

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

More than three-quarters of people living in the world today had their lives shaped by the experiences of colonialism (Ashcroft 2). For years the colonizers were chaining their rights for freedom. They could not express their thoughts and their feelings freely. After the departure of the colonizers, the formerly colonized people are seeking ways to express their thoughts and their cultures. They express them in various arts such as paintings, sculpture, music, dance and writing. Among those ways, the written literature is considered as the most influential media to express day-to-day realities experienced by colonized people. And the most popular literary work in which the ex-colonized people's aspiration can be expressed powerfully is the novel.

The term post-colonial comes into surface in the middle of the 20th century. This term is used to cover all the cultures include literatures that affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonialization to the present day (Ashcroft 2). From the explanation above, we can define post colonial literature as all written material produced after the departure of the imperial power which is concerning the world that exist during and after the period of European imperial domination, and the effect of this on the life of the people and the country. This kind of literature usually has significant political message such as criticizing what the colonial had done over their colony and its people.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul or well known as V.S Naipaul is considered as one of the influential post-colonial living writers in the world today. He was born in Trinidad into a family of Indian Brahmin origin in August 17, 1932. His parents were descended from Hindu immigrant from northern India. He was educated at Oxford University in England on scholarship. Naipaul turned his keen mind and wit on the struggling societies of the developing world and seem fated to become the voice of the people searching for their place in post colonial times (Kakutani 1). He won almost every major literary award in Britain. He is the winner of the first David Cohen British Literature Award in recognition of a 'lifetime's achievement by a living British writer'. He had received the Bennett Award, given by the Hudson review in recognition of "his outstanding accomplishments as a novelist and man of letters. He was also granted with other awards such as: John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Prize, Somerset Maugham Award, Hawthorndon Prize, W.H. Smith Prize and the prestigious Booker Prize. Naipaul has reportedly been considered several times as a nominator for a Nobel Prize and finally he has been selected as the winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize for literature given by the Royal Swedish Academy (Kakutani 1). Has written more than 20 interesting books in the last 45 years, he is generally considered as the leading novelist of the English-speaking Caribbean (Naipaul 1). Naipaul's writings are mostly expressing the life and experiences of formerly colonized people. His work has often explored the tension between rich and poor, colonizers and the colonized in a rapidly changing world. He is trying to awaken political and cultural nationalism of colonized country against the colonial superiority. It is true that his

works contain politic but no political statements or messages stated clearly in them (Buruma, Introduction)

One of his best works dealing with the idea of post-colonial world is *A House for Mr. Biswas*. It is often regarded as Naipaul's masterpiece. It tells the tragic story of the search for independence and identity of a Brahmin Indian living in Trinidad. The main character is Mohun Biswas or Mr. Biswas as he is usually called by the author from infancy. He is the youngest son of poor Indian family in that British colony. His father Raghu worked in a sugar cane estate with a very low salary. When he was a baby, he got malnutrition, had six fingers and was branded unlucky from birth by the pundit. He was believed to be lecherous and spendthrift and bring bad luck to the entire family. He progressed from a low job as a sign painter to that of journalist. He was trapped into marriage and almost absorbed by his wife's vast family, the Tulsis, but continued to bid for independence, symbolized by the house which he acquired shortly before his death. His struggle to gain what he really wanted in life was amazing and it struck the writer to analyze it and go deeper into his character.

Colonial cultures are absolutely different from those indigenous ones. In the process of searching his independence and identity, Mr. Biswas is transforming his indigenous values into colonial ones. In this thesis, the writer traced the values that are transformed into colonial ones and to find the reason beyond those transformations. Hopefully the discussion will give deeper understanding to the reader on the life of colonized people depicted in the life of the characters in V.S Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*.

B. Statement of the Problems

Having read V.S Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, there are some interesting questions arise. The writer has formulated the problems and would like to seek answers to these following questions:

1. What indigenous values of the characters are transformed into colonial ones?
2. How far do those transformations of values affect the main character's life?

C. Objective of the Study

This study majorly aims to provide a satisfactory and scientific outcome concerning the previously mentioned problems. The objectives are as follow:

1. To describe what indigenous values of the characters are transformed into colonial ones in the novel
2. To discuss how far those transformation of values may affect the main character's life at the end of the story.

