

INDONESIAN ISLAMIC POETS' AMBIVALENCE UNDER THE DUTCH COLONIALISM IN THE 1930S

Dwi Susanto¹

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia.

e-mail: dwisastra81@gmail.com

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Abstract

Islamic poets' poetical themes expressed their spiritual experience in Indonesian literature during the 1930s. These themes had opposed to the Islamic movement at the time, which was fighting against colonial ideology. The objectives of this study are to look at why poets advocated oppositional views in the face of colonial discourse, as well as the poets' position within the Dutch colonial system in the 1930s. Thematic notions of Indonesian literary poets in the 1930s, biographical histories of poets, and colonial discourses in Indonesia in the 1930s were among the data sources used in this study. The result revealed that the poets adopted a romantic aesthetic mimicking strategy to portray the idea of their spiritual experience. In most colonial literature, the mimicry between the colonizer and the colonized nation heightens the ambivalence of the Indonesian human personality. Because of ethical adjustments and unacceptable ideal categories, this ambiguous attitude develops. Syncretism emerges as a result of the clash of Western and Eastern civilizations. The author's aesthetic mimicry strategy has implications for the poet's ambivalence: on the one hand, the poet follows Balai Pustaka's aesthetic pattern with an understanding of individualism, while on the other hand, the poet ignites the concept of Islamic symbolic memory as part of the construction of Indonesian cultural identity, as in the Indonesian Cultural Polemics from 1930 to 1942.

Keywords: Ambivalence; colonial discourse; poets; romantic aesthetics

A. Introduction

In the 1930s, Islamic poets in the Dutch colonial era had a tendency to write Islamic religious themes that prioritized the idea of longing for God. In general, the written themes show an individual expression of psychology and faith, specifically the personal relationship between humans and God. Islamic poets nearly never came up with concepts that combined Islam and social practice, particularly colonial authority in Indonesia. Amir Hamzah's work by A. Hasymmy, R.O. Hanka is an example of this. The question arises as to why Islamic poets rarely, if ever, use the topic. Meanwhile,

they are colonized, so why not start fighting back against their ideological oppressors? This is in marked contradiction to the Dutch East Indies colony's Islamic movement, which opposed Dutch colonialism both explicitly and implicitly (Elson, 2007).

The writing of the famous Indonesian literary critic, H.B., Jassin, entitled "*Beberapa Pengarang dan Penyair Islam*" [Several Islamic Authors and Poets] (Jassin, 1967) simply gives a brief explanation of the topics and names of Indonesian Islamic poets in the 1930s. Islamic poets are rarely discussed and only mentioned casually in other discussions of Indonesian literary criticism. This can be seen in Ajip Rosidi's writings "*Ikhtisar Sejarah Sastra Indonesia*" [Overview of Indonesian Literature History] (1986) (Rosidi, 2018) and "*Kapankah Kesusasteraan Indonesia Lahir*" [When did Indonesian literature emerge?] (1964) (Rosidi, 1964), A. Teeuw in *Modern Indonesian Literature I* (1967) (Teeuw, 1994), and later Indonesian literature scholars. The 1930s seemed to be significant because there was a significant change in the development of Indonesian culture or how to build Indonesian identity around this period. Literary magazine *Pujangga Baru* is one of the magazines that had a significant impact on the birth of that era's cultural debate, namely the Cultural Polemic. The debated notions included the orientation of Javanese traditions, the East (India), and the West (individualism and liberalism), as well as the synthesis of various cultural traditions (Gilroy, 2002). Meanwhile, the voice of Islam can only be heard in the concept of developing Indonesian character through education in the *pesantren* or Islamic world.

