CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

December 7, 1941, all eyes were upon the tiny island of Oahu, Hawai’i, as the Japanese airships bombed the US naval base in Pearl Harbor. The world was surprised to see the might of Japan overpowered the US. This sudden attack succeeded to sink several ships, including US’ battleship Arizona and Missouri, and bring down the military installation in Pearl Harbor. Many soldiers died and The US suffered from a tremendous loss. That day, the day when Pearl Harbor turned to ashes, was not only the day which became the cornerstone and reason of the US involvement in the warfare. But it was also the day which marked the darkest history of Japanese-Americans. It was the day that dramatically changed their life.

In the wake of the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested many Issei. Issei is the first generation of Japanese-American who holds Japanese citizenship (Muller, 2007). Japanese-American Incarceration, or famously called as Japanese-American Internment, was the result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Many descendants of Japanese were arrested and forced to move to someplace provided by the US Government. They were put in camps similar to the Nazi’s infamous Jewish concentration camps. The reason why the US government performed such an action was obvious; the
Japanese descendants became scapegoats and they were blamed for the incident in Oahu.

Such treatment to the Japanese-Americans was, of course, unfair to them. Although there was no evident proof about the contribution of the Japanese-American in helping the Japanese soldiers, the hysteria and paranoia caused by the bombing of Pearl Harbor triggered the government to execute the order to “imprison” the Japanese descendants. (Muller, 2007, p. 16) The fact that most Japanese-Americans were Nisei, or the second generation of Japanese immigrants, who held United State’s citizenship was ignored. It really did not matter if a person was Issei (Japanese citizen) or Nisei (American citizen). All of the Japanese-Americans in the west coast of the mainland were relocated regardless to their citizenship status.

The different things happened where the Pearl Harbor tragedy took place. Hawai‘i was a home of many Japanese-Americans whether they were the Japanese citizen immigrated to America, or the second generation of Japanese descendant. As the US part which separated from mainland, Hawai‘i was the closest US state measured from Japan. Japanese, along with the haole (white descendants) and kanaka (the native Hawaiian), formed the Hawaiian society. The fact was, Japanese-American was one of the largest ethnic groups resided in Hawai‘i. Japanese-Americans made presumably 40% of the total population of Hawai‘i.
The enormous amount of Japanese descendants in Hawaii made the US government think twice to implement the same action as they did to the Japanese-Americans in the mainland. It would be disastrous to relocate them all because the Japanese-American populations significantly affected Hawai‘i. But, there were several hundred quick arrests upon the Japanese-Americans within 48 hours after Pearl Harbor (Ng, 2002). Most of them were male, including Nisei and Kibei (the US-born Japanese descendants who took education in Japanese). They were put in jails for several days and treated like prisoners. After a while, they were relocated to temporary camps set exclusively for them.

The life for Japanese-Americans was tough during the wartime. They had been mistreated before the Pearl Harbor attack, and they continued to be prejudiced as disloyal to the states afterwards. Although this was not the first time the “yellow” race being harassed in the entire history of Japanese-Americans, the burden of people who possessed Japanese ancestry was unquestionably heavy. They were condemned for the crime they didn’t even commit.

History has recorded several key events showing the racism and prejudices toward Japanese-American as well as other Asian descendants. Since the first arrival of the Asians to America, there had always been certain common dislike against the yellow race. The term “yellow peril” (Mac, 2009), for example, is a mark of a strong hate toward Japanese Americans dated back to 1900’s. While the number of Japanese Issei migrated to America was increasing because of the demand of the railroad workers, the insecurity of the society was also growing, especially when people saw lots of workforces were using Japanese as their labor.
Some later events, such as the Gentleman Agreement banning Japanese immigration to America, also led to the further racial discrimination of Japanese descendants.

The public hate towards the Japanese-American then rising near the climax as Japan took part in World War II. Along with German and Italy, Japan formed the Axis, which was the Allies’ enemy. It culminated and reached the peak as soon as the first bomb from the Japanese aircraft shook the earth of Oahu. Needless to say, Japanese-Americans at that time were really considered as a threat to American society. The society began to feel fear alongside their previously-set hatred to Japanese immigrants.