D. Scope and Limitation.

In making a scientific discussion, it is very important to present the scope and limitation of the study because it will prevent the writer from analyzing beyond the object of the study.

The study of the transformation of indigenous values into colonial ones will majorly focus on the main character, Mr. Biswas, since he plays a significant

role in showing those transformations and his characterization gives much contribution to the finding of the intended data. The discussion also covered the sociohistorical condition of ex-colonized country, Trinidad-where the story takes place-, in order to support the analysis. Yet, the writer had to emphasize here that this study was not to analyze post colonialism in details, but the use of the new theory is merely to help the writer in approaching the novel.

E. Significance of the Study.

The writer hopes this study will serve a good discussion on the problems arise as already mentioned in the statement of the problem. Exclusively, this study is expected to give a meaningful contribution to the student in the study of Caribbean writer V.S Naipaul, especially on his work *A House for Mr. Biswas*.

The writer expects that the outcome of this study may broaden the reader's horizon of thinking on the idea of humanity through the study of post-colonialism. And perhaps it is not an exaggeration that this study might be an important and helpful guide in the development of literary study, particularly in the English Department of Airlangga University.

F. Theoretical Background.

The discussion of a literary work scientifically cannot be separated from the theory. It plays an important role in the writer's explanation of the phenomenon existing in the object of the study. The right theory will be able to answer the proposed problems. Furthermore, it is obvious that the study of literary

work as a scientific research needs theory as the instrument to answer the problems arise.

In analyzing this novel the writer applies postcolonial theory by Homi Bhaba since the analysis focuses mainly on the character's transformation of indigenous values into colonial ones. Actually there are many theories which deal with the critic on "Postcolonial literature" like V.S Naipaul's *A House For Mr. Biswas*, but the writer considers that Homi Bhaba's postcolonial theory is the most appropriate one in approaching the text.

Since the analysis is going into the 'inner side' or the psychology of M. Biswas, the psychological approach might also be attached. To make the discussion more adequate, the writer will relate the transformation of value phenomena with socio cultural approach because what had happened on the life of the main character cannot be separated from his social identity and because this study also deals with the condition of formerly colonized country, Trinidad-where the colonial and postcolonial discourse takes place.

G. Method of the Study

The study of transformation of Indigenous values into colonial in the novel *A House for Mr. Biswas* used qualitative method. It will explore and analyze what indigenous values are transformed into colonial ones and how the main character endures the process of transformation through Homi Bhaba's Post-colonial theory. The analysis is focusing on Mr. Biswas as the main character and the social - historical background of Trinidad and its ex-colonized society that are

foregrounding his consciousness in transforming those values into his life. This is also supported by sociological approach since this thesis will also deal with the sociological aspect of Trinidad society and its influences on Mr. Biswas' characterization. The sources are accumulated by library research which is done by collecting, reading and selecting the information concerning to the novel and the approaches.

The steps and the techniques of data collecting employed systematically in this study can be defined as follows. The first step is collecting data on the main character, Mr. Biswas, the society he is living in and the other supporting character involved in the novel researched. For additional information, the writer is also collecting data on V.S Naipaul, and of course the data about Post-colonial literature and theories. After that, all of the data successfully collected are observed whether they are significant enough to be enclosed in the research. The important data on the character of Mr. Biswas is then analyzed and the outcome of the analysis is eventually interpreted to find its implication toward associated society and his effort to transform his indigenous values. The data analysis is principally conducted in conjunction with the theory used in the study.

H. Definition of Key Terms

Transformation(n): The act or operation of changing the form, external appearance, nature, condition, character or personality into the new ones.

- Value(s) (n)** : Acts, customs, institution, etc, regarded in a particular, especially favorable; way by a people or ethnic group.
- Indigenous (adj)** : Native; inherent; natural; existing or growing naturally in a region or a country; that characterizes a particular region or country.
- Colonial (n/ adj)** : The inhabitant of the colony who take in charge of the system in the colonized country.

(Source: Neufeldt and Guralnik *Webster's New Word Dictionary*)

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK