CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

America, an archipelago discovered firstly by Leif Eriksson five hundred years before Columbus but got its name from an Italian, Amerigo Vespucci, was a country established with colonization background. It also has always been a land of immigrants from time to time.

Opening of American West was emerging in the nineteenth century by Thomas Jefferson, the third president of America. He tried to make expeditions to the West three times before his inauguration, but he accomplished it when becoming a president. The West, in Jefferson's perspective, geographically was laid on the west side of the Appalachian chain.

The opening of American West, in the beginning, was aimed to fulfil Jefferson's curiosity on the West. He read from many books in his personal library that there might be woolly mammoths wandering in the West, mountains made out of salt, the volcanoes erupting and Indians who had blue eyes and spoke a Welsh language. But then, when he was the Whitehouse man, he had a mind that encompassed the continent and envisioned the creation of a great nation stretched from sea to sea, that bound together by a political concept, not only by geography and commerce.

As a president, it was improper to have his hands dirty so next he chose people to make a journey and explore the West for him. They were a young Virginian, Meriwether Lewis, and a regiment captain, William Clark. Lewis was chosen by Jefferson himself due to the Lewis's eagerness and adequate knowledge of botanical and wildlife, his family's background, his frontier skill and hunting as well as his idealism, while Captain Clark was chosen by Lewis. Their journey made them to have relationship with the American's native, Indian tribes. This relationship next influences the politics, economics and culture of white American and Indian tribes.

The expedition bit by bit was led to the colonization. Colonization itself was the physical settling of people from the imperial country. The process involved one nation or territory taking control of another nation or territory either through the use of force or by acquisition, and the sense of domination or superiority is usually caused by racism on other nations. Typical aspects were including racial and cultural inequality between ruling (white American) and subject people (Indian tribes), political and legal domination by the imperial power, and exploitation of the subject people.

There is no previous research on colonialism, specifically in English Department, Faculty of Letters at Indonesia University of Computer. It was my personal interest to make a research on the topic.

1.2. Research Questions

The research problems in this study were stated as follow:

1. How does colonization affect the politics and economics systems of the Indian tribes?
2. How does of American as colonialist and Indian tribes as the colonialized can cause the appearance of “Mimic man” in both cultures?

1.3. Objectives

Based on the statement of problem above, this research is aimed to:

1. Find out how the Indian Native tribes politics and economics were affected.
2. Find out how the Mimic man emerges from the American and Indian Native tribes due to the collision of culture.

1.4. Significance to Knowledge

This study expects to provide new perspective in comprehending how colonization was practiced toward the Indian tribes by the American and the effect on both sides during the opening of American West. As non-American person, surely we also need to know about the history of the state and the reason how America become a super power country for decades, as well to learn from them. Personally, this research is conducted to identify my own identity whether I am a true freeman or a mimic man.

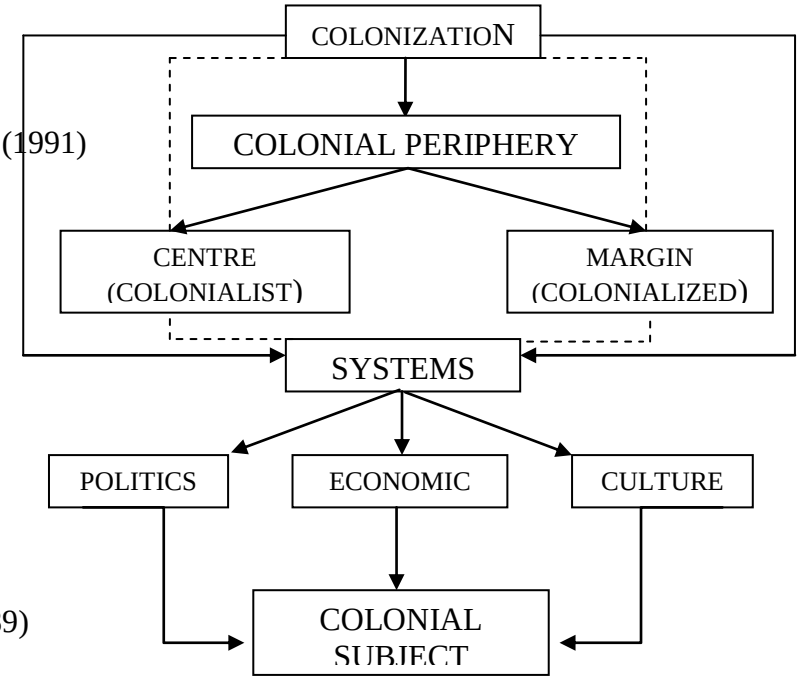
1.5. Framework of the Theories

The research was focused on the colonization periphery and its effect on the politic, economic and culture of the Indian tribes. The colonial periphery or border was a term defined by Trinh T. Minh Ha where dividing two borders were, the centre and margin. Then, such condition might lead to a new identity which was called a colonial subject or a mimic man according to Jenny Sharpe.

The colonial periphery or a limitation in colonization was made and accepted by both sides, unconsciously. The centre was the position of the colonialist, the American, and the margin was the colonized, the Indian tribes related with the opening of American West journey. Each side had own authority on its life's aspects, but each also had influence to another. America, through Lewis and Clark exploration, unintentionally, was spreading the systems of politics, economics, and culture to the Indian tribes.

Several tribes–Teton Sioux, Blackfeet, Cheyenne–had strong immunity so that they are considered as "noble savages". But, it was unable to change their position as the margin for the centre. However, there would be no centre without the existence of the margin. This relationship might become a mutualism relationship for both sides, but it also caused the emerging of a new identity from them named a colonial subject or a mimic man. This group was not only from the colonialized side or the Indian Tribes but also the colonialist itself or the American.

Trinh T. Minh Ha (1991)



Jenny Sharpe (1989)

Figure 1

The framework of study