanic Students with some strategies, managing personalities, and reauthorization of five core NCLB principles.

In the first news, the possible ways are to motivate students and manage their personalities. Motivating the students, it can make the students stay longer in school, perform better in school, and they can do tests well. There are intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Some strategies can add to students' motivation, such as setting the tone of the classroom, varying the teaching method and giving the students options.

In the second news, the possible way that can be done in passing the obstacles from the sixth article are to abolish the racist thought in American people and the government should give more attention to Hispanic students. The act that can be done is by managing personality that racist thought is not a good thing. Some steps that can be done to stop racist thoughts are acknowledging differences, seeking out friendship from different groups, focus on the difference. The second is the government should reauthorize the five core principles of NCLB. Those are a high expectation, accountability, knowledge, intervention, and support. Obama also delivered the speech regarding No Child Left Behind, by using the CDA from Jager, the analysis framed as below:

1. Context

In 2011, Obama delivered a speech regarding the NCLB Act. He commented that NCLB still has deficiencies, and its implementation, NCLB is still labeled as a failure and Obama wanted NCLB to be revised immediately.

> But experience has taught us that, in it's implementation, No Child Left Behind had some serious flaws that are hurting our children instead of helping them. Teachers too often are being forced to teach to the test. Subjects like history and science have been squeezed out. And in order to avoid having their schools labeled as failures,

Obama gave the solution that he would give flexibility to the teacher in each region. Obama admits all the US states to do flexibility toward NCLB implementation. Flexibility means that Obama liberates all the nation states to do innovative ways to give the children skills to advance their careers and set the high standard.

Obama's speech is in line with the usnews.com article. In the news, the existing social problem is the underachievement of Hispanic students in reading ability, then in Obama's speech, what makes NCLB fail is the problem of reading ability. Although the news is more concerned about racism, both of them tells about NLCB shortcomings.

2. Surface of the article

Obama's speech is structured in 23 paragraphs. The speech started with the title then it will be followed by the paragraphs. The 1st until the 5$^{th}$ paragraphs contain the greeting of Obama, and he mentioned some of the figures who also have a role in the

government. Then the 6th paragraph contains the problem that is faced by the US. The 7th and 8th paragraphs tell about the economic condition of the US. Then, the 9th paragraph tells study is an important part of the students. The 11th and 12th paragraphs tell about the Race to Top program that will help the teacher to make an innovation in teaching. Paragraphs 13th and 14th tell about the importance of the reformation of NCLB. The 16th paragraph tells the program of Obama that will give flexibility to the states in developing the NCLB policy. And the following paragraph tells the example of the school that failed.

### 3. Rhetorical Device

The problem stated in the two news and the speech Obama reflects that the implementation of NCLB is still failed. So the solution is like revising NCLB Act, motivating the students, and the involvement of American parents and society to build a better American education is also very much needed.

### 4. Content and Ideological Statement

Based on the first news that came from USNEWS.com, the news supports and sides with NCLB, and the media is included in the media side with the republican party. The problem that occurred in the first news was explained that Hispanic students lacked skills in reading. With these problems, this news wants to revise and improve NCLB.

### 5. Pecularities of the article

The peculiarities of the speech were that the speech was delivered in a friendly manner as evidenced by the laughter and enthusiasm of the audience who applauded. The speech was delivered clearly so that it

was easy to understand. As well as familiar greetings and nicknames were given by Obama to his colleagues.

### 6. Position and message from the article

The speech is in a position that is almost in line with the first news relating to Hispanic students, although it is slightly different in several ways. Furthermore, the message that can be conveyed from the speech is that improving the quality of NCLB is important for the advancement of education in the US. In addition, the role of government and society is needed for the advancement of education so that the US does not become a country that lagged behind other countries.

### CONCLUSION

The NCLB Act implementation in the field is neither as expected nor fit for NCLB. There are still many weaknesses and some of its aspects should be repaired. There are several social wrongs, such as the achievement gap, protests, the schools being recognized as low performance and the NCLB problem of finding obstacles to addressing social wrong, such as old-fashioned thoughts of black people, discrimination, lack of funding, unsent voice, no-revised NCLB, and divided parties, and therefore, there must be ways to solve the problem regarding NCLB implementation, such as supervising NCLB Law and the education system; making a new law called "ESSA"; and revising NCLB law by giving flexibility of standards for each school. In addition, the Hispanic students also experienced the impact of the NCLB implementation to them.

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# SEEING MUSLIM MEN AND WOMEN HERMENEUTICALLY: A LIBERAL-FEMINIST STUDY ON AMINA WADUD'S QUR'AN EXEGESIS

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## ABSTRACT

Gender inequality became one of the important issues in the US as it intersects with other societal aspects, one of which is religion. In the last century, the US has seen a fast-growing number of believers in Islam, despite its unequal practices based on gender. American Muslim women are not only treated differently due to religious beliefs but also to racial backgrounds. The emergence of Amina Wadud, a female Imam with an African-American background, brings new thoughts on the position of women in Islam. Employing the Post-Nationalist approach combined with Rosemarie Tong's liberal feminism theory, this article analyzes Wadud's *Qur'an and Women: Re-reading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* to reveal her thinking in becoming a female Imam in the US, as well as her fights against injustices towards Muslim women. It finds that her background as an African-American woman, a second class in American society, pushes her to put women's rights in Islam forward, which are not consistent in the Qur'an. She re-interprets it with the hermeneutic method, putting women and men in the same position. While her pro-faith determination for equality drives her to overcome the rejection from the American Muslim community when she became an imam in a mixed congregation of Friday prayers.

**Keywords:** *female imam; gender equality; hermeneutics; Islam*

## INTRODUCTION

American Muslims come from various backgrounds. According to a 2009 Gallup poll, American Muslims are one of the most racially diverse religious groups in the US. According to a 2017 study done by the

Institute for Social Policy, "American Muslims are the only faith community surveyed with no majority race, with 25 percent black, 24 percent white, 18 percent Asian, 18 percent Arab, 7 percent mixed race, and 5 percent Hispanic" (Mogahed & Chouhoud, 2017). Muslim-American women face the challenge of reconciling different aspects of their identities, such as gender and race (Moore, 2014). Women's status often becomes the central discussion of the difference between Islam and the West. While questions of gender and women's status in Islam have a long and complex history, they have been particularly vocal since the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Moore, 2014). The identity and the faith of women always become the center of discussion among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims. For more than a century, western perceptions of Islam as necessarily inimical to women's rights have made the status of women in Muslim societies into a pronounced litmus test of Muslims' ability to "modernize", according to Hammer, (2012, p. 5) and Elouafi (2010 in Moore, 2014). These gender issues are also of concern for the US government in its quest to ally with "moderate" Muslims.

Amina Wadud is an American Muslim philosopher with a progressive focus on the Qur'an exegesis. Wadud was born as Mary Teasley to a non-Muslim African-American family and her father was a Methodist minister (Wadud, 2006a). She was a student at the University of Pennsylvania in 1972 when she converted to Islam. Two years after she converted to Islam, Mary Teasley officially changed her name to Amina Wadud. After she converted to Islam, she concerted her efforts on the relationship between gender and Islam. She has been part

of several civil society organizations and movements for promoting principles of equality for women under Islam principles. Gender issues in Islam push her to have the urge to bring a new perspective on women in Islam as seen in *Qur'an and Women: Re-reading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Wadud, 1992).

In this article, the interpretive reading is qualitatively analyzed under the scope of Post-Nationalist American Studies using Rosemarie Tong's theory of liberal feminism. In *Feminist Thought book* (2009), she argues liberal feminism is not about women who can do anything that men can do, but it is more about some women who can do anything that they want. Liberal feminism also focuses on individual autonomy that has justice and guarantees, so women can do what they want without any disturbance since what they do is already appropriate and guaranteed. It highlights the unequal opportunity between men and women. Liberal feminism sees women have the ability to determine their destinies. The movement has several strengths in solving problems related to gender inequality (Tong, 2009). First, liberal feminism states that men and women have the same opportunities. Second, liberal feminism encourages respect for individual rights. The last is liberal feminism offers concrete solutions to overcoming gender inequality, namely structural intervention.

## DISCUSSION

### Racism and Repressions of African American Women

Racism, a form of systematic oppression, is a harmful attitude which exists between races all around the world for thousands of years (Chapagain, 2020). Racism in the US

has existed since colonial times. Racism in the US involves laws, practices, and discriminative actions and has affected various groups of race and ethnicity. Racism in the US started for the first time as White landlords brought Black people to make them the workers on their farms. Black people as human beings stopped existing in the White world as a result of what those landlords did. According to Kovel (in Adhitya, et al. 2022, p. 262), the Whites dehumanized their slave, made them quantified, and became the object of the transaction as if they were a thing in the productive market. The Whites took everything that belongs to the Black people and made them nothing left to keep. The Whites also imposed their values on the Black people. As a result, Black people lost their authentic selves and started to feel inferior because of the collapse of their native values (Chapagain, 2020).

## The Form of Racism and Oppression Toward African American Women

Since they arrived in the unknown country from their hometown, African-American women have suffered exploitation and oppression by the people who thought they were higher than those women. They had to endure the horror of slavery and live in a racist society. They were the subject of oppression; as a worker, a Black person and a woman. African-American women were the most exploited workers. They were forced to work the most menial and dead-end jobs. They occupied the lowest place on the wage scale.

Ten years after the Civil Rights Movement, 53% of the Black people population suffers discrimination because of sex (Murray & Harrison, 1981). African-

American women suffer the most in society from living in a country that is sexist and racist. They were oppressed as a Black and a woman. According to Hooks, there is no other group in the US whose identity was socialized out of existence as African American women (King, 1988). They were rarely seen as a separate group and distinguished by the other groups such as Black men. African-American women were never presented as part of the larger group of women. They were always seen as the shadow behind African-American people and White women. People tend to focus on African-American men if they talk about African-American people and focus on White women if they talk about women. This made the experiences of African-American women assumed to be equivalent to the experiences of African-American men and White women (King, 1988; Al Fajri, Atmantika & Adhitya, 2022, p. 245).

Black women in America could not stand side by side with Black men and white women (Chapagain, 2020). They were still far behind them although they kept progressing gradually. Being oppressed by three kinds of oppression made Black women could not develop their hidden potential and could not make involved in society. Steinem (in Chapagain, 2020) states "Male was universal, but the female was limited. Just like White was universal, but Black was limited". As such, there is something that always stopping Black women to develop themselves. Black women had to struggle to survive both inside and outside of their homes because they were being oppressed by the Black men community and the Whites in society. They had been resisting multiple different forms of repression. Only about giving rise to male authority over women,

but also the higher valuation of male over female roles in society (Lewis & Lewis, 1977).

In the history of slavery and racism in the US, Black men had been excluded from participation in the dominant politico-jural society and denied access to authority (Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Ayuningtyas & Adhitya, 2021, p. 154). The Whites needed to do special measures to reaffirm Black male inferiority. A black male was seen as a potential threat to White superiority because of the concept of male dominance in society. Both White and Black women in the US also had been excluded from participation in the politico-jural domain (Lewis & Lewis, 1977). The authority and prestige position in the politico-jural society had been reserved mainly for White men. Despite sharing the same subordinate group and the potential common interest, Black women occupied a subordinate position to White women. They had no access to deference, power, and authority (Lewis & Lewis, 1977).

The lack of deference toward Black women was caused by the stereotype of the race. The lack of deference made Black women become the target of Black men's resentment because those men who could not get jobs and stable incomes saw Black women as service providers. Black women were called matriarchs and seen as the castration of Black men (Lewis & Lewis, 1977). That aspect made Black men disrespect Black women and want to dominate them. Black men also feel they must persecute Black women to despise Black matriarchs. However, Black women did not think that they can trigger Black matriarchs. They thought they just provided for their family and that they just kept surviving for their family (Lewis & Lewis, 1977). Black women in the US can be described as a slave of a slave because they become slaves of Black men who are slaves of Whites. Their physical image has been maliciously maligned. Black women had been sexually molested and became the baby production factory for men. As a result, some of the Black women thought that they have no productive life, except to bear and raise kids (Beal, 2008).

As the same community, Black women and Black men shared the same racial oppression experience during the Black male exclusion from society. Although men were the ones who dominate the public sphere, Black men did not have the power and authority to gain respect as much as White women had. White women dominated Black men and also Black women who were in the lowest hierarchy. Attributes of the white woman's status currently criticized by many feminists as examples of sexism were seen (and are still seen) by many black women as representative of the unique privileges of women of the dominant group (Lewis & Lewis, 1977).

## African American Muslim

African-American Muslims today are still the largest racial group of Muslims in America. According to PawResearch in 2017, African American Muslims make up 20% of the total Muslims in the US. Most African-American Muslims are orthodox Muslims (Wyche, 2004). The remaining Muslims in the US are of Southeast Asian, East Asian and Arabian descent. A large of these Muslims voluntarily immigrated to the US. African American Muslims view other Muslims as people who are voluntary

immigrants and more focused on religious-cultural issues (Karim, 2006).

African American Muslims belong to two main groups, which are the American Muslim Society, also known as the Muslim American Society (MAS), and the Nation of Islam (NOI) (Wyche, 2004). The MAS is the largest, with approximately 2.5 million members. The NOI members are estimated between 30,000 and 70,000 to 100,000 (Wyche, 2004). The American media focuses more on NOI than on the MAS so the American public thinks that most African-American Muslims belong to the NOI. African Americans who are Muslims do not face issues of assimilation like Muslims who immigrated to the US. They are Americans who have the right to choose their religion. African-American members of NOI were different from members of traditional or orthodox Muslim groups. Since membership in the NOI is only open to African Americans, they have an identity that is both racial and religious as a symbol of distinctiveness (Wyche, 2004).

The earliest Muslims were African slaves, but the plantation owners were primarily Christian (Wyche, 2004). Slaves, as property, did not have a choice in their religion. Nowadays, African-American Muslims who belong to traditional Islamic groups have chosen racial integration, for Muslims, as a group, united by the religious faith allowing no differentiation between followers along ethnic, racial, or linguistic lines. However, in the US, cultural stratification based on religion, ethnicity, race and social class can undermine this sense of unity and identity (Karim, 2006).

African-American Muslims argue that they feel more discriminated against than Black Christians and nonblack Muslims (Karim, 2006). African-American Muslims think that many other Muslim immigrants exclude and discriminate against them. Based on research conducted by the American mosque study in 2000, sixty-four percent of mosques in the US have one dominant ethnic group active in the mosque (Karim, 2006). In some situations, the two ethnic groups that predominate in the mosque in the US are African Americans and South Asians (Karim, 2006). At this point, people can see that there is no marginalized in the Muslim community in the US. African-American Muslims are not only become one of the most substantial groups but also became one of the most independent Muslim communities and separated from the three biggest Muslim communities in the US. About 90% of African-American Muslims worship in a mosque filled with African-American Muslims (Karim, 2006).

When two are ethnically represented in the mosque, it makes an immigrant combination consisting of Middle-Eastern and South-Asian Muslims, it will never be African American and immigrants (Karim, 2006). Because of this issue, African American Muslims separate themselves from immigrants. This becomes one of the reasons that makes the unity between African-American Muslims and Muslim immigrants not happening. This causes the number of immigrants who come to African-American mosques to be less than the number of African-American Muslims who attend the other immigrant mosques. Many African Americans learn about Islam through immigrant communities and maintain contact with those communities, whereas Middle-

Eastern and South-Asian Muslims, who are born Muslims, have no ties to African-American Muslim communities (Karim, 2006). In addition, the immigrants live in separated neighborhoods and few of them want to spare their time to go to African American mosques. Therefore, African-American Muslims attend a mosque more often where they appear as a minority.

**African-American Women and Islam**

African-American Muslim women had a hard journey to embrace their beliefs. As the ones who received multiple oppression, African-American Muslim women were forced to accept the treatment given by the non-Muslims and Muslims in the US. People will never have the image of African-American women if they were asked about Muslim women. They will imagine a woman who has the characteristic of an Arabian woman or Malaysia and Indonesia. This becomes one of the reasons why African-American Muslim women were looked down upon by American society. Their status as Black and women were worsen the discrimination that they got. In addition, the stereotype of Islam and Muslims about the oppression of women has added confusion in American society that could hinder their understanding. Therefore, African-American Muslim women started to fight for their rights and equality for being American citizens and Muslims.

Karim (2006) proves how African-American Muslims are discriminated against by the people around them and even by other Muslims among Muslims in the US. The research involved three women with different racial backgrounds, namely African-American and South-Asian Muslims. One of

the sources for this interview is Melanie, an African-American Muslim woman. Melanie says that she is treated differently in society, not because other women are prettier or smarter, but because she is an African American. She is seen so at first sight, then as a woman, and then as a Muslim. She believes that it is her apparent identity as an African American that makes her treated differently, even in Muslim society. How she was treated differently when she joined a mosque visited by Muslims of all races. Muslim women from other races will shun her off, cut her in the middle of a conversation, some of them even do not make a move to make a conversation with her. Therefore, she no longer prays in mosques containing people of various races in the US because she felt she was more valued and closer to her fellow human beings. Even some of them did not make a move to make a conversation with her. Because of that issue, she decided to not pray in mosques containing people of various races in the US anymore.

**The Background of Amina Wadud**

Wadud is one of the most influential Muslim intellectuals in the US. Since the 2000s, she has been talking about women's issues especially in the context of Islam through various media in the US. She is a Professor Emeritus of Islamic Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and is also a visiting scholar at Star King School for the Ministry (Wadud, 2002).

Wadud was born in 1952. She comes from a devoted Christian family and her father was a priest. She converted to Islam in 1973 when she was 21 years old. As an African-American woman, she understands

the experiences of other African-American women who live in the US for years. Because the patriarch system happened around African-American women, Wadud and the other African-American women fought for gender equality. Wadud then realized the importance of fighting for the equality of all women. According to her, Islam is the oasis in the middle of the world which suffered from global turmoil, stating, "Obviously, this most recent resurgent movement has a strong relationship to the liberation from colonialism" (Wadud, 2002). She (2006b) recounts converting to Islam because she experiences double oppression as an African-American woman. She was trapped in racial and sexual discrimination in the US without privilege. Wadud found Islam as the new foundation that offered women care, protection, support, and adoration.

**Wadud's Re-interpretation of the Qur'an**

As someone who embraces the thought that states that men and women have the same opportunity and have their rights, Wadud shows her movement by reinterpreting Qur'an verses that are considered detrimental to women and the interpretations that ignore the principles of justice, equality and humanity. Her thoughts on gender and feminism are an affirmation that women are whole beings. She rejects the patriarchal system that dominates society. According to her (Wadud, 2006b), the gap between the rights of women and men in the Qur'an is a form of interpretation dominated by the patriarchal culture which results in the subjective interpretations of the Qur'an and the interpretations tend to elevate the status of men above women. As someone familiar with gender and feminist issues, Wadud is considered a Muslim feminist figure who

criticized the method of understanding the Qur'an which is considered discriminatory against women. As a form of her fight, Wadud released her interpretation of the Qur'an to provide a new perspective on the equality of women and men in Islam.

Starting from changing the way of thinking and the interpretation of women in the Qur'an, Wadud started her reconstruction movement. She elaborates that thoughts on women in the Qur'an needed to be reconstructed into a new thought. It will help people to learn that the Qur'an is never biased and that it supports the equality of men and women in society.

1. The origin of women and men are equal

Wadud (1992) states that men and women are merely the classifications of the human species. Both of them are given the same or equal potential in terms of creation, pairing, and reward they will receive in the afterlife. *Taqwa* is the only distinguishing aspect between men and women. It is what the Qur'an confirms, the reference of all Islamic references.

2. The distinction between men and women

Regarding the different roles between males and females, Wadud argues that the Qur'an treats women as individuals as well as men. She explains that there are two conditions under which the statement men are the leader of women can be applied, which are the husband is able to prove his strengths and the husband is able to earn a living for supporting his family's life. Wadud argued husband cannot be named as the leader of his wife if he does not meet the criteria stated before. For feminists, the notion that places the husband as the head of

the household contradicts the main idea of feminism, namely the equality of men and women. Thus, the consequence of the concept of equality between men and women is the creation of the status of a wife who is equal to her husband (Wadud, 1992).

Wadud continues that if the husband is no longer able to provide for his wife, the status as a leader in the family will lose. Moreover, in this era, there are many women (wives) who work and become the head of the household. Wadud stated that the facts show that some men do not become the breadwinner of the family and the role is switched to women who also become the center of the family both economically and socially. Therefore, the interpretation of household leadership has changed.

3. The Qur'an concept of Angels

According to the traditional interpretations, women do not just become the second sex and men's complementary, but also the ones who satisfy the desire of men. The Qur'an clearly states pious men will get beautiful angels in heaven. For Wadud, this interpretation is the opposite of the Qur'an paradigm about justice, equality and pluralism (Wadud, 1992).

Wadud defines pious women should get the same reward as the pious men in heaven as they have the same rights and opportunities. Quoting a verse in QS. Ali-Imran, she mentions not only men but pious women are also entitled to a special reward in heaven someday. Wadud considers that every human being, woman or man, who following to Islamic teachings has the same right to get their reward in heaven in the form of a good partner. Therefore, the concept of

angels (*bidadari* in Bahasa) should refer to both men and women.

4. Leading a Prayer

Islam is always led by men. The one who lead the prayer in Islam is a man. Amina Wadud breaks through one of Islam rules by leading a mix-gender prayer in 2005. Amina Wadud considers that women also have the same opportunities as men in terms of being the prayer leader. She continues that there are no verses in the Qur'an which stated that the one who lead the prayer in Islam must be a man. She also states that a man leading a prayer is a conservative tradition and culture. She quotes on of hadits mentioning a woman, Ummu Waraqah, led a prayer in Prophet Muhammad's home. Ummu Waraqah was appointed as an imam for *shahabiyah* (Prophet Muhammad's female followers) and led their prayer. Wadud sees this as a chance for women to lead prayer in general. Amina wanted to be free from men's domination and she hope someday she could be free from Islam regulation that was dominated by men's interpretation (Wadud, 2006b).

**Wadud's Controversies**

As someone who strongly upholds the concept that women and men have equal opportunities and individual rights, Wadud makes a controversial decision in the Islamic world. She decided to become an imam of the mixed congregation of Friday prayer. She argues that there is no written rule that an imam of mixed-congregational prayer must be a man. She believes that everyone has the right to become an imam regardless of gender. Therefore, Wadud considers women also to have the same right to become an Imam.

Every once week on Friday, Muslims around the world gather in mosques to carry out a prayer called Friday Prayer (Hammer, 2009). Generally, only men are allowed to perform Friday prayers but, in some areas, women are allowed to attend Friday prayers. Unlike the obligatory 5-times-a-day prayers, Friday prayer cannot be performed alone. In addition, every Friday prayer is always added with a *khutbah*, called a sermon, which is delivered before carrying out Friday prayer and is delivered by the prayer leader, the *Imam*.

On Friday, March 18, 2005, a different Friday prayer was held. It was different from the established Muslim prayers because the leader or imam was a woman, Wadud, who also gave the sermon (*khutbah*) before the prayer. The prayer did not separate the gender of the congregation. Wadud acted as imam for a congregation consisting of 60 women and 40 men. The adhan (call to prayer) was performed by a woman as well. They indirectly challenge the exclusive privileges of men in leading mixed-gendered prayers and they blurred lines of gender segregation in ritual prayers (Hammer, 2009).

