

Anti-Mimicry of the Female Characters in Conrad's *Almayer's Folly*

Anti-Mimikri dari Karakter-Karakter Perempuan di *Almayer's Folly* Karya Joseph Conrad

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Abstract

This research focuses on Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* to explain the circumstance which leads to the rejection of Mrs. Almayer and Nina Almayer to embrace the dominant race and the reason why these characters choose to remain within 'Othered' identity. This study employs Ricoeur's hermeneutics that applies two steps of reading: distantiation to obtain an objective understanding of the novel and an appropriation through putting the objective understanding of the novel in the socio-cultural context. This study attempts to offer the term "anti-mimicry", borrowing Bhabha's term' to explain the subjectivity of the female character who stand out against the white domination to resist through savage and barbarous manners to mock the dominator, the white. Through the refusal to mimic, Conrad provides a space for Malay women consciousness to develop her subjectivity that could be construed as Conrad's ambiguous perspective to white superiority in the colonial era.

Keywords: *Conrad, novel, Malay, woman, mimicry*

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji *Almayer's Folly* karya Joseph Conrad untuk menjelaskan situasi penolakan Nyonya Almayer dan Nina Almayer untuk mengikuti ras dominan dan alasan mengapa karakter ini memilih untuk tetap mempertahankan identitas 'Yang Lain'. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori hermeneutika Ricoeur yang menerapkan dua Langkah membaca yaitu distantiasi untuk memperoleh pemahaman objektif tentang novel dan apropriasi dengan meletakkan pemahaman objektif novel dalam konteks sosial budaya. Studi ini mencoba menawarkan istilah "anti-mimikri", meminjam istilah Bhabha 'untuk menjelaskan subjektivitas karakter perempuan yang menonjol melawan dominasi kulit putih untuk melawan melalui perilaku biadab dan mengejek sang dominator, ras kulit putih. Melalui penolakan untuk meniru, Conrad memberikan ruang bagi kesadaran perempuan Melayu untuk mengembangkan subjektivitasnya yang dapat diartikan sebagai perspektif ambigu Conrad terhadap superioritas kulit putih di era kolonial

Kata kunci: Conrad, novel, Malaysia, perempuan, mimikri

Introduction

Joseph Conrad has written many works on Malay people, both in the form of novels and short stories. The most representative works on Malay are his trilogy: *Almayer's Folly* (adapted into film in 2011 by French film makers and 2014 by Malaysian film makers), *An Outcast of the Island* (also adapted into film in 1951), and *The Rescue*. His trilogy has attracted many critics because of his unusual representations of the West and the East "beyond the now standard claim that he encounters much of the imperialist rhetoric promoting self-sufficiency and racial hegemony at the turn of the century" (Lane, 1999, p. 404). Conrad's interesting characters are on his depictions of "the predicament of an isolated man, never a great man, holding with some force of conviction to a theory, usually of his unassailability, until confronted with its repudiation" (Young, 1953, p. 527).

Many scholars consider Joseph Conrad as a prominent figure in the development of postcolonial studies. His works have generated many critical commentaries because of the issues of imperialism, colonialism and humanity which some critics construe as ambivalence. Yet, Conrad was associated to the colonial literature. His works which were inspired by his travels on Malay Archipelago, nevertheless, provided the notions beyond the ideologies of the 19th century European imperialism and colonialism which tended to support the superiority of the white. Acheraiou, for example, in his study on "Karain: A Memory", one of Conrad's short stories, identifies the Orientalist of the narrator who associated the Malays "with emotionalism and irrationality, standing in sharp contrast to Europe's rationalism and sense of moderation" (2007, p. 154). However, at the same time Conrad also enabled the narrator to see and speak about the European as "unbelief and frantic materialism" that also marked the Western as the radical other (Acheraiou 2007, p. 158).