Various popular Hollywood movies and history books have retold the story of the Pearl Harbor. The scene of the bombing was put in the screen, with many American soldiers died in the attack. The popular thought was filled with how the Japanese aircraft succeed to shock the “sleeping” America with their advanced strategy. Only a little portion told us exactly about what happened afterwards: the life of Japanese-Americans during what is so called as Internment period.

However, the truth about internment could not really be hidden or blurred. Nowadays, many books and novels write about the harsh reality faced by the Japanese-Americans in World War II period. Some were written by the Internment -“victims” themselves and some by non-Japanese-Americans. They
speak out the plight of the Japanese-Americans and reveal the bitter truth of Internment.

*Under the Blood Red Sun* is one of the novels that talk about the Japanese-American’s life in the days of World War II. Set in Hawai‘i, this novel centers its story on the life of Tomikazu, the main character. He is a Nisei, Japanese descendant born in the US. Tomikazu lives with her family consisting of his little sister, his mother, father, and grandfather. His mother, father, and grandfather are Issei, or the first generation of immigrants. Three of them do not possess American citizenship. Tomi’s grandfather is the one who owns a strong tie to the Japanese homeland. The rest of the family, although still using some traditional value of Japanese, has adopted American way of living.

In Hawaii, where the population of the Japanese descendants reached one-third of its total population in 1941, there was a strong prejudice towards the Japanese-American living there. It is felt by Tomikazu and his family. They have to live among the neighbors who always keep their eyes on Japanese family. Even his old-friend and closest neighbor, Keet, hates Tomi for being Japanese. Keet always tries to bother Tomi just because Tomi is a Japanese descendant. After Pearl Harbor incident, Tomi’s father is arrested while he is fishing. Not long after that, his grandpa follows. His grandpa is forced by the FBI to be prisoned because he is alleged to “signal” the Japanese pilots. Tomi is left with his little sister and his terrified mother. Due to the arrest of the two men in the Nakaji family, Tomi’s life becomes harder and he, along with his mother and sister, has to face the reality that his father no longer could support the family.
*Under the Blood-Red Sun* is chosen as the object of the research because it tells about the hard struggle of Japanese-American family in living with the prejudiced mainstream society. The story is particularly about the impact of the anti-Japanese feeling to Tomi, the main teenage character of the novel. Written by Graham Salisbury, a Hawaiian white man, *Under the Blood-Red Sun* won Scott O’Dell Award for Historical Fiction targeting children and young-adult reader. It has also been made as a movie launched in September 2014 directed by Tim Savage.

Graham Salisbury is a children literature writer. In writing *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, Salisbury provides both mainstream’s and Japanese-American’s point of view about the discrimination in Hawai‘i. Therefore, it is possible to extract how exactly the Hawaiian society was from reading and analyzing this novel. There are events which are historically accurate and enabling us to know the plight of Japanese dating back to 1940’s.

The interesting aspect of this novel is that the novel tells a fascinating story about tradition, honor, survival, and courage. It is the story of a thirteen-year-old Japanese American who is searching his true identity of being a Japanese-American. Tomikazu’s experience in the search of his identity particularly in the face of oppression and racial hatred is the experience that every immigrant descendant can relate to. It needs a further examination of how this identity is shaped and acquired.
Under the Blood Red Sun belongs to the category of children literature. It has to be noted that although it is a children literature, it should not be underestimated. Stewart and Atkinson in Ethnic Literary Tradition in American Children’s Literature stated that “…children’s literature is recognized as literature worthy of study,” (Stewart & Atkinson, 2009, p.3) and it can be analyzed and seen from ethnic perspective, although it is voiced and narrated by a child. In the children literature with ethnic themes, the representation of children of colors and their culture can be perceived in the text. Although the signs may be more “readable” and obvious because of its children readership, there are layers of meaning hidden beneath the easily-read signs. Moreover, children ethnic literature, especially those of Asian-American, “highlight the meaning or value that society attributes to history, national and ethnic affiliation, intercultural relationships, and how groups occupy or influence the places they are in and the communities they form.” (Stewart & Atkinson, 2009, p.147) So, it can be said that it is possible to recognize the ethnic identity by examining children ethnic literature. In this research, the children ethnic literature is treated as a cultural text that is rich in the cultural issues particularly regarding to the Japanese-American ethnic identity.