The event was held in the Synod House, owned by the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan's Morning Heights. The organizers of this event had tried to find mosques in New York but failed to do after three mosques had refused to host the event. The second choice for the venue was an art gallery named Sundaram Tagore Gallery, but later withdrew its offer because of a bomb threat. The organizers looked for an alternative and decided to use St. John as their place to hold the prayer despite the prevailing security concern. The police in front of the cathedral and the security checks

before entering the venue showed how the organizers handle the threat in a serious manner.

**How American Muslims Respond to Wadud Leading a Prayer**

On the day Wadud led the prayer, there were about fifteen protesters outside the synod house, the place where the prayer will be executed (Elliott, 2005). There was a brief outburst outside the synod house caused by the people who did not agree toward the action before the event was started, but they were kept from entering the place by the presence of police. There was a poster brought by the protester that reads their hope for God to immediately cast a curse on the organizers (Elliott, 2005). One of the protesters, a young American-born activist, who went by the name Nussrah, said Wadud was not the representative of Islam and Muslim society. He said that Wadud tarnished the whole Islamic faith. Nussrah added his opinion by saying the punishment Wadud will receive when she died at the risk of distorting Islam's law.

People who followed her prayer considered that what Wadud and the organizers of this prayer were doing is a form of fighting for equality for women in Islam. They argued that this is an opportunity to change traditional regulations into more modern regulations that are adapted to the modern era. In an era where women can also be equal to men, it should also be applied in Islamic law and one of the ways to do that is by opening up new insights that women can become the imam in a mixed-congregational prayer. Ahmad Nasef, the owner of MuslimWakeUp.com and one of the organizers of the prayer, says that this event

is important for men as it is for women because only when men realize the equal space that they need to share with women, in the communities or the mosque, then they will realize the true nature of what it means to be Muslim (Elliott, 2005). Nasef's statement reflects that there is a regulation in Islam about how women are equal to men and it is written in the Qur'an, but it was different in society. In Muslim society, there are still many Qur'an practices that place women under men. Therefore, through the action of holding a mixed-congregational prayer, it was expected that it could give a new perspective to the American-Muslim community to uphold equality in Islam (Hammer, 2009).

After she was the imam of a mixed-congregational prayer, female Imams started to rise all around the world. It shows how big an impact Wadud has in the Islamic world with her thoughts reflecting feminism in Islam and her action in becoming a lady imam which shows that women also have the same rights as men to become leaders, especially as the prayer leader.

## CONCLUSION

Wadud's effort to fight for equality in Islam did not stop. After the success of her book, she creates a commotion in the Muslim world. She led a mixed-congregational Friday prayer, breaking the provisions that have been believed by Islamic communities around the world for decades. She was the imam giving Friday sermons. The event sparked protests from the Muslim community in the US who considered Wadud teaching heresy. She received a bomb threat in the place where she supposedly conducted the prayer. There were about 15 protestors

outside Synod House at the time the prayer was held. One of them said that what Wadud did was a form of blasphemy and she would receive the punishment given by God. Despite being controversial, some showed support for Wadud, considering what she was doing as a new form of Islam. They agreed with the existence of female priests and this is a manifestation of the equality referred to in the Qur'an. In addition, the impact of this Wadud prayer is the emergence of female imams from various countries around the world.

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# CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY AMONG CHINESE AMERICAN THROUGH JEAN KWOK NOVELS *MAMBO IN CHINATOWN*: POSTCOLONIAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to see how Chinese American people as immigrants in America construct their identity while facing two different cultures in society. This research is a descriptive qualitative study and using postcolonial approach. This study used novel by Mambo in Chinatown by Jean Kwok as the main data. Another document, journal, and author's interview as the secondary data. Ambivalence by Homi K. Bhabha will used as the main theory of this research. The main data collected after the researcher goes through close reading of the novel. The result of this study show that ambivalence occur through this novel. This study also highlights that the struggle of the character in the novel reflect the reality life of Chinese American immigrant in America. Seen from their arrival in America and how the first-generation immigrant transferring Chinese culture and value to their children as the second-generation in America.

**Keywords:** *Chinese American; Identity; Immigrant; postcolonial*

## INTRODUCTION

Identity is a very important element for every individual to have. The existence of identity provides an opportunity for others to know who and how the individual is. Individual subjectivity which is displayed through their identity becomes the main basis in interacting in the social sphere. In the social sphere, the concept of identity itself always refers to the position and role of an individual in a particular group. Which is defined by Hogg and Abrams and Jenkins in Eriyanti 2006 that identity is a concept about who and what an individual is, and how that individual correlates with other individuals. (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, p. 2). Identity refers to the style possessed by each

individual that makes them look different from other individuals in the social sphere. In addition, identity is not always about personal information inherent in each individual such as name and place of residence, but identity is an aspect that can be constructed. In other words, a person's identity can also be formed from the interactions that they make in their environment. Every individual has the right to choose what kind of identity they want. Concepts related to identity have been put forward by several theorists, among which several aspects have been defined in an individual including social identity, cultural identity, postcolonial identity, and other identities that can be created from interactions that occur in each individual's environment.

In the case of identity, it should be noted that the recognition of identity is something experienced in the real life of immigrants who position themselves in daily life and how those immigrants build a hybrid identity at the individual and collective levels. The existence of interactions that occur between historical, social, and cultural contexts is a necessity that has long occurred. The concept of identity can also be understood in different ways depending on how an individual or an ethnic group position themselves. Through the interactions that occur, it can finally be seen whether they claim to be China, America, or even both Chinese and American and not both at all. Based on the collective experiences experienced by different immigrants, it means that an identity can be said to be something relational. Besides, immigrants can identify themselves and their identity can be called a complex hybrid process that has never been delegated before. On the other hand, an identity will continue

to be defined and re-articulated in certain social and cultural contexts that have been shaped by interaction and power.

Meanwhile, the main issue raised in this research is the constructing of identity, which will look at individual identity collectively or through an ethnic basis. The existence of social relations between communities in this context becomes very important in shaping the construction of identity. Identity will be seen through how they understand themselves based on their surroundings. In addition, the presence of immigrants in the 'between space' shows the existence of conflicts and struggles of each individual and how this can affect the construction of their identity when faced with other cultures which will later open a new process to negotiate their new identity.

In addition, postcolonial studies not only see and criticize the domination of the colonialists but also participate in fighting abuses that betray a country. Self-identity is depicted through several forms of love for their native culture. Said in his book entitled orientalism explores and discusses artificial lines, as well as the stereotypical lines created between the west and the east. Said saw how the colonizers saw themselves as "us", while those who were colonized as "others" (Said, 1978).

Meanwhile, Bhabha's view of postcolonialism is different from what some postcolonial thinkers have previously stated. After what Said said about postcolonial studies using the framework of 'binary opposition' to find out about the relationship between the colonized and the colonialists, Bhabha gives a different view that it is not just about "us" and "others". However, the

correlation between the two results in a space that is finally known as the third space, where there is a possibility of interaction between the colonized and the colonized or commonly known as hybrid and ambivalent. Bhabha introduces to the world that postcolonialism is not just about fair and unfair, on the other hand Bhabha argues that postcolonialism can also be known as the domination of non-absolute rulers. Bhabha then saw that, when we trace the traces of postcolonialism, we will find the fact that the direct picture of the cultural mix is only ambivalent spaces and contradictory behavior (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38).

Bhabha's postcolonial theory makes clear three main points: hybridity, ambivalence and also mimicry. Where in this study, the author would discuss three of those points, which might clarify this research regarding individual identity in accordance with the research questions that have been previously stated.