Almayer's Folly is one of Conrad's remarkable novels written in the late 19th century. As a classical novel, a wealth of scholarships has been published discussing and debating various materials from different perspectives to Conrad's works, to *Almayer's Folly* as well. Most criticisms to Conrad's, since he was still alive to decades after he passed away, seem to agree to Moser's opinion of achievement and decline in Conrad's work (Peters, 2006). *Almayer's Folly* was disparaged in its structure because the plot of the novel tends to be melodramatic (see Hicks, 1964, p.12) and "more emblematic of romance and adventure fiction than fiction in general" (Dryden, 2000, p.52). Counteract to Moser who previously criticized the characterization and the relationship of Nina and Dain as lack of moral and psychological interest and pointing out as "the weakest part of *Almayer's Folly*", Hicks argued that Moser oversimplified to presume that Conrad's love is restricted sex alone. Hicks contended that love in the novel became "a commitment involving most of what Conrad associated with his conception of fidelity. Fidelity, nearly all critics agree, including Moser, lies at the center of Conrad's moral vision." The love between Nina and Dain in the novel turned to become fidelity (Hicks, 1964, p. 25). She found "the new principle of her life" and "the reason and aim of life" which she couldn't find in her life with her father in Sambir and with other white people in Singapore. (Hicks, 1964, p. 25).

Conrad's travel experiences to Asia and Africa nourished his writings which showed his ability to understand the human sides of both European and non-European. His scepticism of the intention of the racial figures represented on both the white and non-white characters has provided critics to explore Conrad's stance on imperialism and racism. Raja (2007, p. 12), in his study on *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Island*, for example, has suggested that Conrad should neither be read as the so-called "thorough going racist" through his representation of Africa and African in the *Heart of Darkness* nor as "a remarkable man" through his understanding of the native as subject. Rather, he was considered "as an ambivalent writer of his times who, at times, was able to go beyond the realm of the cultural stereotype and colonial prejudice". Nevertheless, both sides brought their own perception and prejudice to speak and behave as Orientalist and Occidentalist which could convey tensions between the West and the East. Thus, the racial differences are still constructed based on categorization of people and hierarchy, as it has been objected by Bhabha in "*The Location of Culture*".

In his Malay trilogy, Conrad also introduced the colonial female characters who stood against the white males who regarded themselves as superior. In point of fact, recent critics influenced by the development of gender studies consider Conrad as a 'man's author' to criticize his portrayal of women as sexist stereotypes (Roberts, 2000, p.1). In *Almayer's Folly*, the relationship between the white males and the non-white females represents the stereotype of the asymmetric relations of power because of the portrayal of non-white women as inferior both to the white and to the men. Although Conrad's presentation of the female characters are emotional, animalistic, and primitive, such aspects which make them systematically subordinate in both gender and race, the main female figures of *Almayer's folly*, Mrs. Almayer and Nina Almayer, refused to follow a European order and to embrace white identity. In other words, both the male white figures in the novel, Lingard and Almayer are powerless because of his inability to impose the European order. Such representation shows Conrad's interpretation of the Malay which suggests his reverse to the power of the white to exercise power over the non-white women. Accordingly, the objective of this research is to explain the circumstance which leads to the rejection of Mrs. Almayer and Nina Almayer to embrace the dominant race and the reason why these characters choose to remain within 'Othered' identity. What occurs to Mrs. Almayer and Nina Almayer can be considered as denial to mimic, borrowing Bhabha's term on his notion of colonial discourse.

In his book *the Location of Culture* Bhabha has argued that, "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite." (Bhabha, 1994, p. 85). Mimicry is both the colonial method and strategy to assert the colonial domination through an extensive strategy of cultural imperialism. Mimicry produces ambivalence because the subject position of the mimicking individuals has been transferred into neither the colonizer nor the colonized. Rather, the colonized subjects stand in between. Although, they are taught to mimic or to repeat the Western socio-cultural formations, the advantage of the Western education that they have earned could create the opportunity for the counter-gaze. In line with Bhabha's notion, this research purposes to explain the circumstance which leads to the rejection of Mrs. Almayer and Nina Almayer to embrace the dominant race and the reason why these characters choose to remain within 'Othered' identity. This study attempts to argue the suppression of Tom Lingard, the "God Father" in the trilogy, in his attempts to subvert Mrs. Almayer's and Nina Almayer's native socio-cultural

identities which unfortunately lead them to fight back. However, in their counter discursive acts, they deliberately stand against the white domination and superiority through their denial to mimic. Instead, they exercise their barbarous and monstrous acts to represent their native identity, although for doing so they earned savage racial discourse. As, their acts counter Bhabha's notion on mimicry, this study deliberately uses the term "anti-mimicry" to say the denial to mimic. The denial to mimic in Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* is more radical than "parodic mimicry" which refers to the idea of the subversive strategies of the writer to mock the dominator through employing discriminatory discursive practices (see Ramin&Roshnavand, 2017).