There are numerous previous researches about Japanese Internment Camp, especially after President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act in 1988 as a redress act to the Internment victims. Those researches see Japanese American Internment from various points of view. One of the researches about Internment-themed novel is “Power and Cultural Politics in John Okada's No-No Boy” by
Jinqi Ling published by Duke University in 1995. It analyzes John Okada’s novel *No-No Boy* that tells about the story of Ichiro, a draft resister in the Internment Period. Ling’s research examines the impact of mainstream’s power to the identity of Internment victims, particularly to Nisei. The similarity of Ling’s research and this research lies in the impact of Internment to the identity formation of Japanese American. The difference with this research is that the Nisei’s identity in *No-No Boy* is different from that of in *Under the Blood Red Sun*. This is due to the different setting and context of both novels. Another important research is done by Donna K. Nagata from Department of Psychology, Smith University, MA, titled “*The Japanese-American Internment: Perceptions of Moral Community, Fairness, and Redress*” (published in 1990). Nagata’s research is about different perspectives of Internment seen from the eye of the White people and Japanese American. In Nagata’s research, the different perspectives of Internment affect the struggle of Japanese American to seek justice about the Internment.

**B. Scope of Study**

This research is conducted under the field of American Studies in the study of ethnicity and history. The aim of the study is to explain how an ethnic group that becomes a subject to prejudice and certain discrimination by the mainstream society can survive. It is about the anti-Japanese feeling and its impact towards the Japanese-American ethnic identity. The research is focused on construction of Japanese-American identity during the World War II.
C. Research Questions

This research is conducted to answer the following research question:

1. What is anti-Japanese sentiment as reflected in the novel *Under the Blood-Red Sun*?

2. How does the anti-Japanese sentiment affect the Japanese-American ethnic identity?

D. Objectives of Study

The objectives of the study are to describe what anti-Japanese sentiment is and how it affects Japanese-American ethnic identity as reflected in the novel *Under the Blood Red Sun*.

E. Benefits of Study

The significance of this study is to help the readers to understand one of the historical events in the United States' history and its contribution to the prejudice toward Japanese-American ethnic group. Furthermore, this study helps us to understand how racism affects the ethnic community. This research is also meant to give deeper understanding and deeper knowledge on the study of Japanese-American ethnic group and its long standing history in the United States. It can also be the reference to other researchers especially for American Studies students in the English Department, Sebelas Maret University.

F. Research Methodology

1. Type of Research
This research employs qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative research is concerned with non-statistical methods of inquiry and analysis of social phenomena. It draws on an inductive process in which themes and categories emerge through analysis of data collected by such techniques as interviews, observations, videotapes, and case studies. (http://www.uncp.edu/home/marson/qualitative_research.html). Qualitative research is used in interdisciplinary research. It is multidisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary at the same time. It is “many things at the same time” that are “committed to the naturalist perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.7).

Descriptive research is the type of research that concerns with the description in details. Glass and Hopkins stated in Knupfer and McLellan (1996) that descriptive research “… involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection.” Analysis of literary works employs this kind of research because it does not measure the quantity of data, but rather it employs several approaches to interpret the data taken from literary work.

2. Data and the Source of Data

The data used in the research is divided into two groups: main data and supporting data. The primary data, or the main data, is gathered from the novel Under the Blood-Red Sun by Graham Salisbury. It consists of the characters, characterizations, plot, setting, narrative and dialogue. The secondary data, or the
supporting data, is used for supporting the primary data. It includes the wartime and internment narrative and article which are gathered through various sources such as books and webpage articles related to the study of Japanese-American ethnic groups.