Ambivalence is one of the attitudes where an individual or group is in the middle between the colonizers or being colonized, or in other words, love, and hatred. The encounter between two cultures causes individuals or social groups confused about their identities. They adopt a more dominant culture, but they also still have their own culture and way of thinking. This condition is also known as ambivalence where the original culture is negotiated with a more dominant culture. The consequence that also arises from the meeting of indigenous and dominant cultures is that when these individuals face the uncertainty of identity, they tend not to recognize their original culture, because they have begun to be influenced by the more dominant culture.

The arrival of immigrants from west to east reads the colors and characteristics of their own colonies. Differences in culture, mindset, and habits are of particular interest to indigenous people. The existence of a state population in this world presents two social orders, superior and inferior. As a minority, immigrants often experience unfair treatment, because they are controlled by the colonial power who has the power and power. The term postcolonial is a study that focuses on the former colonial countries. The clashes experienced by minorities create doubts about their identity. China is known as a large country that has a long history of immigration, especially to the United States. Apart from being known as a great nation,

China is also known as the nation with the largest population distribution in the world. The population of Chinese Americans is the largest population in America where 23% of Asians live in America. In 1990, the number of Chinese Americans in the United States was approximately 1.6 million, or about 0.5% of the entire US population (US Bureau of the Census, 1992). Chinese people have come to America around 1820, so that the history of the Chinese people in America is called the ethnic group with the longest history among all Asian groups in America. which was when there was a gold rush in California. Most of the Chinese immigrants were known to be hard workers, especially in agriculture, railroad construction, and other menial jobs that white people did not want to do. They are also known as cheap labor, able to save from this very low income, and live very simply.

Chinese American is the largest Asian population in America with a total population of more than 2.5 million. At first, the arrival

of Chinese immigrants to America began in the 1850s, just like immigrants in general, most Chinese people came to America in search of a better life and work opportunities. Then at that time most of the Chinese population fled from the economic chaos that was going on in China, and also trying their luck at the gold rush in California. The Chinese immigration process is divided into three periods, namely:

*The first period (1849-1882)* began during the gold rush in California. Immigrants who came from China flocked to California to work. This first period ended with the existence of the Chinese exemption law in 1882. Until the end of this first period, the Chinese population in America was around 110,000 people. *In the second period (1882-1965)* only diplomats, merchants and students were allowed to travel to America. Meanwhile, the activities of other Chinese immigrants have been limited in line with the enactment of the Chinese exclusion. *The third period (1960s)* the civil rights laws of 1964 brought about a new period of Chinese American immigration. In 1965, Chinese immigration was turned into a basis of equality with other countries in the world. The US government sets an annual quota, whereby Chinese immigrants are allowed to enter America is limited to 20,000 people each year.

This study used one of novel by Chinese American author's entitle Mambo in Chinatown. This novel tells about a girl named Charlie Wong who lives and grows up in Chinatown New York. Charlie's father is a noodle maker at a restaurant in Chinatown, while her mother is a professional ballerina dancer. Her mother died when Charlie was little. Then, Pa (Charlie's father), and also her

sister Lisa lived in a small apartment in Chinatown. Charlie's father is a man who really loves Chinese culture. Even though they are surrounded by Americans, Charlie's father remains true to the Chinese culture he believes in. Meanwhile, Charlie who was born and raised in America secretly began to like western culture through ballerina dance where she's worked. This is where Charlie struggles to determine her identity. On one hand, she respects her father by still following the rules and customs that exist in Chinese culture. But on the other hand, she also began to be interested in western culture which was represented by the ballerina dance which she had hidden from her father and family. The objectives of this study are (1) to see how the identity of Chinese American portrait in Jean Kwok *Novels Mambo in Chinatown* and (2) to see how the struggle in the novels reflect the reality of identity of Chinese American Immigrant in America. As a result, this study will show the ambivalence of the Chinese American Immigrant in the United States.

## DISCUSSION

The construction of identity will be seen through several aspects, the first is ambivalence, the second is hybridity, then the third is mimicry. These three aspects will be discussed separately in the discussion in each novel. Mambo in Chinatown is a novel set in Chinatown's New York, United States. Novel by Jean Kwok was released in 2014, tells the story of a girl named Charlie Wong. She is a second generations Chinese immigrant in America. Her father came from China before Charlie was born. This novel described about the family life, society, social interaction, and contrasting feelings between eastern and western cultures.

**Ambivalent Portrayal through *Mambo in Chinatown***

*Mambo in Chinatown* is the second works of novelist Jean Kwok which was published in 2014. Kwok in several interviews he conducted said that the main idea of this novel was taken from her past experiences as second generation Chinese American immigrant in America. The depiction of Charlie Wong's life and her family as immigrants who came to America to improve their quality of life has been seen clearly even from the first chapter of this novel. This section will discuss about how immigrant and their struggle in facing ambivalence towards Mambo in *Chinatown* novel.

Being immigrants in a foreign country forces individuals to live a life that shows a mixture of cultures that may be foreign to them at first. Entering a new environment, they still face new rules and habits that follow from the dominant culture. Sometimes, adapting to a new culture will meet various challenges and pressures such as emotionally or through social life. Individual ambivalence is something experienced by immigrants in the novel Mambo in Chinatown. One of the situations that shows the ambivalence of the characters in the novel is as follows:

> She pressed the red envelope in my hand.
> "For good fortune."
> "Are you sure?"
> "You must take it or it will be bad luck."
> "Thank you." I bent over and kissed her cheek. (Kwok, 2014, p. 35)

Charlie is a second-generation immigrant who has lived in America since he was born. America's dominant culture enliven Charlie's life. Even so, the values of Chinese culture persist and are always

believed in Charlie's family. The effects caused by the dominance of different cultures that must be experienced by Charlie make Charlie in some situations ambivalent. He did not reject the values of Chinese culture that continued to develop through his family but also did not reject new systems and customs outside of his original culture. The data above shows two different situations that show two representations of Chinese and western culture. First, the situation shows how Godmother Yuan is very excited about hearing Charlie get a new job. He immediately took out a red envelope that was kept in his purse to save a few dollars and gave it to Charlie as a token of appreciation for his new job. The red envelope is synonymous with Chinese culture. Red in Chinese culture indicates happiness, success, and luck. While Charlie through one of his statements in the novel, it is shown that he is someone who does not believe in superstition or it can be said, for some situations, Charlie also doubts the authenticity of his culture. Yet he still accepted it and even thanked godmother Yuan. The second situation, Charlie expressed his gratitude to the godmother yuan. In Chinese and Western culture, the expression of *'thank you'* or *'xiexie'* has different meanings. For Americans, even for trivial things, they will say thank you as a polite or just to show gratitude. Different from American people, in Chinese, say *'thank you'* or *'xiexie'* meaning that shows the distance between the two speakers. Furthermore, Chinese people always refuse a thank you because it will look like they are strangers to each other.

With the meeting of two cultures in Charlie's family, in addition to influencing how they communicate with each other, it also indirectly affects other small actions that

are carried out either consciously or not. In this case, Charlie and her family experience ambivalence in their lives. Besides, another ambivalence situation seen through in *Mambo in Chinatown* novel show in the following statement:

> "Take a look at this." Lisa passed me a scrap she'd torn out of an English newspaper, probably from her school library. Pa only bought Chinese newspapers, which neither Lisa nor I could read." (Kwok, 2014, p. 13)

Based on the text above, it is clear seen that in Charlie's small family, there are two different sides that can be seen through the choice of reading topics. As an American born Chinese, Lisa and Charlie are certainly more comfortable with news or information related to America. besides, Pa is a difference. He is a person who really loves Chinese culture, clearly seen from the way he chooses to read Chinese news. But despite all the differences that occur in Charlie's family, starting from their language and reading interests, they are still fine with it. There is no quarrel or incitement related to the existence of these differences. Apart from the way of communication, ambivalence can also be seen from the way they determine the names of their children and their families. In addition to the emergence of the use of two languages caused by the existence of families who have two different cultural angles, another impact that is also clearly visible is the small habits of doing activities in the house. However, the absence of problems that arise due to different habits because Charlie, Lisa, and also Pa did not take too much attention on it. Means that all three have shown ambivalence as a means to claim their identity. They still with their original culture, but the three of them do not reject the western culture that has entered their

family through differences in habits and preferences for small things. In fact, there is no rejection of the two cultures, on the contrary, they allow it to happen in their daily lives.