Method

This research is conducted through employing Ricoeur's hermeneutics as the method of analysis, to justify the freedom of interpreting the text. To interpret the denial of Mrs. Almayer and Nina to mimic European identity, it borrows Bhabha's concept of mimicry. As it has been previously mentioned, criticism to Conrad's female portrayal is on his tendency to create his female characters to refuse to be tamed by European order. This study takes a similar standpoint; however, the different context of the critics leads to different interpretation. In this case, hermeneutics is a crucial approach to produce an argument which provide an argument of the possibility of different understanding to the similar text and show how researchers could develop different subjectivity to the text. Taking Ricoeur's notion on the idea of the autonomy of the text, this study develops the argument from the belief that different life experiences can lead the individuals to search for unique meanings reflecting the dominant ideologies of the interpreters. Ricoeur (1975) in "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics" has stated that "the common trait which constitutes the text as text is the fact that the meaning of the text has become *autonomous* in relation to the intention of the author, the critical situation of discourse, and its first addressee" (p.90). In this notion, the text of *Almayer's Folly* has freed itself from the boundary of Conrad's intention and ideology and opened up to unlimited number of readings to correspond with the world of the reader to appropriate the text.

The opportunity to engage the text of *Almayer's Folly* in hermeneutic understanding arises from the understanding of the complexity and richness of human experiences. Such understanding produces critique of ideologies in self-comprehension which "rest on the element of *distantiation*" (p. 92). *Distantiation* (this word is also spelled "*distanciation*") is "the dialectical counterpart of belonging-to, in the sense that our manner of belonging to a historical tradition is to be related according to a distance which oscillates between remoteness and proximity" (p.92). Hence, as Ricoeur has argued, interpreting can reduce the distance of the "temporal, geographic, cultural, spiritual" through the ideological phenomenon which the text mediates because "the hermeneutical task is to discern the 'thing' of the text (Gadamer) and not the psychology of the author" (p.93). It is to say that the act of interpretation is not an enquiry into psychological intention of the author but "the explication of the being-in-the-world shown by the text" or in other words "the projection of the world" which the text provides (p.93). Considering the principle of distantiation, the text offers a metamorphosis of reality which could place the text remotely from the author's intention because it would produce "imaginative variations". Thus, the theory which Ricoeur has offered is to subordinate the intention of the author in interpreting the text.

Hermeneutics also suggests to make subjectivity as the last category of comprehension. It aims to reach the conclusive acts which should be away from the radical origin which has “carried the meaning of the text”. It instead *responds* to the thing of the text. It is therefore the counterpart of distantiation which establishes the text in its own autonomy in relation to the author, to its situation, and to its original destination.” (p. 94). In expressing the conclusive act, appropriation is established because it is to attain self-understanding: “to understand is to understand oneself in front of the text” (Simms, 2003, p. 42). This means that to apply hermeneutic is to understand life experiences as exposed by the text.

In its application of the hermeneutics theory to explain the denial of the female characters to mimic the White as dominant race in the story, the analysis begins with the binary analysis of the characters’ portrayal to understand the vicious attitudes of the female characters to reject the white culture. This research takes different stand point of Bhabha in counteracting the binary analysis of scholarly works on postcolonialism. Rather than following Bhabha’s assertion of mimicry as an ironic compromise in demand for identity, this research attempts to understand the rebellious attitude of the female characters to keep their native identity. By means of this binary analysis, the life exposed by the novel which dichotomizes the unequal position in terms of race, caste, and gender is presumed to connect to the discourse of postcolonialism. Contextual analysis to appropriate anti-colonial discourse is conducted to argue the anti-mimicry, which the study deliberately uses the term, the failure of the white dominator to tame the powerful bond of the female characters to the ancestor culture. Interpretation is drawn to put the objective analysis, that is the life exposed by the novel, in the context of colonialism, in particularly colonialism in Malay Archipelago.

