



## IDENTITY POLITICS AND COLONIAL LEGACY IN LEILA S. CHUDORI'S NOVEL *PULANG*: A HOMI K. BHABHA POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

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### *Abstract*

*This study analyzes the politics of identity and colonial legacy in the novel *Pulang* by Leila S. Chudori using a postcolonial theory approach, particularly the concepts of Homi K. Bhabha. The novel depicts the experiences of political exiles after the events of 1965, who are forced to live in exile and face identity crises. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this study explores how colonialism and political repression shape the characters' social reality and how their identities are dynamic and negotiated in hybrid and ambivalent spaces. The results show that the novel "*Pulang*" reflects the impact of colonial legacies, which not only influence state policies and social structures but also shape the identities of individuals in liminal positions. Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry reveal the characters' struggles to shape their identities in the transnational realm. In this context, literature serves as a medium to create alternative narratives, challenge state hegemony, and reinterpret the meaning of Indonesian nationalism through a postcolonial framework.*

**Keywords:** Identity politics; colonial legacy; postcolonialism; political exile; *Pulang* novel

### INTRODUCTION

Literature is not merely a form of artistic expression but also functions as a reflective medium for the social, cultural, political, and historical realities that shape a nation's identity and its values. The term literature refers to the creative works of humankind that employ language as the primary medium of artistic creation (Tjahyadi, 2020). Literature represents human creativity manifested through the imaginative, intellectual, and experiential capacities of writers, expressed in written or oral forms to convey ideas, emotions, and values.

Literary works offer enjoyment and aesthetic pleasure and embody educational values that contribute to moral and character formation. Through its refined use of language, literature transmits knowledge, ethics, and religious values to its audience. Literature appears in various forms, one of which is prose fiction (Rahmawati, 2022). The English word novel shares a similar meaning to novella in Italian and novelle in German, both referring to fictional narratives. By definition, a novel is an entirely imaginative form of fiction (Tyas, 2024). Through literary works, authors can record, critique, and reinterpret major events that shape a nation's history, including the influence and enduring consequences of colonialism.

A similar dynamic is evident in colonial literature. The collapse of colonialism within literary works gave rise to a new intellectual movement known as postcolonialism. This movement is characterized by the strengthening of individual consciousness, efforts to break free from hegemonic power, and the restoration of Indigenous rights to land and culture, including a reparative perspective that emphasizes that “the restitution of plundered Indigenous cultural heritage is the only realistic form of reparation” (Chechi, 2024). Colonialism, derived from the term “colony,” involves not only occupying and claiming territory but also exercising domination in the sphere of thought; accordingly, European colonization “disseminated and entrenched particular worldviews, modes of thinking, discourses, and knowledge systems” shaped by the Western (colonial) order (Chakkarath & Weidemann, 2023). One of colonialism’s defining features is the construction of a rigid boundary between the “civilized” and the “uncivilized” (Furqon et al., 2020). This aligns with nineteenth-century formulations of the “standard of civilization,” which classified peoples and states as “civilized,” “barbarous,” and “savage” (Zago, 2025). Colonialism, which in many respects catalyzed the development of cultural studies, underwent major upheavals in the mid-twentieth century. A similar transformation occurred within colonial literature, where the demise of colonialism in literary representation generated the emergence of postcolonialism.

Leila S. Chudori’s novel *Pulang* (Homecoming) stands as one of Indonesia’s most significant literary works portraying the complex interplay of identity politics and colonial legacies within the country’s historical and political landscape. The novel is rich in historical and political dimensions, yet foregrounds the existential struggles of identity faced by its characters. It narrates the lives of political exiles forced to leave their homeland and adapt to life in foreign countries. Among them, Dimas Suryo emerges as a central figure who experiences an acute identity dilemma: his Indonesian citizenship is no longer recognized by the state of his birth, yet he cannot find a sense of belonging in France. Despite his residence abroad, Dimas rejects his new identity and maintains an unceasing longing for his homeland, Indonesia (Sari, 2019). The novel portrays the experience of political exile resulting from the 1965 tragedy, a dark chapter in Indonesian history that induced collective trauma and produced a generation of people condemned to live a life of displacement and uncertainty. Through its narrative of longing for “home”, *Pulang* articulates a profound reflection on alienation and identity and the ways in which colonialism and Indonesia’s political history shape the social realities confronted by its characters.