Then, another data that shows ambivalence situations in the novel shown in the following statement:

> "I'd always suspected that Uncle's own desire for a boy was the reason my Chinese name, Cha Lan, meaning "beautiful orchid," had been turned into Charlie in English. Everyone knew it was easier to be accepted with an American name, so after choosing a Chinese name for a child, many parents would ask English-speaking friends and family for suggestions for an American equivalent." (Kwok, 2014, p. 26)

The choice of name was carefully considered by Charlie's family, considering they live in the Chinatown neighborhood in America, where western culture dominates their lives. Giving names in English was decided considering the dominant culture would complicate the future success of the immigrant children in the future. Furthermore, giving American names after their Chinese names, shows that they are worried about their children futures. The dilemma that is created is not only related to the naming of America, but also covers Charlie and Lisa's true identity as children of Chinese blood. The naming also shows that they are indirectly given an American name but are still constrained by the Chinese culture that is applied in the family. The existence of clashes between cultures that they have to face, creates a stigma of emphasis that raises the indecision that is felt by Charlie and Lisa.

> "As the train went uptown, the number of Chinese people in the car decreased. They were replaced by men and women in long black coats,

reading their cell phones" (Kwok, 2014, p. 66)

The text above shows how Charlie is dominated by western culture, both in the work environment and when she is in public places. This situation then positions Charlie in two different points of view. The acceptance of two cultures by Charlie presents a contrasting feeling to society. Ambivalence basically does not only represent differences in thoughts that appear simultaneously, but can also represent opposing feelings felt by individuals or groups of an ethnicity (Larsen, 2007: 1 in dharma 2013). Race groups and other social groups largely represent the colonizer and colonized. The ambivalence of the colonized race or group occurs towards the colonizers because of the differences in stereotypes and attitudes between them. The colonialist's prejudice against the colonized caused the colonized to hate them but the colonized even admired the colonizer because of the great power of the colonizer. Bhabha also states that the implications between colonizer and colonized are ambivalent. It can be concluded that the relationship between the colonizer and colonized is ambivalent (Bhabha, 1994). Furthermore, the ambivalence between colonizer and colonized can be attributed to hybridization. This condition can be associated with hybridization because the ambivalence of delegation of authority from one's position of power, authority can also be hybridized when placed in the colonial context is found.

## The Struggle of Immigrant Reflects the Reality Life of Immigrant in America

Identity is a very broad concept if it has to be described one by one. Identity can be seen based on several dimensions such as general self-identity, race, culture, gender, socioeconomic, religion, and roles that may be related to one's life. This is because the purpose of this research is to see how the constructing of identity is, in which the contents of the novel are about immigrants who face two different cultures. Do the characters in it remain loyal to their original culture, or will they be more dominant in the culture that dominates their social environment, or will they choose both? Such points can be categorized in post-colonial identity by looking at the identity of the character based on three aspects (ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity). In the process of forming this identity, immigrants certainly have different struggles. In a decision about identity, some individuals express a commitment based on the choice of their parents, not from their own choice or not from self-exploration. Furthermore, some individuals are in a situation where he is personally trying to find a middle ground with what his parents want for him, what society demands of him, and what he is capable of doing for himself. After going through this stage, the individual realizes the ego identity that is achieved. People realized that they had a higher self-esteem and a set of realistic expectations". The interaction that occurs between individuals in their family environment as well as in their social environment also affects the process of forming individual identities. Moreover, the interaction will produce two different responses, namely acknowledgment and rejection from the environment around the individual.

Charlie's family in the novel consists of her immediate family (father and younger brother) as well as her father's brother, Uncle Henry and Aunt Monica. As a twenty-two years old girl, Charlie is required to become a

person who no longer troubles her father. But behind it all, Charlie also has several shortcomings including she is weak in terms of education, is not able to speak Chinese like her father, she also lacks confidence when in public places. Charlie's family life in Chinatown is really far from their expectations. They really have to fight to survive in America, even though they live in Chinatown, an area dominated by Chinese people and culture. Even the place where they live in Chinatown is very deplorable. They only have one bed, and when night falls, she and Lisa will sleep on the sofa and the rollaway bed in the living room.

> "Every night, after saying good night to Pa as he retired to his tiny closet of a room, Lisa and I folded up the plastic table in the living room and put it in the corner. My mattress, with the sheets hanging off it, always leaned by the wall. We squeezed that in between the sofa and the pile of three little televisions stacked against the other wall" (Kwok, 2014, p. 12)

The statement above shows how the life that Charlie and her little family had to live at the beginning of their arrival in America. Chinatown became the choice of place to live for them where the difficult situation of their life at that time forced Charlie to keep working hard to help their lives. Charlie was aware of the limitations of her abilities, so he could only give up working as a dishwasher, even though the job was not really what she wanted. Spending time as a dishwasher for almost half her current age has changed nothing in Charlie's life. She worked all day in the laundry room of a chili restaurant imagining that she could find a better job. Some differences are shown when immigrants decide to leave a place and come to a new place. Some of them came with the hope of getting an education and a better life, but some of

them had to fight for financial and economic opportunities, even as slaves. This of course will affect other people's views on the immigration process and will question the way they are assimilated into the new culture in their environment (Lazarevic, 2012, p. 2).

Cultural differences will bring ambivalent feelings to individuals. The indecision created by the encounter of native culture and the dominant culture in your life often leaves them confused about who they are. Even though they are surrounded by people, they still feel alone. When they are at home, they don't feel really at home. Who they really are, they don't even know that. An American Chinese immigrant also said the same thing that the existence of a bicultural family sometimes made him feel ambivalent about his own identity. In the YouTube video that she uploaded in May 2021, Emily Chen (YouTube username) shares her life story about her bicultural identity.

> "However, for us Asian Americans who were born in the U.S., or came here when we were very young, we don't exactly have a clear-cut original home culture that's fundamentally a part of us, and a brand new separate culture that our immigrant family members encounter when they come to the U.S. Instead, we are bicultural, in that we live in two cultures from the very start the dominant American culture, and the heritage culture that we encounter at home with family. So, we acculturate to the American culture that surrounds us, and enculturate to our heritage culture. And for me, that's Taiwanese Chinese culture. And it turns out that acculturation and enculturation aren't mutually exclusive like I used to believe. When my college counsellor told me this, it blew my mind and opened up my world, because it helped me realize that I don't have to choose between

American western culture, or Taiwanese Chinese Asian culture."

Based on Emily's statement above, it is clear that families who immigrated to America also value togetherness. In a situation where first and second-generation immigrants are brought together in a family, it is certain that there will be two different cultural beliefs. The second generation comes with two identities and lives a double life. They grew up with the original culture in their homes but were met with other cultures at school or other outside community environments. The existence of cultural differences that are accepted in the home environment and elsewhere will place individuals in a double bond (Quinones-Mayo & Dempsey in Augustin 2012). If the two cultures have very different values, it will be difficult for immigrants to unite the two cultures. The existence of bicultural family immigrants in America will find difficulties due to acculturation in the family whose application in the family system is different. Besides, the two cultures have many differences. Immigrant children position themselves between the two cultures, or even fully assimilate following the dominant mainstream culture, while their parents will still hold on to their original cultural values. Through the novel Mambo in Chinatown, it is also shown how Charlie and her father have different perspectives on beliefs about cultural values. Both belief in two different cultures caused by their bicultural family. Which ultimately makes Charlie ambivalent about her own identity. He is very interested in the dominant western culture but does not want to directly let go of their original culture which is still very strong in their family environment.