Result and Discussion

Anti-mimicry of Mrs. Almayer

This study is attracted to the portrayal of Mrs. Almayer, a Malay woman, the descendant of Sultan Sulu who rebels to take European order although she stays in a nunnery in Semarang. She is quite young, still 14 years old when she captivates Captain Lingard. Linking the scene to the development psychology, youth is easily integrated to the new culture through social exposure and interaction with new environment, in this case, through education in the nunnery. When the new culture is sharply different, youth might experience associated acculturative stress, however mostly tends to embrace the host’s culture and cultural norms rather to continues glorifying the past, (Renzaho, Dhinra, and Georgeu, 2017). However, the young Mrs. Almayer does not experience a sense of loss under the superiority of European and Christian values and norms. She refuses to upgrade her status, which we will discuss later in this paper. Thus, from the beginning of the story, the desire and fear of imperialism have been stood out with the portrayal of Captain Lingard ‘s effort to tame the ferocious manner of the exotic young Malay girl. Putting the young girl in the nunnery to gain white education but refusing to marry her show his white superiority. In this case, the notion of Bhabha’s ambivalence of colonized discourse to argue the powerless subject of the Malay girl is counteracted. Although she is silent, she refuses to mimic both white culture and Christianity.

The binary analysis to the novels results to the racial dichotomy of the male white characters Tom Lingard and Kaspar Almayer who felt superior to the Malay women Mrs.

Almayer and Nina Almayer. The narrative tells the story of Lingard betrothing the girl he discovered alive among the heap of the death bodies of Sulu pirates to Almayer, a Hollander, in a Cathedral in Batavia. This marriage has broken the girls' heart who falls in love with the knightly act of Captain Lingard. Again, white superiority is stressed out because Almayer could not be captivated by her exotic beauty. He agrees to marry her in a return of the fortune of the material wealth of Lingard. Sharing similar cultural superiority, Lingard could look at the possibility of Almayer to kick out her in the future.

In attempt to domesticate her savage behavior, Lingard sent her to get education in a nunnery in Semarang with an expectation for her to learn European culture and Christian religion considered as a dominant culture. The narrative of Lingard in his attempt to change the other into 'like himself' represents the white male desire to maintain his racial superiority. However, it is unexpectedly leading to her denial to embrace and develops her subjectivity as a Malay woman and wife. The portrayal of Mrs. Almayer who is aware that "according to white men's laws she was going to be Almayer's companion and not his slave, and promised to herself to act accordingly" (Conrad, 1923, p. 23) conveys Conrad's appreciation to the individuality and the intellectuality of Malay woman. When Almayer refuses to listen to her, she reminds Almayer that she is his lawful Christian wife, "You know, Kaspar, I am your wife! Your own Christian wife after your own Blanda law!" (Conrad, 1923, p. 40) which shows her equal position feeling toward her husband. However, Conrad does not need to create Mrs. Almayer's maiden name to evoke the inferior position of a woman in white patriarchal culture.

Mrs. Almayer is educated in nunnery with the expectation to embrace European and Christian cultural norms and values. Unfortunately, the new cultural system does not turn her against her own cultural capital that she was the descendant of Sultan of Sulu, with his glories and splendour. Although it is not narrated in the story, it could be interpreted that she experiences problems to socialize and adapt to her new cultural environment because of her inner social status conflict from the superior position as the daughter of Sultan of Sulu into the inferior Malay, the non-white among the whites in the nunnery. In her confusion and fear, she tends to let herself wander her mind to the reminiscence of her ancestor. Deep in her heart she still feels hostile towards white men. The covenant life in the nunnery leads her to conform, only in a superficial manner. She conveys the meaning of the Christian cross in her superstitious belief, "At that point she usually dropped the thread of her narrative, and pulling out the little brass cross, always suspended round her neck, she contemplated it with superstitious awe." (Conrad, 1923, p.41).