3. Techniques of Collecting and Analyzing Data

The data were collected by reading the novel as the source of data. Then, the next step in collecting the data was to identify the issue found in main source of data. The identification led to the selection of the data: the most important data were selected and sorted. The data which had been collected were analyzed by using appropriate theories and approaches to answer the research questions. In the process of analyzing, the secondary data supported the primary data. The secondary data were used to enrich the analysis and the arguments.

G. Theoretical Approach

America is the nation of people. Many people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and nations came and is still coming to America, as Dinnerstein and Reimer stated in *Ethnic Americans*:

never before—and in no other country—have as many varied ethnic groups congregated and amalgamated as they have in the United States. The original seventeenth-century settlers were overwhelmingly English, and it was they who set the tone for American culture. In spite of its English Protestant orientation, the New World was also characterized by ethnic diversity. After the 1680s millions of others, including Scots-Irish, Germans, Irish, Scots, French, Dutch, Italians, Russians, Poles, Scandinavians, Greeks, Chinese, Japanese, Africans, and Latin Americans, eventually emigrated to America. (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 1999, p.1)
Those people, who migrated from various countries with different backgrounds and ethnicities, bring the colors to the American life. Each culture they bring contributes to the diversity in the United States. Consequently, America becomes a country with high complexity and it is relatively hard to define what American culture is.

American culture grows with the American experience itself. It has been “transplanted, rather than a native growth; it has been characteristically heterogeneous, rather than homogeneous, agglomerative than organic.” (Spiller, 1973). The effort to understand the American culture, therefore, has to involve several perspectives and approaches as the American culture cannot be viewed as a single culture. It has to be seen as a multifaceted and fluid culture where “different identities mix and collide” and ever-changing. (Campbell & Kean, 1998, p.20).

Thus, American Studies, as a study of American culture, is interdisciplinary in its nature. While culture cannot be perceived only from one point of view, interdisciplinary studies offers a way to study culture by combining and making use of several branches of studies such as Ethnic studies, gender studies, historical studies, etc. It incorporates anthropology and humanity, as well as various theories and approaches related to the culture and its products. Interdisciplinary studies “provides a suitable method through which to engage with theses dominant voices, and to appreciate and listen to the other voices, recognizing their mutual struggles to be heard” (Campbell & Kean, 1998) so that it allows us to see American culture from every different angles and perspectives.
This research is conducted under the field of American Studies. In the early form of American Studies, Shelley Fisher Fishkin argued that American studies “had little room for dissenting voices of minorities and women.” (Fishkin, 2004) The study of ethnic in the past had been the story of conquest and assimilation into the white culture. But in later years, particularly during the rise of civil right movements, American Studies has included ethnic studies, which includes the struggles of minority “to be heard” (Campbell & Kean, 1998), into its scope of study. This particular development in American Studies supports the study of ethnic groups which becomes the theme of this research.

Literature is a product of culture. As a product of culture, it can be viewed as a text that can be read and analyzed to give a glance of what society thinks and feels at the specific time. Literature can be purely fiction and just a “creation of a disciplined imagination” (Sykes, 1963), but it is still considered as a text that conveys special messages and it can be still analyzed. While literature cannot be taken for the “objective description of reality” (Sykes, 1963), the fact is that a literary work sometimes contains the author’s perspective and “selected experience” (Sykes, 1963). It can also be a reflection of the conditions happening in the society. Therefore, whether the literary work is purely imaginative or contains historical facts, the study of it can lead to the discovery of cultural significance and pattern.

With this logic, it needs careful examination to extract the cultural significance of a literary work: what it says about the culture and what it tells reader about author’s point of view of the life in the specific era. It certainly needs
background knowledge to study a character’s motives and thoughts. Each literary work has context and limitation. Then, the approaches such as socio-cultural and historical approach and also the study of ethnicity are important to help understanding the literary works. They serve as the helpful tools to put a text into its contexts.