The politics of identity in *Pulang* is rooted not only in historical and political contexts but also in the complex process of negotiation between individuals and social groups in response to the ideological inheritance of the past. The novel’s characters navigate the tensions among nationalism, political identity, and personal subjectivity, all of which are tested by social transformation and the historical trauma of the Partition. Within the theoretical framework of Homi K. Bhabha’s postcolonial thought, these tensions can be interpreted through the concepts of hybridity and ambivalence conditions in which subjects inhabit a dual position between the colonized and colonizer and between the original and adopted self. In this sense, identity is fluid rather than fixed, evolving within the “third space,” a liminal zone where cultural negotiation and meaning-making occur continuously. This third space becomes the symbolic site in which *Pulang*’s characters reconstruct their fragmented identities amid the tension

between their colonial past and postcolonial present.

Previous studies on *Pulang* have primarily employed psycho-literary approaches. [Rahman \(2021\)](#), for instance, examined the characters through Freud's psychoanalytic framework of id, ego, and superego, highlighting their psychological dominance and narrative influence. [\(Park, 2024\)](#) explored intercultural interactions, identity conflicts, and the representation of cultural diversity among political exiles. In her interpretation, multiculturalism in the novel functions not only as a narrative backdrop but also as a site of ideological contestation, collective memory, and hybrid identity formation.

However, this study seeks to provide a deeper analysis of how identity politics and colonial legacies structure individuals' lives, particularly political exiles who have lost their citizenship. *Pulang* demonstrates the experience of alienation, identity crisis, and state repression directed at those labelled ideological adversaries of the post-1965 regime. From a postcolonial perspective, the novel reflects the persistent impact of colonialism, not only in its physical forms but also in social, political, and psychological structures. In this context, literature serves as a medium of critique, resistance, and historical reflection in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Postcolonial Theory*

Postcolonialism is a critical perspective in literary studies developed by Homi K. Bhabha that examines the inseparable relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, particularly in the context of postcoloniality. According to Bhabha, this relationship produces a contradictory cultural construction of colonial and Indigenous cultures. He introduced the concept of "liminal space," an intermediary realm where cultural negotiation and interaction occur, blurring the boundaries between cultures. This space enables symbolic resistance and interaction, giving rise to patterns such as hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence in postcolonial culture [\(Munaris, 2023\)](#).

In his theoretical framework, Homi K. Bhabha articulates an "in-between space" between the colonizer and the colonized. He describes this as a time-lag, a structural condition of division and ambivalence within colonial discourse that perpetually positions subjects in a liminal cultural space. This condition represents a situation in which demarcations are rigid but unstable, and their boundaries are difficult to define. Thus, the concept of liminality refers to the "in-between" or "intermediary" zone where cultural transformation becomes possible. Within this dynamic cultural site, identity strategies—both individual and communal—are continuously negotiated and constructed. This space, conceptualized as the "third space of enunciation" [\(Wahyuni, 2021\)](#), is a symbolic realm where the encounter and tension between colonial and Indigenous cultures take place, enabling ongoing processes of adaptation, negotiation, and hybridization.

Colonialism gave birth to the field of cultural studies as an intellectual response to its profound impact in the mid-twentieth century. A similar transformation occurred in colonial literature, where the collapse of imperial domination generated a new critical movement: postcolonial studies. This movement is characterized by growing individual consciousness, resistance to hegemonic structures, and the reclamation of cultural and territorial rights by formerly colonized peoples [\(Sultoni et al. 2021\)](#). Within postcolonial discourse, literature plays a crucial role in examining how colonialism left material traces

of occupation and established enduring structural legacies that persisted beyond independence.

### ***Homi K. Bhabha's Postcolonial***

Bhabha also explains, in fundamental ways, how colonialism fractures identity and colonial authority. He theorizes division within colonial discourse via diverse modalities of repetition, encompassing mimicry and reiteration. Mimicry refers to a colonial strategy of control, wherein the colonized are compelled to imitate the external appearance and internalize the values of the colonizer, a process governed by the panoptic logic of power, as articulated by Foucault ([Lestari 2019](#)). For Bhabha, colonial power operates not only through physical domination but also through the symbolic repetition and fragmentation of subjectivity. However, mimicry always carries an element of difference: imitation is never perfect, and this subtle deviation destabilizes colonial authority. In this sense, colonial discipline can never fully secure its intended replication because, as one recent study notes, “this demand is not perfectly reproduced in the perception and practice of the colonized people” ([Park, 2024](#)).

Postcolonialism also denotes a set of concepts, analytical methods, and interpretive practices used to critique and understand social and cultural phenomena. As a theoretical framework, it offers alternative viewpoints for reevaluating established discourses. The term refers broadly to life after colonialism and encompasses three general understandings within the Indonesian context: the historical period following the end of colonial rule, critical writings that interrogate the Western perception of superiority over the East, and the broader analytical frameworks of Orientalism and imperialism ([Diannita, 2021](#)). In Indonesia, postcolonialism encompasses not only political and economic legacies but also language, culture, and national identity.

Therefore, postcolonial theory functions as a collection of analytical tools and critical frameworks employed to re-examine cultural, historical, political, economic, and literary texts. It serves as a means of deconstructing previously dominant colonial narratives ([Nudin, 2021](#)). This orientation is consistent with a recent international journal editorial that emphasizes how “postcolonial theory is therefore both a normative account and an analytical tool.” ([Riegel, 2025](#)). The colonial legacy manifests in social systems, ideologies, cultural perspectives, and national identities that remain in tension with Indigenous values and foreign influences. A significant aspect of postcolonial inquiry is the politics of identity, where individuals and communities redefine themselves in relation to colonial history and postcolonial power structures. This trend is visible in contemporary political deployments of identity as well, where research highlights that “authoritarian and conservative actors mobilize subaltern identity in a US/Western-dominated world to legitimate reactionary politics.” ([Zhang, 2023](#)).

Postcolonial criticism cannot be separated from the notions of “colonizer” and “colonized,” which extend beyond historical boundaries into the contemporary reality of Third World nations still facing the enduring consequences of colonial domination. Thus, postcolonial studies highlight the historical representation and ongoing impact of colonial structures in contemporary contexts. The prefix “post” in postcolonialism must be understood not merely as “after” colonialism but as a continuing condition shaped by colonial legacies and their contemporary manifestations. According to Endraswara ([Novtarianggi, 2020](#)), works produced after the colonial era—whether reflecting old or

modern colonialism must be analyzed through a postcolonial lens. Therefore, postcolonialism critiques the continuous dynamics of domination and dependency that shape the global political, cultural, and economic relations (Nurhikmah NIP, 2025).

Bhabha's notion of hybridity introduces the idea of a contradictory and ambivalent space of representation, where the continuity and stability of national traditions—serving as a defense against colonial pressure—are disrupted through cultural negotiation and translation. Language, which operates through specific norms and rules, is a core component of this process. In Bhabha's view, hybridity marks the culmination and transformation of identity formation. Every individual and nation has deep connections to territory, tradition, and language. Through these elements, hybridity encapsulates the essence of postcolonial subject formation in cultural studies (Taula'bi, 2021).

Colonial ambivalence refers to the instability and slippage of meaning within colonial authority, revealing that colonial power is never complete or absolute in its authority. Hybridity, as Bhabha explains, represents a strategic reversal of domination through subversive imitation, allowing marginalized identities to preserve and assert their agency within hegemonic systems (Wita 2013). Colonial relations are inherently unstable because of the coexistence of control and contradictions. Hybridity complicates the colonial claim to purity and total control by generating spaces of resistance through negotiated cultural blending.

Within the colonial context, hybridity articulates an ambivalent space of power, where the dynamics of control and desire intersect, creating disciplinary yet unstable relations between the ruler and the subject. Although colonial discourse enacts surveillance and regulation, hybridity enables the colonized to evade and subvert these constraints. Bhabha's postcolonial perspective thus provides not only a new theoretical approach to the complex relationship between the colonizer and the colonized but also a significant contribution to modern literary criticism in general. His emphasis on cultural negotiation within fluid and dynamic spaces reveals that identity is never static but is constantly reconstructed through the interplay of power and resistance.

Bhabha's concept of liminal space serves as a key framework for understanding cultural interaction as a zone where the traditional boundaries between colonizer and colonized become blurred and negotiable. Within this space, hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence manifest as cross-cultural negotiations. Hybridity embodies the creation of new cultural forms that belong to neither side entirely, mimicry reflects imitation infused with subtle resistance, and ambivalence exposes the tension between acceptance and rejection of colonial heritage. Collectively, these concepts deepen literary analysis and broaden the critical understanding of how power and identity continuously transform in postcolonial societies.

Etymologically, the term postcolonial derives from *post*, meaning "after," and *colonial*, meaning "pertaining to colonization." It denotes not only a historical period after the empire but also an ideological stance or intellectual position between the colonizer and the colonized. Theoretically, postcolonialism serves as a critical tool for interrogating persistent colonial practices and their modern equivalents. It illuminates a social reality marked by racial hierarchy, power imbalance, subaltern cultures, and an intertwined awareness of hybridity and mimicry (Taum, 2017).



## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method based on Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theoretical framework. The descriptive method aims to explore and elaborate theoretical concepts within the data. The primary characteristic of this research design is the direct involvement of the researcher in the analysis. The researcher functioned as an observer, categorizing subjects, examining phenomena, and recording findings in the observation notes. In this approach, variables are not manipulated; instead, emphasis is placed on naturalistic observation and interpretation (Mappasere et al., 2019). This study begins by determining its analytical focus namely, to explore the dynamics of identity, colonial legacy, and representations of power in Leila S. Chudori's novel *Pulang* through the postcolonial lens of Homi K. Bhabha, particularly the concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence. Data were collected directly from the novel through intensive reading and the identification of key textual segments relevant to postcolonial themes. The selected excerpts were categorized according to thematic patterns that reflected postcolonial elements (Tamphu, 2025; NurhikmahN, 2024). Once the data were compiled and systematically organized, each excerpt was analyzed within Bhabha's theoretical framework to interpret its underlying meanings. The findings are presented descriptively, offering a coherent interpretation of how the novel articulates the postcolonial dynamics and identity negotiation.

## DISCUSSION

The data analysis results demonstrate that Leila S. Chudori's novel *Pulang* successfully represents the dynamics of identity politics and the lingering colonial legacy that continues to shape Indonesian political exiles' lives. The characters of Dimas Suryo and his associates exemplify Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, wherein their identities are constructed at the intersection of two cultural spheres: the Western culture they inhabit in exile and the Indonesian culture that remains deeply embedded in their memory. They are neither fully accepted by their host country nor completely embraced by their homeland. This condition produces an internal tension and a profound sense of fragmented identity, resonating with Bhabha's notion that hybridity creates an "in-between" space in which identity is fluid, unstable, and yet rich in creative potential.

The mimicry strategy is evident in the ways in which these exiled individuals adapt to foreign societies. For instance, Dimas assimilates aspects of language, behavior, and lifestyle from the local population to survive socially: However, as Bhabha asserts, mimicry is inherently ambiguous and subversive: though the colonized subject imitates the dominant culture, this imitation remains incomplete and thus reinforces their status as "the Other." As a result, the process of mimicry, rather than fostering assimilation, paradoxically highlights and sustains difference.

The characters also experience ambivalence toward their homeland. On the one hand, they yearn for Indonesia and dream of returning; on the other, they acknowledge that the state has rejected their citizenship because of their political history. This ambivalence captures not only emotional turmoil but also political alienation. The novel further illustrates how colonial residues persist within the repressive power structures of Indonesia's New Order regime. The government's stigmatization of political exiles as traitors perpetuates exclusionary and discriminatory practices reminiscent of colonial systems of control. Within Bhabha's theoretical framework, postcolonial power often

replicates the logic of colonial domination through covert authority mechanisms.

Therefore, *Pulang* is not merely a work of fiction but a form of narrative resistance that offers space for alternative histories and voices marginalized by the dominant state discourse. In this sense, literature functions as a medium of deconstruction and subversion, challenging hegemonic narratives and providing renewed insights into the complexity of national identity and historical consciousness in postcolonial Indonesia.

### ***Military Repression Against Individuals Perceived as Threats***

#### **Data 1**

For the past three years, the Nusantara News Agency, where I work, has been “cleansed” of lice and dust—people like us. The military are the disinfectant. We are the lice and dust that must be wiped from the face of the earth

This excerpt illustrates how dehumanization operates as an instrument of power within an authoritarian regime, wherein groups perceived as opposing the state are not only marginalized but also depicted as impure entities that must be eradicated from the body politic. By referring to them as “lice and dust” and portraying the military as a “disinfectant,” the narrative constructs a rhetorical justification for repressive actions against specific individuals or groups, framing ideological purification as a hygienic necessity to preserve national stability. This metaphor powerfully reveals how state propaganda functions to instill fear and suppress public empathy toward the persecuted, thereby enabling systemic oppression to persist without significant resistance. What Landry et al., (2022) describe as how ‘dehumanization facilitates violence by disengaging moral restraints.

### ***The Political Impact in The Aftermath of The G30S***

#### **Data 2**

Almost every day, at minimum, ten to fifteen people were required to obtain a certificate stating that they were not involved in the 30 September Movement, a document that also required a passport photograph.

The excerpt depicts how the impact of the September 30th Movement (G30S) continues to permeate everyday life in Indonesian society, where many individuals were compelled to demonstrate their non-involvement in the event. The “certificate of non-involvement in the G30S” became an essential document required to obtain employment, pursue education, or simply live without fear of persecution by the government and security apparatuses. The inclusion of a passport photograph in this process indicates that the verification was conducted formally and on a mass scale, underscoring the extent to which political control infiltrated people’s private lives. This reflects the pervasive atmosphere of fear and surveillance during the New Order era, in which citizens were constantly required to affirm their loyalty to the state to avoid suspicion, exclusion or social ostracism.

### ***Systematic Political Manhunts, Pervasive Fear, and Repression Under an Authoritarian Regime***

#### **Data 3**

I know he was satisfied, because I was the final piece in the chain they had been

hunting. Hundreds of my friends had already been arrested since the manhunt began three years earlier.

The excerpt portrays the regime's political persecution of individuals deemed dangerous or opposed to the state. The narrator's realization that he has become "the last target" in a prolonged series of arrests spanning three years reflects the systematic and sustained nature of the hunt. The expression "he is satisfied" implies that the pursuer—most likely state or military authorities—perceives the capture of the victim as the completion of their mission, fulfilling a political agenda (Farida, et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the phrase "hundreds of my friends have already been arrested" amplifies the sense of large-scale repression and ideological cleansing, revealing that numerous others fell victim before the narrator himself was detained. This passage encapsulates the pervasive atmosphere of fear, surveillance, and erosion of personal freedom, which is characteristic of Indonesia's post-1965 political climate.

### ***Intensive Searches and Strict Surveillance Carried Out by The Regime***

#### **Data 4**

According to my friends, they were intensely curious to find me, to the point that they called me "the Shadow"

This excerpt illustrates how the narrator becomes the principal target of political persecution, earning the epithet "the shadow," which signifies his elusive presence and ability to evade capture. The nickname encapsulates the tension and paranoia experienced by the authorities pursuing him and his comrades, who followed the unfolding situation with apprehension. The term "shadow" also implies that his existence never completely disappears but lingers in the background—watching, moving in secrecy, and defying visibility. This imagery underscores the intensity of the hunt and reveals how the protagonist is forced to live in exile and in constant fear as a consequence of political repression in the novel.

### ***Mass Repression of Individuals Suspected of Having Links to The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI)***

#### **Data 5**

Since the beginning of the year, everyone considered to be involved with the Indonesian Communist Party or family members of the PKI, associates of PKI members, or even neighbors or friends deemed close to the PKI had been pursued, detained, and interrogate.

The excerpt portrays the extensive scope of political persecution and repression directed at anyone suspected of having direct or indirect ties to the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) after 1965. The targets of this hunt were not limited to PKI members alone but also extended to their families, friends, neighbors, and even individuals associated with them. This reveals that repression functioned not only as a political mechanism but also as a social one, where suspicion and punishment were imposed solely based on perceived affiliations with those regarded as enemies of the State. The passage reflects the pervasive atmosphere of fear,



widespread suspicion, and systemic injustice in which countless individuals lost their freedom or even their lives without concrete evidence of wrongdoing.

### ***The Arrest of Mas Hananto as Part of Broader Political Repression***

#### **Data 6**

Mas Hananto my friend, superior, and fellow discussant; Surti's husband and the father of Kenanga, Bulan, and Alam was finally arrested at his workplace on Jalan Sabang a month ago

The excerpt reveals the arrest of Mas Hananto, who is not only a close friend and colleague of the protagonist but also a husband and father. The description of his multiple social roles underscores that his arrest affected not only him but also shattered the lives of his family members. The fact that he was apprehended at his workplace highlights the open and systematic nature of the political purges, where individuals could be detained at any time and without warning. This passage also reflects the harsh realities of repression in post-1965 Indonesia, when numerous people were arrested under accusations of involvement with the PKI, often without due legal process, leaving their families in a state of uncertainty, fear and suffering.

### ***The Injustices of Identity-Based Politics***

#### **Data 7**

Hananto is a victim of identity politics, in which a person is arrested solely due to perceived ties to a particular network, without recognition of the individual as a human being with a family and a private life.

This excerpt affirms that Hananto becomes a victim of identity politics, in which his arrest is not based on any concrete criminal act but rather on a perceived association or affiliation with certain networks in this case, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) or groups suspected of being linked to it. Within a repressive political system, individuals are not evaluated based on their character, integrity, or contributions but are instead reduced to mere representatives of a group labeled as dangerous by the state. Dehumanization operates here as a mechanism of control: Hananto is no longer seen as a human being with a family and a personal life but as part of a broader category of "political enemies" to be eliminated. This passage illustrates how identity can be weaponized to justify repression and injustice, disregarding the inherent dignity, rights, and humanity of individuals.

### ***The Spirit of Student Resistance Against Injustice***

#### **Data 8**

A fierce voice, full of demands for a more just society—even though, in time, some of those idealistic students would become part of the very apparatus of power .

The excerpt reveals the irony inherent in the dynamics of activism, where students who once vocally demanded justice and social change often become part of the very power structures they once critiqued. Initially driven by strong idealism and a

desire to create a more equitable society, many eventually compromise their political interests or even assimilate into the oppressive systems they had opposed. This passage reflects a recurring political cycle in which yesterday's opposition becomes tomorrow's ruling power, highlighting how idealism is frequently eroded by the pragmatic realities of authority and governance.

### ***The Experience of Freely Wandering and Exploring The City***

#### **Data 9**

The days we spent as flâneurs gradually enriched my French vocabulary

This excerpt illustrates how the leisurely activity of strolling and observing city life a manifestation of the flâneur experience in Paris helps the main character enrich his French vocabulary. By embodying the role of a flâneur, enjoying the urban atmosphere, engaging in conversations with locals, and exploring the surrounding environment, the character naturally begins to internalize and deepen his understanding of French. This passage also demonstrates that language acquisition does not necessarily occur within the confines of a classroom but can develop organically through direct experience and everyday interaction within a supportive cultural context..

### ***Monsieur Antoine Martin as A Retired Police Officer With A Profound Passion For Literature***

#### **Data 10**

Monsieur Antoine Martin, a retired police officer who loved literature so deeply that he was willing to sit in his stall and read aloud several excerpts from the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Marguerite Duras

The excerpt depicts Monsieur Antoine Martin, a retired police officer with a profound love of literature. His passion is so deep that he willingly spends his time in his small book stall reading aloud passages from novels by Alain Robbe-Grillet and Marguerite Duras—two renowned French authors celebrated for their experimental and introspective narrative styles. This portrayal reveals that despite his professional background rooted in discipline and authority, he possesses a tender and reflective side marked by an earnest appreciation for the literary arts. The passage further illustrates the contrast between his former profession and his artistic devotion, demonstrating literature's capacity to transcend social boundaries and resonate with individuals from institutions traditionally associated with power and order.

### ***The Escalation of Political Repression***

#### **Data 11**

The manhunt grew increasingly ferocious, targeting not only those considered communists or sympathetic to the PKI. Now family members and relatives were also being rounded up

This excerpt portrays the escalating scale and brutality of political repression in

post-1965 Indonesia. Initially, the persecution targeted individuals identified as members or sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI); however, it gradually expanded to include anyone with familial, social, or even casual associations with those labeled PKI. This development illustrates how injustice and fear permeated society, as individuals could be arrested solely based on social connections rather than their actions or beliefs. The passage reflects the pervasive dehumanization and political paranoia of the era, where entire segments of the population became victims of suspicion and ideological cleansing in the absence of due legal processes.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals how Leila S. Chudori's novel *Pulang* portrays identity politics and the colonial legacy through the lens of Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory. In her work, Chudori explores the identity conflicts of characters who experience alienation following the events of 1965, emphasizing the concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry in constructing new identities. Bhabha's notion of the third space is evident in the characters' interactions as they seek to redefine themselves within a liminal sphere while simultaneously challenging dominant narratives of nationalism. Overall, *Pulang* functions as a medium of resistance to colonial legacies and a critique of political ideologies that restrict individual freedom. This research contributes significantly to the understanding of literature as a means of redefining identity within postcolonial contexts and opens new avenues for further studies on the intersection of literature and identity politics in Indonesia.

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