The binary analysis to the narrative also results to the dichotomy between White and the Malay as conflicting races. Conrad does not show his stand position to one of the races. He narrates both with their each superior feeling one toward another. Once she becomes Mrs. Almayer, the trace of European and Christian education leaves out no mark, she is reluctant to live in white cultural way of life, rather she continues "chewing betel-nut, and sitting all day amongst her women in stupefied idleness" (Conrad, 1923, p.27), so that Almayer regards her as a "savage" woman. In her attempt to resist when disheartened by Almayer's response to her request or excited by the reminiscences of her piratical period of life, she destroys the associated symbols of white civilized culture through for example tearing off "the curtains to make sarongs for the slave-girls", or burning "the showy furniture piecemeal to cook the family rice." (Conrad, 1923, p. 91). When Mrs. Almayer uses the curtain to make sarong and furniture to cook rice, she

exchanges European symbols into Malay to actualize her identity as a Malay woman. Meanwhile, Almayer’s response to her “savage” behaviour, who just keeps silent, could suggest to his knightly attitude as superior white man which should embrace the late 19th century chivalry (see Dryden, 2000, p. 22).

The denial of Mrs. Almayer to mimic the white culture conveys into two explanations. As previously mentioned earlier in this paper, her marriage is an arranged by Kaspar, a man whom she falls in love with, one of the situations of the novel which earns Conrad’s work as a romance in its theme. Another possibility, as it is not narrated in the story, is the failure of Mrs. Almayer to adapt to the new culture through the socialization and education process in the nunnery, although the new culture is considered as superior in this story. Thus, rather than developing into harmonious marriage relationship over their time of their marriage, they often have domestic quarrels. Such situation could be construed also as Conrad’s scepticism to the possibility of interracial marriage when it is between the colonized and colonializer.

The racial tension in their marriage life cooccurs with the binary opposition between the white and the Malay. They despise each other to regain their racial identity loss in their own way. In the context of the hero of late 19th century, Almayer suffers from his loss to achieve his passion to have “the beauty and the joy of living, the beauty and blessedness of death, the glory of battle and adventure” and to marry a woman as the object of his devotion to protect her from exposing to impurity and violence (Dreyden, 2000, p.22) which often leads him to meditate in silence. Meanwhile, Mrs. Almayer distresses for her loss of the glory of the pirate’s legacy, which is going to discuss later on this paper. Despite giving up, she bequeaths her legacy to her daughter, Nina.

“Give up your old life! Forget!” [...]. “Forget that you ever looked at a white face; forget their words; forget their thoughts. They speak lies. And they think lies because they despise us that are better than they are, but not so strong. Forget their friendship and their contempt; forget their many gods”. (Conrad 1923, p. 150-151).

Such expression, uttered by Mrs. Almayer, elicits Conrad’s ambivalence to the colonial discourse. The binary opposition is highlighted through the expression which illustrates both sides’ apprehension to the domination of the one over the other.

White	Malay
Strong	Weak
Thinking and speaking lies	Not thinking and speaking lies
Worse	Better
Despising Malay	Being despised
Many gods	One God
Figure 1: Binary-opposition between white and Malay	

In the context mother and daughter relationship, Mrs. Almayer’s utterance invokes a meaning of her struggle to win her daughter’s heart over her husband’s attempt to encourage their daughter to embrace European culture. It demonstrates the tension between white and Malay relationship under the context of colonialism of the 19th century.

Anti-mimicry of Nina Almayer

While Mrs. Almayer is Malay woman, Nina is half-caste, mixed between Malay and white race. Nina Almayer is raised in the two antagonistic poles of life, the white's order and the Malays' tradition. Almayer and Lingard has dragged her to embrace the white order through sending her to stay with Mrs. Vinck in Singapore. Nina, Almayer's half-caste daughter is his only hope to reach his European end, thus he believes that "the child must be brought up decently" (Conrad, 1923, p. 26) through mingling with other Europeans in Singapore. During this time, Singapore was the centre of British power in Southeast Asia. However, Mrs. Lingard drives her away to remind her to the pirate's legacy: that although under European eyes pirates' parasitic and predatory operations are outlaw, they signify Malay's idea of power. Mrs. Almayer inherits the dashing courage of her ancestor, Sultan of Sulu, "jumping into the river and swimming after the boat in which Lingard was carrying away the nurse with the screaming child." (Conrad, 1926, p. 27

In Singapore, Nina was able to adapt herself marvellously to the white circumstances though as a half-savage and miserable life. Ten years living under the care of Mrs. Vinck has not encouraged Nina to avail European culture and identity. Her half-caste which should serve her upgrading status, in fact, turn into unexpected situation. Her outshining half-caste beauty induces a problem enraging Mrs. Vinck to throw her out to go back and live with her "witch-like mother".

Captain Ford takes her back to Sambir and Nina has to leave all European order away and to begin to live a very different cultural life. She accepted without question or apparent disgust "the neglect, the decay, the poverty of the household, the absence of furniture, and the preponderance of rice diet on the family table." (Conrad, 1923, p. 31). Being rejected in white society, Nina, in her state of confusion, finds herself seeing her father in his longing for eyes to escape from her trading failure. In contrast to Mr. Almayer's silence, Mrs. Almayer is more articulative telling the ancestor past stories with sense of pride.

Her mother's stories about her ancestors thrilled her more than her father's story of the gold and expedition. "Expedition! Gold! What did she care for all that?" (Conrad, 1923, p.65). Nina often approaches her mother to listen to her stories about her ancestors with awe that drives her gradually away from white descent. Her mother's abrupt excited utterance when narrating the glory of Sultan Sulu counteracted with the rasping expression of "the feeble and traditionless father" induces turmoil and inescapable state of mind as a half-caste daughter. (Conrad, 1923, p.67). Living with Mrs. Vinck was just to remind to her low born position. Rather than enacting the act to mimic to gain recognition, Nina Almayer stood out to show her pride against the so-called genius civilization. Mr. Almayer's intention of civilizing mission is denied since in Nina's eyes, "there was no change and no difference" between white and Malay (Conrad 1923, p. 43). Since her Malay mother's identity was mocked, her worldly wise story of her ancestor strove her opposition to compromise. In her adolescent confusion and floating identity as a white and Malay, Nina finds herself torn into the strong and tender of Malay warrior and "the narrow mantle civilized society of Orang Blanda" (Conrad, 1923, p. 42) to mask their outrage intention for material wealth. Despite the Nina saw only the same manifestations of love and hate and of sordid greed chasing the uncertain dollar in all its multivarious and vanishing shapes. (Conrad 1923, p. 43). Again, Conrad provides a binary opposition to contrast between the life in Singapore and Sambir,

Life in Singapore	Life in Sambir
Trading in brick go downs	Trading in muddy river bank
Making love in the cathedral of Singapore promenade	Making love under the shadows of the great trees
Making a plot under the protection of laws under the rules of Christian conduct	Seeking the gratification of desires with savage cunning and the unrestrained of fierceness of natures
Manifestation of love, hate, and lust for money	Manifestation of love, hate, and lust for money
Figure 2: Binary opposition between life in Singapore and life in Sambir	

Although Mr. Almayer looks forward to Nina marrying a white, Nina is not touched with white politeness and tenderness. In her eyes, being Malay or white is similar since they share similar desires of achieving material wealth. When she meets Dain Maroola, her memory floats to her mother's story of the courageous, strong and tender Malay warrior and, she chooses to embrace the Malay identity.

She recognised with a thrill of delicious fear the mysterious consciousness of her identity with that being. Listening to his words, it seemed to her she was born only then to a knowledge of a new existence... (Conrad 1923, p. 64).

The passage of Nina's choice to elope with Dain suggests Conrad's ambivalence on Malay culture. It is strengthened with Almayer's despair looking at Nina sharing mutual understanding with Dain as two savage natures.