The 1930s Cultural Polemic was a debate about the construction of Indonesian cultural identity. Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana's concept (S.T.A) "*Menuju Kesusasteraan Baru*", published in a magazine *Panji Pustaka* and his article "*Menuju Masyarakat dan Kebudayaan Baru, Indonesia pra-Indonesia*" in *Pujangga Baru* magazine year of III no. 2 clearly and firmly shows that Indonesian culture is a dynamic society that continues to seek growth by referring to the current development of the Western World, rather than being based on old culture or ancient customs. Meanwhile, Sanusi Pane, in his writing "*Persatuan Indonesia*", represents the opposing side, which emphasized that Indonesia's new culture is a part of the country's former culture, which has not been lost and adds to the dynamics of the new culture (Mihardja, 1977). Returning to past customs is one way to rediscover the Indonesian people's identity. According to him, the West is overly individualistic and places a premium on the physical, as evidenced by materialism and intellectualism. The East, on the other hand, places a high value on the soul and spirit. Sanusi Pane believes that the next logical step is to unite individualism and intelligence with spiritualism, feeling, and collectivity. It was like a cross between Faust and Arjuna, the Mahabharata's hero.

R. Sutomo's writing "*National Onderwijs Congres, Menyambut pemandangan Tuan S.T.A.*", on the other hand, reflected the Islamic faction's stance. R. Sutomo's perspective strongly encourages a return to Islamic *pesantren* education. The Islamic boarding school system, he claims, is highly rigid in allowing the argument between the Sanusi Pane faction and S.T.A. In his opinion, the Islamic system allows intellectualism and individualism to flourish while still encouraging collectivity and spirituality (Sweeney, 2007). Indonesia's original and evolved *pesantren* system is a manifestation of the country's first universities. They help to construct Indonesian society's culture, which teaches physical and spiritual life to individuals at all levels.

Islamic voices can be heard and have power in cultural construction as a result of the debate. On the one hand, there is the struggle of Islamic organizations to participate in the establishment of an Indonesian education system, civilization, and culture (Hefner, 1993). In this context, Islam continues to follow a different path than the ideas brought by Dutch colonialism and spread through education, literature, and

culture in general. In addition to creating political organizations, the Islamic movement expands its struggle through social, religious, and cultural activities (Zarkasyi, 2008). This is evident in the legacy of those who followed the path of practical politics or practical Islam in politics to build an Islamic identity in the 1950s (Chisaan, 2012). What is intriguing, however, is why Islamic poets' voices do not seem to be in line with the struggles of Islamic organizations outside of literature, or why Islamic voices are just a symbol of Islamic collective memory. The fundamental problem in this paper, based on the conversation, is what role Islamic poets have in coping with colonial discourse. This question entails an attempt to trace the biographical origins of Islamic poets or their reactions to colonial discourse as reflected in their works.

The issue of Islam and literature in the context of colonial discourse can be seen through the lens of colonial discourse's position in Indonesian society. It is impossible to deny that Indonesian novels existed during Dutch colonial rule. Indonesia, known as the Dutch East Indies during the Dutch colonial period, had a tradition of written literature in both Dutch and Malay (Hatley, 2002). The novels are divided into two categories: those written by foreigners, primarily Dutch and Chinese authors, and those written by native Indonesians, primarily from Java and Sumatra (Day, 2022). The novel, which was published during the colonial period, made an important contribution to the struggle in Indonesia against the Dutch colonial government. The struggle was waged within the context of postcolonial discourse (Foulcher, 1995).

The poet's literary work or position becomes the subject that represents the colonized, creating a relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The poets of Indonesian literature in the 1930s were shackled by colonial shackles. As members of a colonized society, poets engage in a variety of actions such as secret resistance in various forms such as mimicry or ambivalence. When two traditions intersect, hybridity is created, and resistance becomes inevitable (Chakraborty, 2016; Young, 2005; McLeod, 2000). Mimicry occurs not only in physical form and lifestyle, but also in the mind, such as the internalization of ideology. This can be seen in literature through the colonizers' aesthetic "internalization." For Bhabha, mimicry is part of an ambivalent attitude in which one side establishes identity while the other maintains differences (Bhabha, 2012).

In this period, Indonesian Islamic poets had an Islamic cultural background that was combined in the Indonesian context, and when confronted with colonial discourse in dealing with such a position, Islamic poets' ambivalence or ambiguous position was a possible reaction. In this position, the subject (Islamic poet) and the colonizer are topics of a remarkably similar but not quite identical difference (Bhabha, 2012; Sulianti et al., 2019). Consequently, the colonized people imitate colonizers. Slips, benefits, and differences can all be signs of continuous imitation. Actually, the actor of this impersonation or mimicry is skeptical. The representation shows a denial.

The bivalence that generates mimicry is a dual representation, namely a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline that is compatible with other visualization powers. It is, indeed, a symbol of obscurity. The main effect of this condition is the disruption of the stability of colonial discourse. Mimicry can also include original ideas and rewriting. It is the pinnacle of partial representation. It was actually concealing something from its presence, much like a mask. Mimicry thus shows a conflation of cultural, racial, and historical differences that directly threatens colonial power or authority. Thus, the ambivalence that produces this mimicry is essentially cultural resistance.

B. Methods

The object of this study is the poetry of Indonesian Islamic poets in the 1930s, and the poets' ambivalence toward colonial discourse. The data in this article are the ideas and themes of works by Indonesian Islamic poets in the 1930s, the poets' biographical settings at the time, and colonial discourses at the time. The data interpretation technique was carried out from a postcolonial perspective. This step is carried out by reading the binary opposition between the colonized (Islamic poets) and the invaders (colonial discourse). To determine the colonized's reaction and attitude toward the colonizer, this reading entails reversing the position in the context. The colonized's reaction to the invaders is to place themselves against them, reflecting this attitude. The major idea or main topic of the literary work, as well as the poets' sociological biographical background, are all established in this step. In addition, the aesthetic circles or colonial discourses of the Islamic poets were studied, as well as their colonial practices. The final step is to link the ideas in the literary work, the poet's sociological setting, and the colonial discourse that binds the poets in order to determine the poets' position or attitude toward colonial discourse.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Poets and Themes of Works

Islamic poets in the 1930s included Amir Hamzah, Memar Mandak, Hanka or Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, Rifa'i Ali, Samadi or Anwar Rasjid, Karim Halimatau, R.O. Hanka, and others. These poets were Muslim and wrote poetry in Malay or Indonesian at the time. Except for Hanka and Amir Hamzah, biographical information on some of the poets is limited. Hanka is a poet and author who worked in Indonesian literature during three periods or decades: before independence, after independence, and during the Indonesian revolution, which lasted until the 1960s. Even though he died at an early age as a result of social turmoil involving the Indonesian Communist Party and the colonial occupation, Amir Hamzah is one of these authors who is extremely creative, popular, and has a wide link with the authors or intellectuals of his time (Anderson, 2013). The publication of these two authors' works and biographies has been well documented.

Pujangga Baru magazine was one of the most active media in publishing the works of authors or poets in the 1930s, and it is often referred to as Angkatan Pujangga Baru (New Generation of Poets) in the history of Indonesian literature. Nonetheless, almost all Indonesian literary experts argue that the aesthetic concept developed by this group is a derivation or imitation of the aesthetic developed by Balai Pustaka or the 1920s Generation (Faruk, 2007). Balai Pustaka is a cultural and educational (literary) institution founded in accordance with Dutch colonialism's mission and goals in Indonesia (Jedamski, 1992). However, there are some works by this group that are essentially anti-colonial. They used the aesthetics introduced by Dutch colonialism to subtly counter the construction of colonial culture itself (E. B. Fitzpatrick, 2000; I. Fitzpatrick, 2020). This proves that the aesthetic tradition is still valued by the next generation and used for a variety of purposes, depending on the circumstances of the time. The nature of the colonized is undeniably mysterious or unpredictable, with the possibility of resistance or liberation from colonial shackles (Faruk, 2007). Even though they mimic, the mimicry has ideological implications such as ridicule or opposition to what they imitate.

Amir Hamzah is a descendant of the nobility of the kingdom of Langkat in North Sumatra, and he was born on February 28, 1911, in Binjai. He is descended from a noble family in Langkat Hulu, and his title is Tengku Bendahara Paduka Raja. Tengku Amir Hamzah is his full name. He received a Western or Dutch education in Java, such as Surakarta, Batavia, and Jakarta. When he was a teacher at Taman Siswa or College Schools, he became acquainted with writers such as Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, Amir Pane, and Sanusi Pane. Amir Hamzah is known for being quiet and emotional. The meeting with these writers finally established himself to become a writer. Before finishing law school in Batavia, Tengku Amir Hamzah was summoned by his family and married to the daughter of the Sultan of Langkat, making him the king's son-in-law while also serving at the Langkat palace. After getting married and working as a Langkat court official, he finished law school. Apart from his involvement with *Pujangga Baru* magazine, his literary activities were documented when he worked as a writer for *Timboel* and *Pandji Poetaka* magazines.

Amir Hamzah was raised in the Azizi Mosque and learned Islamic law as a child. He is a devout believer of Islam. In March 1946, he died at a young age due to social unrest spearheaded by the Indonesian Socialist Youth (Anderson, 2013). Amir Hamzah was apprehended alongside several nobles from the Kingdom of Langkat, which was considered as a symbol of feudalism. He and other members of the Langkat kingdom of North Sumatra were taken to a plantation in Kwala Begumit, where they were tortured and forced to dig their own graves. The next day, on March 20, 1946, they were all buried alive in their own dug holes, along with twenty-six other prisoners. His body was properly buried in the vicinity of the Azizi Mosque in November 1949. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia declared Amir Hamzah a National Hero of Indonesia on November 3, 1975. Many of Amir Hamzah's works, mostly in the form of poetry or poems, may be found in numerous magazines. Several publications, including *Nyanyi Sunyi* (1937), *Boeah Rindu* (1941), and others.

Rifa'i Ali is the next author. In the history of Indonesian literature, there are few sources on Rifa'i Ali. On April 28, 1909, this poet was born in Padang Panjang. In 1923, he attended Thawalib Padang Panjang, Islamic College, Padang (1932), and Kuala Lumpur's Von Mullen English School (1935-1940). *Kata Hati* (a collection of poems), published in Medan in 1941, is one of his works. His work has also appeared in magazines such as *Pujangga Baru*, *Semangat Pemuda*, and *Panji Islam*. Poems such as "Indah" (published in *Pujangga Baru*) and "Dihidup-hidupkan" (published on December 25, 1937 in *Panji Islam*) prove his intelligence. The other poet is Anwar Rasjid, also known as Samadi. Indonesian literary scholars rarely discuss the poet's gait and works, which are only mentioned in books on the history of Indonesian literature. He was born on November 18, 1918, in Maninjau, West Sumatra. His whereabouts were unknown since the PRRI (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*) social revolution in 1957-1958. In 1939, he attended the Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah Teacher School, where he received an Islamic education. He then continued his studies at the Department of Indonesian Literature at the National Academy of Indonesian Literature (1941). In addition to being a school principal, he was involved in religious social movements in Medan in 1940-1941 through the magazine *Pedoman Masyarakat dan Pedoman Islam*. *Kisah Seorang Pengemban* (a collection of poems published in 1936), *Dewan Sajak* (a collection of poems published in 1940), and *Senandung Hidup* (a collection of poems published in 1941) are examples of literary works that have been published (a collection of poems, 1941). He was also actively involved in the writing of religious books, such as *Muhammad Rasulullah* (Eneste, 2001). *Pujangga Baru* (September 1931 edition) and *Pedoman Masyarakat* were among the literary magazines

that published his work at the time (18 November 1936 edition).

The following author is Hasjmy, also known as M. Alie Hasjim, who is rarely included in the canon of Indonesian literary history. According to H.B. Jassin (Jassin, 1967), Hasjmy was born on March 28, 1914 in Mukim Montasik, Seulimeum Aceh. He was a successful merchant. His educational background was obtained in Aceh, where he attended Islamic schools. He was the author of several works including *Seorang Pengembara* (a collection of poems), *Dewan Sajak* (a collection of poem), *Bermandi Cahaya Bulan*, *Melalui Jalan Raya Rindu*, and *Di Bawah Lonceng Gereja* (roman atau novel). His work has also featured in a variety of magazines, such as *Raya*, *Pahlawan Muda*, *Suluh Islam*, *Panji Islam*, *Pedoman Masyarakat*, *Penyairan*, and *Pujangga Baru*.

In general, the Islamic poets of this decade were born on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, in areas like Padang, Binjai, Medan, and Aceh. Their education is inextricably linked to Islamic traditions, whether at local Islamic schools or elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Because of the variety of traditions they have, such as Amir Hamzah and Rifa'i Ali, they have Islamic insight in the context of Malay and Indonesian traditions. This is evident in the topics or themes of his literary works. In general, these themes revolve around human proximity to God or the Creator, Allah SWT. This can be recognized through hidden portrayals or the use of specific images in the context of Malay cultural tradition, the poets' ancestral culture.

For example, Amir Hamzah's work "*Nyanyi Sunyi*" recounts the poet's inner experience of various situations. This poem is a psychological expression of Amir Hamzah's quest for life purpose. He is likened to a traveler who is traveling through a land where everybody submits to God. In the depths of his life's sadness, he is constantly on the lookout for the perfect life partner, namely God, the owner of nature. As a result, he is a firm believer in Islam as a religion and a way of life. This theme is revisited in the work "*Padamu Jua*," which tells about the loss of all hope in life, which eventually leads him to the ideal that has been missing in his life, namely the road to faith. Personal works and psychological expressions by Amir Hamzah can be found in other works such as "*Doa*", "*Doa Poyangku*", "*Insyaf*", and many others.

These spiritual experience themes have become popular among poets of this decade. This can be found in the works of R.O Hanka and Karim Hali, for example in the poem "*Goda...!*" published in *Pujangga Baru* magazine year VI No. March 10, 1939. Karim Hali was working at the time when he received a call from God, which he initially rejected. Humans are frail creatures who are unable to escape temptation. Finally, humans must resist God's temptations and trials in order to be accepted by God. This personal experience is explored in the work "*Di Pusara Bunda*," which was published in *Pujangga Baru* magazine in VII No. July 01, 1939. Longing for a deceased mother leads to a spiritual experience in prayer that eventually leads to God. In the poem, the mother represents the existence of God. Other poets, such as M. Alie Hasjim and A. Hasjmy, found similar themes, such as in his poem "*Kisah Seorang Pengembara*" (1936), published in *Pustaka Islam*, Medan. Individual piety becomes the central theme, which is wrapped in a romantic and allegorical framework. Nature is situated as a subject in solitude or separation. The poem is divided into segments that depict the subject's journey through psychological experience. This psychological perspective is a component of the romantic aesthetic, which takes precedence over the mind and the individual self (Wellek & Wellek, 1949).

2. Islamic Poets under the Influence of Dutch Colonialism

The relationship between Islamic poets and Dutch colonialism influenced the creation and aesthetic achievement of literary works such as poetry and novels. The

literary aesthetics of the Balai Pustaka, a colonial institution in charge of education and literature, providing reading materials for the colonized people, are generally discoursed or normalized in the canon of Indonesian literature (Jedamski, 2009). In this context, Balai Pustaka has imposed influence or aesthetic hegemony in Indonesian literature, culminating in literary works that are always rooted in its influence. Outside the Balai Pustaka tradition, however, works or authors will play with anti-colonial themes. Through aesthetic hegemony, Balai Pustaka labels works or authors outside of their aesthetic tradition as "wild readings," "minor readings," and "poor literary works".

Balai Pustaka's artistic construction as a colonial institution unquestionably benefited Dutch colonialism like a wolf in sheep's clothing (Jedamski, 1992). One of these constructions makes it a felony for literature to discuss politics, race and ethnicity, or religion. Because it will generate social upheaval and political instability in the colony. The prohibition on addressing religion in literature (Islam) is designed to prevent authors from using religion or religious feelings to resist colonialism. Religion (Islam) is only permitted in public as a form of personal piety or psychological expression by writers in limited practice (Rohmana, 2016). Since the 1920s, *Balai Pustaka* has exercised a series of controls over the publishing of Indonesian literature, including ideological production, the publication of books or readings for colonized people, and distribution through government schools. This activity is a series of methods used by the colonial government to control the attitudes and thoughts of future intellectuals and indigenous elites so that they are always submissive to their masters or colonial authority. Thus, Balai Pustaka has succeeded in constructing aesthetic constructions through literature in such a way that literary topics or themes are seen as not endangering colonial power.

Since the 1920s, *Balai Pustaka* has brought and echoed the aesthetic of romanticism as part of modernism. In the 1930s, the New Pujangga was the greatest accomplishment of the Balai Pustaka tradition. Although *Pujangga Baru* is considered as a distinct generation or period in Indonesian literature, the aesthetics developed are still similar to those of *Balai Pustaka*, namely romanticism as an ideology to support colonial rule. Within this context, Islamic writers and poets generally resided and worked at Balai Pustaka or became managers of the colonial-controlled Balai Pustaka. As part of the colonial political campaign, a number of works have been published which use the theme of modernity versus tradition. Modernity is a type of progress and hope for a new advanced or progressive civilisation that embraces the Indonesian people as a valued member of society with the European world. European or Western culture represents modernity, which is represented in this context by Balai Pustaka or the colonial government. Meanwhile, tradition is represented by location, and Islam is undoubtedly present. The theme of *Balai Pustaka* and *Pujangga Baru* works is an opposition or dialogue between tradition and modernity, which is symbolically won over by modernity in the end (Faruk, 2007). However, later on, the concept of modernity became a source of debate, leading in the Cultural Polemic.

The Islamic poets of the 1930s were trapped in a circle of debate between tradition and modernity, or "locality" vs European culture. Tradition or Islam versus colonial culture construction is an instance of such opposition. This debate eventually gave voice to voices that had been silenced by colonial discourse through *Balai Pustaka* to *Pujangga Baru*, particularly the voice of Islam. What is interesting, however, is that Islamic poets do not advocate Islam as a social, ideological, or political movement that openly rejects colonialism. Meanwhile, Islamic groups such as Muhammadiyah or Nahdlatul Ulama have sought to carry out this movement through educational, traditional, social, and religious activities. Thus, who are the Islamic poets and what

are their relationship to colonial power?. These authors were raised in or influenced by the Dutch colonial circle. This can be seen in their biographical setting in general. First, the authors were educated in Dutch colonial schools. This has a significant impact on their minds because the socialization of the discourse of modernity versus tradition becomes more effective. In this context, Dutch schools actually teach about the glory or civilization of Europeans so that the orientation of the mind and culture "admires" and changes to imitate (mimicry) of the Europeans. This can also be seen in the reading sources or translated works of European literature distributed by Balai Pustaka and taught in Dutch schools (Jedamski, 1992). This fact demonstrates that they do consider and have been hegemonized by the aesthetic discourse and "civilization mission" of Dutch colonialism.

Second, these authors have a strong connection to the Balai Pustaka institution in terms of work and equality. Their involvement with this institution became inextricably linked. Through structured socialization from Balai Pustaka, the aesthetic establishment of this institution converts their thoughts and aesthetics into Balai Pustaka's aesthetics. Balai Pustaka bans discussions on race, politics, sexuality, and religion. This is due to the fact that this is viewed as immoral work that destroys society by causing upheaval. Sutan Takdir Alisjbanda and Sanusi Pane, for example, had a strong influence in the 1930s through the *Pujangga Baru* magazine. Amir Hamzah and other authors are part of the *Pujangga Baru* movement, which was aesthetically influenced by the 1880s in the Netherlands, particularly the expression of romance and individualism.

Third, on average, Islamic poets and other writers lived in Java and the colonial government or literary center controlled by *Balai Pustaka*. What is more important is that they are members of the indigenous elite or nobles, who are innately close to the amenities offered by the Dutch colonial government. To maintain the trust of indigenous elites, the colonial government carried out a re-traditionalization movement at this time, which involved activating traditions and getting closer to local rulers or aristocrats (Guan, 2012). The indigenous elite, particularly the local aristocrats, had close ties to the colonial government. They were given trust or support for symbolic and cultural capital by the colonial government so that they were impressed as part of the colonial government as well as having power over the people under their kingdom. The indigenous elite were given rights and acknowledged their power in this position, but they were unable to influence foreign policy or the economy. Both fields were under the control of the colonial government. Outside of the indigenous elite, Islam or Islamic intellectuals are among the feared and considered as dangerous companions (Suminto, 1985). Thus, Balai Pustaka and the colonial government created equality or Islamic poets who did not make Islam a political and social movement, allowing the elite of Islamic aristocrats to be exploited.

As part of the extension of colonialism's aesthetics, these three factors shaped the author of the New *Pujangga* generation. Certainly, cultural debates and Islamic poets' voices do not fully represent the extreme Islamic movement at the grassroots level, which is not affiliated with or associated with the colonial government. These poets will, of course, differ from non-affiliated Islamic intellectuals who are not part of the indigenous elite.

In this context, colonial literary policies toward Islamic poets or Islamic literature created two social classes that were at odds with colonial authority. The first class is composed of Islamic poets who are aesthetically hegemonized by the colonial government. The second is a social class or group of Muslim writers or poets who are not affiliated with colonial aesthetics. Because colonial aesthetics was the dominant

and hegemonic aesthetic at the time, this second class or social group was rarely exposed or seen in national literary activities.

3. Islamic Nationalism Islamic Poets

The Islamic poets who emerged in the Indonesian literary scene in the 1930s were mostly authors or poets affiliated with colonial institutions or parts of these institutions. Although these poets' themes are spiritual or personal, these works are very likely to be resistant, as is the view that works by colonized subjects have the idea of resistance through various strategies (Loomba, 2003). This opposition can also take the form of mimicry or the authors' ambiguous position. This ambiguous position can be seen in the themes of the poets' works, which reveal the authors' individual spiritual life experience. Furthermore, their role in the *Pujangga Baru* magazine or the circle of elite writers formed in the literary or intellectual class as a result of the colonial construction itself lend support to this idea.

Pujangga Baru is a literary magazine that focuses on more than just new forms of literature. However, the ideas expressed by writers or poets at this time were Indonesian ideals (Foulcher et al., 1991). That is, this publication begins to discuss the Indonesian country and issues relevant to the development of a new Indonesian culture. Despite the fact that this magazine is influenced by colonial aesthetics, the themes it covers are far from what Balai Pustaka is aiming for. Balai Pustaka students are transformed into human beings who wish to free their "mother" from being left behind and lead their nation to equality with the Western world. This parallel or aspiration may be seen in the Cultural Polemic, which features disputes on the cultural construction of the future nation, Indonesia.

The poet's personal and spiritual themes are an attempt to avoid direct confrontation with colonial discourse. Despite being educated in the shadow and influence of colonial aesthetics; Islamic poets gradually began to carry out social activities or actions through the world of Islamic education. Amir Hamzah and Rifa'i Ali, for example, strive to make their poetry more than a catharsis or a personal experience. These poetry works on the issue of individual spiritual beliefs, on the other hand, are a way of spreading and reminding readers to return to Islamic teachings or to build Islamic aesthetics. When compared to other authors who do not promote or introduce Islamic aesthetics, this fact can be seen as confusing. In this context, these poets truly helped to the generation of religious sentiments or feelings as part of the change to Indonesian culture, which was independent of the construction or orientation of the colonial world of materialism. In an indirect way, the poets contributed to the rekindling of the Indonesian people's symbolic memory of Islam. As a result, the poets persuade the audience to reconsider themselves and their society in order to reclaim their Islamic identity as an integral part of the culture and creation of their society.

Aside from poetry, Islamic themes are rarely found in literary works. Novels and plays about the conflict between tradition and modernity. Religious issues are rarely, if ever, addressed in dramas, novels, or other prose stories. Poems on nationalism and the conflict between tradition and modernity are also included. This poem with an Islamic theme or the idea of individual experience, on the other hand, provides evidence for the voices that are silenced by Balai Pustaka's aesthetic discourse, namely not discussing religious issues. Although the poems do not invite readers to engage in social movements opposing Islamic religious sentiments, the poets have attempted to remind and build the collective memory of Islamic readers by reminding them that they share sacred symbols as well as the same ideals of individual freedom from

slavery and slavery. Humans are considered as equal beings before God, Allah SWT (Gilroy, 2002). These Islamic poets recall and disseminate collective memories, such as the diaspora alliance.

Islamic voices in poetry, such as R.O. Hanka's *Goda...!* and "*Di Pusaran Bunda....!*" or Amir Hamzah's collection of Nyanyi Sunyi poems, are simply an attempt to incorporate Islamic symbols into his cultural identity. The study of these Islamic symbols shows that they make literary readers and the intellectual public in the field of literature aware that the problem of cultural construction is not limited to the debate over locality or local tradition versus modernity (Foulcher, 1995; Foulcher et al., 1991), later literary debates, for example, will be influenced by the context. The voice of Islam, on the other hand, is present in the realm of the intended locality, contributing to the creation of an Indonesian human cultural identity that will be established soon. In this context, poets including Amir Hamzah, R. O. Hanka, M. Alie Hasjim, A. Hasjmy, and others reflect Indonesian nationalism, which rejects the liberalism or materialism advocated by colonial discourse (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

The ambiguous position of combining nationalism and Islam as part of identity creation is a natural response to colonial discourse. This position was chosen as a deliberate effort or strategy to preserve a position in colonial circles while also carrying out covert and concealed resistance movements. Frontally addressing Islamic issues as anti-colonial struggles will potentially ruin poets' and Islamic struggles' ability to dissolve free from colonial shackles, so that subtle and hidden resistance becomes an option by reminding readers of Islam and evoking Islamic symbols in their works. However, colonial shadows remain in the debate over constructing a new Indonesian identity. Islam is also present to give voice and contribution, such as Islamic poets' voices.

D. Conclusion

In the fictional world of the Dutch East Indies novel, mimicry takes the form of imitation, ethical adjustments, and ideal categories focused on replicating the speech and behavior patterns of both the colonizers' and colonized countries' personalities. The mimicry process in the relationship between colonial and colonized nations eventually results in ambivalence in the personalities of the colonized (Indonesia) and colonized (the Dutch). Islamic poets conceal ideas about the construction of Indonesian cultural identity through the theme or topic of individual spiritual experiences. Islam entered the debate over locality or tradition versus modernity. These poets brought symbols of Islam to readers through their personal experiences in the hope that readers will see Islam as part of the fight against Western culture's discourse of modernity and materialism through colonial discourse. Thus, even though Islamic poets did not express the theme of resistance to colonial discourse, the poets carried out resistance in the shadow of colonialism. The discourse of romantic aesthetics, which promotes individual ideas, is used to create poetic works with themes related to Islamic teachings, such as personal piety and strengthening human relationships with God, Allah SWT.

E. Acknowledgement

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