## CONCLUSION

This novel discusses the struggle of poverty in life, as well as the struggle of Chinese American immigrants in determining their identity. Inadequate life and the influence of a bicultural family when facing two different cultures also hinder the characters in this novel from determining their identity. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study to see the identity construction of Chinese American immigrants through postcolonial studies from Homi K. Bhabha focuses on three points, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. Meanwhile, those three aspects seen through this novel. Ambivalence in this study occurs in three forms. First, individual ambivalence, it can be seen from how immigrants position themselves in the middle between two different cultures, there is neither domination nor rejection of the two cultures. Second, ambivalence toward family, indicated by the existence of a bicultural family where there are representations of two different cultures in a family, where parents play an important role in the formation of their children's self-identity. Also, there are different feelings when they are at home and in their social environment. Third, the ambivalence toward society is indicated by the existence of social interactions between immigrants and the dominant social environment, thus creating doubts among immigrants whether to follow the dominant culture or stick to their original cultural values.

At the end, the struggle of Chinese American immigrant in the novel describes the same experience experienced by Chinese immigrants in real life. Starting from the initial arrival of the immigrants to America, it was decorated with difficulties and unworthy lives that they experienced. Therefore, immigrants come to America to change their lives for the

better. Furthermore, most immigrant parents really believe in their native culture. Language is one of the ways used by first-generation Chinese American immigrants to maintain and preserve their original culture.

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# BOOK REVIEW: UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN HEGEMONY

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## ABSTRACT

American hegemony refers to the dominant political, economic, and military position of the United States in the world since the end of World War II. The influence of American culture has become increasingly widespread in all aspects of life and has attracted the attention of academics, including American Studies scholars. The book entitled *Understanding American Hegemony* written by Kasiyarno is a work that explains American hegemony from the perspective of American Studies. The theoretical framework of this book departs from the Interdisciplinary approach, namely US hegemony from the perspective of culture (cultural hegemony), history and political science (international relations), economics, military, and regional (regionalism*). Understanding American Hegemony* is a book that emphasizes the study of how the U.S. experience grows and develops abroad and the reaction of the world or world community toward U.S. policies in disseminating its cultural values abroad. Besides, this book is expected to enrich American studies not only in its regional scopes but also in the direction of the study.

**Keywords:** *American hegemony; American power; American Studies; Book review; Culture*

In *Understanding American Hegemony*, Kasiyarno, a researcher on American cultural hegemony as well as a practitioner in the world of education, explores the United States' experience which expanded and developed in other countries, as well as how the rest of the world or the international community reacted to the policies pursued by the US in the process of exporting its cultural values. He argues that this book will make a tremendous contribution to American studies as an academic discipline. Moreover, it is can be viewed as a new perspective in American studies (Kasiyarno, 2022). This book consists of seven chapters that exclusively discuss American Hegemony from the theory to the practice in the American Studies context. This book begins by reviewing the definition of hegemonic culture. Hegemonic culture refers to the dominant culture that exists

within a society or community, which shapes and controls individual beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors in that society (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 1). This culture is often maintained and reinforced by those in power and is seen as the normative way of life that everyone is expected to adhere to.

The picture of the ups and downs of hegemonic state power in history is illustrated by Modelski (1978) in a graphical form where the hegemonic power of the United States after the Second World War, especially after the Cold War, is the greatest in the history of modern civilization. As a consequence, hegemonic culture has both positive and negative effects on society. On the one hand, it can provide a sense of stability and shared identity, as people are united by common beliefs and practices (Krige, 2018). However, it can also lead to marginalization and oppression of those who do not conform to the dominant culture, as they may be seen as deviant or inferior.

It is important to recognize the existence of hegemonic culture and its effects on individuals and society as a whole. By understanding and acknowledging the dominant culture, we can work to create a more inclusive and equitable society where diverse perspectives and experiences are valued and celebrated.

*Understanding American Heg*emony is a book that cannot be split from the influence of Antonio Gramsci's work. In this book, the author explains that Gramsci's theory of hegemony provides a crucial lens for understanding how dominant groups maintain their power and control over society (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 8). According to Gramsci, hegemony refers to the ability of the ruling class to exert influence over the beliefs, values, and norms of society, creating a sense of consent among the masses of the existing social order. This is achieved through the dissemination of dominant ideas through various cultural institutions such as the media, education, and the arts (Davidson, 2007; Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 12).

Critics of Gramsci's theory argue that it downplays the role of economic factors in shaping social relations and overemphasizes the agency of cultural institutions in shaping public opinion (Galeota, 2004). However, hegemony theory remains a powerful tool for understanding how power operates in society and how dominant groups maintain their control. By recognizing the importance of culture and ideology in shaping social relations, Gramsci's theory offers a valuable framework for analyzing the complex interplay between power, culture, and resistance in contemporary society.

In the second part of the book, the author explains the "American Dream, Myth, and Illusion" and deeply discusses the relationship as well as the implementation of those three things that have shaped the identity of the American nation. Kasiyarno describes that the American dream, for many Americans, is an integral part of their own identity and a vital function in American culture (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 23). It represents the belief that anyone, regardless of their background, can achieve success and prosperity through hard work and determination. However, the American Dream is not without its issues, and there are growing concerns that it is becoming increasingly difficult for individuals to achieve upward mobility in the U.S. Furthermore, the American Dream can be

seen as a form of cultural imperialism, as it has been exported to other countries as an ideal to be emulated. This can contribute to the spread of American hegemony and global cultural homogenization, as other cultures are expected to adopt American values and ideals (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 30).

Meanwhile, Illusion and Myth have played a significant role in the context of American hegemony, shaping the dominant U.S. culture and contributing to the perception of the U.S. as a global superpower. This is the idea that the U.S. is unique among nations, with a special destiny and mission to spread its values and ideals to the rest of the world (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 35). This illusion has been used to justify American military interventions and the spread of American influence around the world, despite the negative consequences of these actions for many people.

In the third part of this book, the author describes American exceptionalism in which the United States is inherently different and superior to other nations. In this part, the author argues that American exceptionalism is often associated with the belief that the U.S. has a special mission to spread its values and way of life to the rest of the world (Kasiyarno, 2022). Besides, the author also explains the influence and the essence of Alexis de Tocqueville`s work in defining American exceptionalism. This country, he said, "is particularly distinctive in applying the ideas and institutionalization of region and politics from Western culture since it displays more social egalitarianism and high social mobility" (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 40). The founding fathers were inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment, which emphasized reason, individualism, and the

importance of human rights. They believed in the concept of natural law, which held that all people had inherent rights that should be protected by the government. They also believed in limited government, with power divided among different branches and levels of government (Schweizer, 2022,).

These ideas, as well as the founding fathers' commitment to freedom and democracy, have been seen as a contribution to American exceptionalism. However, it is worth noting that American exceptionalism has been subject to debate and criticism, with some arguing that it has been used to justify imperialism, exceptionalism, and a lack of accountability in American foreign policy.

In the fourth part, the author explains American Creed and Brand which both are very fundamental in nature. The author argues that the idea of Alexis de Tocqueville about the success of America in implementing democracy triggers the American Creed (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 50). There are five aspects namely; freedom, equality, individualism (respect for individual rights), defense of people's rights (populism), and laissez-faire. The American Brand, on the other hand, is a set of values and images associated with the United States, both domestically and internationally. It includes elements such as the American flag, iconic landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, and symbols of American culture such as Hollywood movies, fast food chains, and consumer brands (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 53).

In the fifth part of this book, the author shows how the United States get involved in the psychological war. The author explains that the end of the Cold War not only caused the United States to lose its toughest

competitor in the race for global domination but also impacted the underlying concepts of American foreign policy, which had been applied for decades (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 55). In this part, the author explains psychological war into five issues, there are; Global Anxiety Management, Global Information Control, Post-Cold War Information Dissemination Strategy, Spreading the idea of "Rogue States", and Spread the failed states' idea: Postcard from Hell". In Global Anxiety Management, the author argues the end of the Cold War was the victory of President Ronald Reagan. Reagan stated his conviction that the Soviet Union was not as powerful as many had assumed (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 60). Reagan publicly voiced his opposition to the development of the Soviet Union's Marxist-Leninist doctrine and threatened to stop it by military force if necessary. America increased the opposition of people in the territory of the Soviet Union in Poland on purpose. In Global Information Control, the author explains the expansion of America's overseas information operations to make them more viable.

The Voice of America (VOA) increased its language broadcasts, while Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty strove to break through the Iron Curtain in the Eastern Bloc. Then, in the Post-Cold War information dissemination strategy, the author shows that the general principle for controlling US information following the end of the Cold War consists of three things: first, the ability to quickly identify all forms of threats, both medium- and long-term; second, the ability to personally identify anyone involved in terrorist activities and acts; and third, the ability to implement all emergency management, protection, response, deterrence, prevention, and detection measures based on risk and information (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 62).

In "Spreading the Idea of "Rogue States"", the author describes that the idea of "Rogue States" typically refers to countries that are perceived to be acting outside of international norms and behaving in a way that is deemed threatening to global security. This concept has been used to justify various actions, including economic sanctions, military intervention, and other forms of pressure on targeted countries.

In "The Spread the Failed States Idea: "Postcard from Hell"", the author explains that the concept of "failed states" describes nations that are unable or unwilling to offer their residents protection and essential services, which leads to a breakdown in governance and social order. A "Postcard from Hell" is a theatrical method of depicting the terrible circumstances that might develop in such states, such as poverty, violence, and humanitarian disasters (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 65).

The term "failed states" is still frequently used in policy circles to refer to nations suffering serious difficulties, despite criticism that it is overly basic and reductive (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 69). We may aid in bringing attention to the urgent need for action to address the main causes of state failure and support individuals affected by these conditions by emphasizing the concept of "Postcard from Hell".

According to the author, in the context of American Studies, this type of categorization is nothing more than a tactic to extend the domination of Western countries, particularly the United States, throughout the world. Although there are still numerous humanitarian issues in various Asian and African countries, this categorization has

overlooked the Western world's role in diminishing the power of third-world countries through colonialization and imperialism (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 70). "Postcard from Hell", which depict numerous social inequities and political instability in Asia and Africa, has also covered an important fact: the same thing is happening on various dimensions in Western countries.

In the sixth part of the book, the author describes how Americanization promotes democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression around the world. The process of "Americanization" stresses the alteration of cultural identity, which may emerge from an appreciation for American subjectivity and civilization or from a compulsive need to adopt American culture to benefit from what America has to offer (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 73). Moreover, in the context of Americanization, the author explains the phenomenon that has brought cultural resonance and has gained the attention of many publics, activists, observers, and cultural experts is so-called McDonaldization (Kasiyarno, 2022, p. 74). McDonaldization unmistakably introduces new ideals to Asian countries, particularly in the model of business organization, consuming culture, and consumerism.

What is remarkable is that McDonaldization, as part of America's global industry, may have a negative impact on local markets and threaten an uncompetitive foreign sectors. Because the bulk of foreign industries cannot compete with the force of the U.S. industrial economy, American dominance is necessarily harms the local market (Kasiyarno, 2022, p.77). The concept of cultural globalization expresses the belief that "Americanization or Westernization is highly significant in affecting many cultures

in third world countries and former Soviet Union areas" (Moody, 2017). Therefore, in various writings and analyses of hegemony in American studies, cultural hegemony is often seen as having a close relationship with cultural imperialism. The dominance of American culture can lead to the loss of local cultural traditions and the homogenization of global culture. It is important to have a critical and nuanced understanding of American cultural imperialism and its impact on global cultural diversity.

To summarize, The United States is one of the most powerful political entities in the world, with significant influence over global affairs. Its political power stems from a variety of factors, including military might, economic strength, diplomatic relationships, and cultural influence. American hegemony refers to the United States' dominant position in the global political and economic order. Its origins may be traced back to the Post-World War II period, when the United States emerged as the world's superpower, and it has since been sustained through a combination of military, economic, and cultural might. Americanization, or the dissemination of American culture, values, and habits, has been a critical component in the preservation of American hegemony. While some regard Americanization as a beneficial force that promotes democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression, others see it as a type of cultural imperialism that weakens local cultures and reinforces American supremacy. Finally, the impact of American hegemony on the world is complicated and multifaceted, impacted by a variety of economic, political, and cultural elements.

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## GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

The editor of Rubikon Journal welcomes article submissions in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Articles have not been published or accepted for publication, or are being considered for publication elsewhere. In addition to the manuscript, a written statement should be attached which clarifies that the article is original and does not contain any elements of plagiarism.

2. Types of article suitable for publication include the following; research report (laboratory, field, archives), conceptual ideas, studies, theory applications.

3. Articles are written in Indonesian or English (preferable) using academic language along with standard academic writing structure and composition. Manuscripts are typed 1,15 spaced in a quarto paper size (A4), between 6000-7000 words in length including references, pictures, and tables.

4. Article should be in essay from which includes:
   a. title (15-20 words),
   b. author's name (without academic degree) with an e-mail address and institution's name,
   c. abstract in English  (150-200 words for each) which includes research problem, methods and result,
   d. keyword in English (5-7 words),
   e. author's personal information and e-mail address,
   f. introduction (without subsection, 2-3 pages) which includes background, objectives, methods, and literature reviews/theoretical construct (if needed) of research. The introduction section ends with an emphasis on items to be discussed,
   g. discussion,
   h. conclusion, and
   i. references.

5. Another suitable type of article is book review. Please note the following requirements for submitting book reviews:
   a. book being reviewed should be newly published (within the last one year for books in Indonesian and two years for books in other foreign languages),
   b. book reviews should be typed between 2000-4000 words in length including references, pictures, etc., and
   c. a copy/scan of the book cover should be attached.

6. Reference list format is based **APA (American Psychological Association) style 7th edition**. Reference list should appear at the end of the article and includes only literatures actually cited in the manuscripts. References are ordered alphabetically and chronologically. We strongly recommend authors to use reference tools, such as Mendeley, Zotero, Endnote, etc. When writing a **reference list**, please use the following conventions:

   Azhar & Matsumura, K. (2010). A study of „Kenry" in Japanese and „Hak" in Indonesian. *Jurnal Humaniora, 22*, 22-30.

   Nur, T. (2008). *Verba dalam Bahasa Arab dan Bahasa Indonesia: Studi Gramatika Konstasif.* (Unpublished Dissertation). Universitas Gadjah Mada. Yogyakarta

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   Zachareck, S. (2008). *Natural women*. The New York Times. Retrieved May 12, 2009, from **http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/27/books/review/Zachareck**

   When writing an **in-text citation**, please use the following conventions:

   As Rowe (2014) asserts, "„Transnationalism" also refers to American Studies done by international scholars outside the U.S. especially scholarship that emphasizes the influence of the U.S. abroad" (p. 1)

   This research assigns the researcher to be the key instrument in his or her own research (Creswell, 2009, p. 211).

   The New York Times (2020) interviewed their gay readers to reveal about the dynamics of gay relationship:
   I am in a same-sex relationship, and we are regularly flummoxed by how our heterosexual parent friends don"t split nighttime child care and sleep loss…In our house, parents are parents. There is no artificial distinction like fathers do this and mothers do that.

7. The editor appreciates if authors excerpt information from subsequent published articles in Jurnal Rubikon.

8. Articles should be submitted in soft files using Microsoft Word application to jurnal.rubikon@gmail.com

9. Authors will be sent notification of receipt of manuscripts and editorial decisions (whether the articles are accepted or not) by e-mail. Manuscripts that are not published will not be returned to the authors.