"Have you forgotten the teaching of so many years?", she said, "No, [...] I remember it well. I remember how it ended also. Scorn for scorn, contempt for contempt, hate for hate. *I am not of your race*. Between your people and me there is also a barrier that nothing can remove. (Conrad 1923, p. 178-179 – italic by authors).

Almayer feels betrayed by her own daughter, when Nina says, "*I am not of your race*". Conrad's ambivalence on the white superiority validates Barker's notion that racism is not born but socially constructed (Barker (2005, p, 248). The failure of both Lingard and Almayer to adhere the white rules to Mrs. Almayer and Nina admits that "the idea of 'racialization' is founded on the argument that race is a social construction and not a universal or essential category of biology". Many of Conrad's passages convey his perspective that both have their own value which is only true for the culture which bears it.

Contextual Analysis: Colonialism in Malay Archipelago

One final point in attempt to understand the reason why Mrs. Almayer and Nina deny to mimic European culture which leads to Almayer's despair and his tragic end is through correlating the novel with the context of the pirate's legacy in the colonial era. Why does Conrad create a tragic end of the main male character and the wicked Malay women who refuse to follow European civilized order? In *Asymmetry, Disparity and Cyclicity: Charting the Piracy Conflict in Colonial Indonesia*, Campo (2007) presented a

detailed study on the conflict between Dutch colonial government in Indonesia with the pirates. This study explains the three bases of piracy: Sulu Archipelago, Lingga-Riau, and Moluccas Archipelago. Further he contended that “piracy based on Sulu increased dramatically after 1768”, which was followed by Riau piracy, which “increased sharply after the Dutch East company (VOC) war against Johor in 1784 and subsequent political development”. Similarly, “the upsurge of piracy in the Moluccas was connected with political conflict, especially the resistance movements of Prince Nuku and Radja Djailolo in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (p. 38-39).

The legacy of the pirate is also acknowledged on the passage with a reference to the transfer of Java and other posts (outside Java) from Britain to Dutch in *Almayer's Folly*.

The deliberations conducted in London have a far-reaching importance, and so the decision issued from the fog-veiled offices of Borneo Company darkened for Almayer the brilliant sunshine of the Tropics, and added another drop of bitterness to the cup of his disenchantments. The claim to that part of the East Coast was abandoned, leaving the Pantai river under the nominal power of Holland. In Sambir there was joy and excitement. The slaves were hurried out of sight into the forest and jungle, and the flags were run up to tall poles in the Rajah's compound in expectation of a visit from Dutch man-of-war boats. (Conrad, 1923, p.34).

Further, Conrad also narrated a passage of the Dutch man-of-war boats paid a visit to Almayer and how excited Almayer to see the sight of European faces and the sound of European voices. Almayer's recital of his misfortune amused the officers and when Almayer “disclosed his regret at the non-arrival of the English, ‘who knew how to develop a rich country,’ it was responded by a general laugh amongst the Dutch officers at that unsophisticated statement.” (Conrad, 1923, p. 35). He had built a new house to receive Englishmen he expected to come when he had found the gold, but it was Dutch man-of-war boats who came, not Englishmen. He was ignorant that the part of Borneo had been transferred to Dutch. Jests at Almayer expense were passed from boat to boat, and the half-finished house built for the reception of Englishmen got the name of “Almayer's Folly”. Besides, Nina refused to show herself, while their visiting Almayer was “no doubt wishing also to catch a glimpse of his daughter” (Conrad, 1923, p. 34). Even, to Dutch soldiers who sought Dain, Nina said,

“I hate the sight of your white faces. I hate the sound of your gentle voices. That is the way you speak to women, dropping sweet words before any pretty face. I have heard your voices before. I hoped to live here without seeing any other white face but this (his father – authors)”. (Conrad, 1923, p. 140)

This illustration conveys the ambivalence portrayals of the male and female characters of the novel, how both characters glorify their own culture and identity and undermine the other race.

The legacy of the piracy in the novel is narrated in contradictory passages: to recognize their magnitude, their freedom and mobility which cause troublesome for Dutch administration (see Campo, 2007, p. 40), however; it is also undermined under the colonial discourse of barbarous and uncivilised conducts. Conrad seems to understand the pirate's legacy as an effort to fight against colonialism (see Teng, 2004). Their rebellious and barbarous acts are driven by the white adventurer's meddling with the

local rulers. Conrad continued to narrate such passages in his next novels: 'An Outcast of the Island' and 'The Rescue', although the narration is prequel to 'Almayer's Folly', the predecessor.

The legacy of piracy is also meaningful to convey Mrs. Almayer's despicable attitude toward her husband. The loser Almayer whose trade is collapsed and living in an illusion of finding the gold is contradictory with the glory of Sultan of Sulu in her memory. The inconsistent Almayer as the loser but the dominator inclines Mrs. Almayer to react in savage natures. A point to note, although many passages are ambivalent in narrating the attitudes of the dominated and the dominator, Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* suggests Conrad's perspective to narrate the passages beyond racism and colonial prejudice. This novel seems to propose to look at the postcolonial works in different perspective. Mrs. Almayer and Nina, despite their savage natures, are the representation of the colonized who do not have lack of confidence which could drive them to mimic the dominant race. Instead, they underestimate the white culture as similar as the Malay who just pursue for material wealth. The ending of the novel which narrates how Almayer dies in loneliness, meanwhile Nina gave a birth to a grandson for the king of Bali that is responded joyfully by Mrs. Almayer strengthens Conrad's ambivalence in narrating the Malay women. It can be conveyed how Conrad views the legacy of pirate, the outlaw of the white on the Malay Archipelago.

Conclusion

This study develops the term 'anti-mimicry' to suggest the denial of the Malay women to acknowledge the superiority of white race on civilization. Although various studies to Conrad's works have been studied leading to the argument of Conrad's ambivalences in his stand point to racial discourses, rarely they discuss the female characters as powerful figures. Rather, they consider that Conrad is sexist in presenting women's savagery since their behavior is against the ideal femininity. However, this study takes different point of view in looking at the barbarous acts of the female characters in their denial to conform to white culture. Through correlating the text of the novel and the context of the legacy of pirate in Malay Archipelago, the study highlights the passages narrating the female characters' rebel against being dominated by the white although for doing so they earn the savage uncivilized race. Both the female characters of the novel, Mrs. Almayer and Nina get white order education; however, they resist to embrace the new identity for the reformed, recognized Others. Through the course of the story, both Mrs Almayer and her daughter Nina finally recognize that white culture is not more civilised and superior to compare with Malay culture. Hiding behind the mask of gentle voices and sweet words, Nina can see his father's, and other whites' ambition on their travel to Malay Archipelago which is just for their pursuit of material wealth. Under the shadow of the glory of the chivalric Sultan of Sulu who fights against the suppression of piracy, Mrs. Almayer contends against her husband through for example destroying the white symbols to regain her Malay tradition. Meanwhile, Nina, her half-caste daughter takes a choice to follow her mother's identity after being scorn by Mrs. Vinck in white society Singapore. In her opinion, living in civilized Singapore and savage Sambir, both are similar in the manifestation of love, hate and lust for money. Thus, the female characters stand out to rebel the superiority of white culture and maintain their identity as Malay women.

Although many passages are contradictory in both the structure and the theme, Conrad is able to fairly depict both white and Malay prejudice one against another. Through many passages, Conrad is ambivalent in his perspective toward racial discourses. Although he is Polish, a white European, Conrad does not take any side to either the white and the Malay. Rather, his story structure is cycled between action and reaction (see Campo, 2007, p. 46). Both races experience suppression which drive them react, either in chivalric way (Almayer) or savage natures (Almayer and Nina). Thus, simply to conclude, Conrad is able to present the Malays from the colonizer perspective and, in reverse, present white people from the colonized perspective.

The novel is rich with references to historical facts that could not be covered by this research. Further research employing new historicism as research method will be very intriguing and significant. The fact that Conrad is able to go beyond racism and colonial prejudice is also fascinating: how could he, a British subject, present ideas on white people's conquest on the Malay Archipelago which in some way is quite similar with Soekarno's ideas (the first Indonesian president) on colonialism?

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