In this research, the problem found in the novel Under Blood-Red Sun will be analyzed with several approaches. This novel will be a text to read the condition of the Japanese-American society during the World War II. This research also uses the ethnic studies, particularly Japanese-American ethnic group. The Japanese-American ethnic study provides the background for understanding the belief and value system of the Japanese-American people. It is also important as a tool to separate the myth from the reality. Myth itself is a “fixed, satisfying, and stable story used again and again to normalize our account of social life” (Moulton, 1994). America is built based on this idea: there are many myths that people believe, such as Columbian myth and the exceptionalism myth. However, every generation of Japanese-America has their own myth as well. Issei, or the first generation of immigrants, has different myth from the Nissei. It is interesting to see how the different myths are contesting and, somehow, mixed to create the image of Japanese American.

Moreover, the importance of ethnic studies in this research is to study the Japanese American ethnic group as the subject of the cognitive (negative stereotypes), affective (prejudice), and behavioral (discrimination) components of the racism. (Quintana & McKown, 2008). Negative stereotypes and racial
prejudice can fuel unfair treatment to the specific group and can lead to the further social disadvantage for that group. This research is to find and analyze the components of racism and their effects towards Japanese-American ethnic group.

To provide further context for this research, socio-cultural approach is employed. Socio-cultural approach helps to give limitation of certain “spatio-temporal dimension”. In the other words, it will place the literary work in certain space and time context. While literary analysis can give a close approach to the characters with their motives and the ethnic studies can give a proper insight of what is going on in the specific group of people, socio-cultural approach enables researcher to give a sense of reality. It connects the literary works with the events in the society at certain time and space.

*Under the Blood-Red Sun* is a historical fiction. Thus it needs proper historical background of this novel. The characters in the novel may be man-made and imaginative, but the historical event is a reality. This is to say that even though this novel is fictional, it contains historical significance which will affect the author’s construction of the characters’ belief and behavior. Historical events affect people in the society, as well as affect the society itself. They will reveal the justification towards racism toward Japanese-American. By examining history, particularly Japanese-American ethnic history and Hawaiian history, the insights based on this novel can be improved. History also provides sufficient contexts to translate the signs in the text.
The last approach to be employed in this research is semiotic approach. As a product of culture, literary work expresses the condition of the culture and society. It is treated as a text which contains the sense that “ideas, words, and expression are not clear and definite, but rather irreducibly plural in meaning and caught up in a web-like complexity of signs.” (Blair, 1978) Each sign conveys each meaning.

It is possible to analyze the signs found in the novel to get the real meaning of those signs. Saussure argues that the signs function through their relative position. Furthermore, Roland Barthes gives a term “myth” to suggest a type of message-bearing speech which functions as a second-level language. (Blair, 1978) It means that the meaning of each signs can be both connotative and denotative. It depends on the context of situation, because nothing has meaning on itself (Berger, 1998). It means that the meaning of the same object may differ if the object is put in different context.

The importance of semiotics in this research is to give two clashing viewpoints from the prejudiced mainstream and from the Japanese-American. While a cultural sign may seem unthreatening in a Japanese-American’s mind, it can be the total opposite when it is viewed from the mainstream’s eyes. Semiotic is, therefore, applied to this research in order to examine how prejudice can blind people’s perspective, and even logic, to interpret certain cultural and social phenomena.
H. Thesis Organization

This thesis consists of four chapters. Each chapter is divided into several subchapters. The chapters are Chapter I Introduction, Chapter II Literature Review, Chapter III Analysis, and Chapter IV Conclusion and Recommendation.

Chapter one is Introduction. It consists of eight subchapters. They are Research Background, Scope of Study, Research Question, Objectives of Study, Benefits of Study, Research Methodology, Theoretical Approach, and Thesis Organization.

Chapter two is Literature Review. It discusses about Japanese American in Hawaii, Immigration, Assimilation, and Ethnic Identity, and Semiotic of Literary Text.

Chapter three is Analysis. It consists of two subchapters. They are Nakaji Family and Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Hawaii and Nakaji’s Journey in Finding Their Identity. This chapter provides the analysis to answer the research question.

Chapter four is Conclusion and Recommendation. It provides the conclusion of the analysis and the recommendation for further research.