

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher showed the background that underlies the research. Aside from showing the background, the researcher also identify some problems that could be analyzed in the research.

1.1. Background of the Research

Crisis cultural identity is one of the biggest and common problems in the world. Globalization and the industrial revolution have led people to exchange information across the world rapidly. The effect of this phenomenon is not only allowed people to exchange words with their relatives or friends but also let them know the culture from where they were living. Beside it, technology development, especially in journalistic and television, made people have easy access to the world (Cornali & Tirocchi, 2012). People can know and learn outside world just from a small box in their room. They know about foreign culture, take an interest in them, and learn about that culture then started to forget their own culture.

Loss of cultural identity happened because people, especially youngsters, wanted to look cool and modern. They think that foreign culture like western culture is more impressive than their own traditional culture. Moreover, people think that western culture can make them cooler and more modern so most people usually youngsters prefer to follow and learn and follow foreign culture to their own culture (PBSNews, 2012).

It can be seen from simple things like music preference and even fashion style, young people especially those in between 14 to 34 years old, more likely to adapt foreign culture.

In a study conducted by media company Cassandra, researchers interviewed 9,500 14 to 34-year-olds from 16 countries in Asia, including China, Japan, South Korea, India and Indonesia. The study found that 56 per cent of young people in Indonesia feel more connected to pop culture from other countries, followed by 39 per cent of young people in South Korea, 36 per cent in India, 33 per cent in China and 32 per cent in Japan (Jim, 2018).

Based on the article above, youngsters tend to choose foreign culture rather than their own culture, even for the simplest thing like music. Youngsters felt more interested in foreign culture than their own traditional one because it can make them look modern and hype (Jim, 2018). Foreign culture already blends with every country in the world. All countries do not have any choice but have to adapt to foreign cultures, so they are not outdated (Praseno, 2011).

The adaptation of foreign culture is not always a good thing for a country's culture, especially a country which has strong traditional culture like Indonesia or China because the foreign culture and the traditional culture can mix together and eradicate the old tradition of a country (Nirmalasari, 2012). Even if the traditional culture not gone, but western culture still remains. Those two strong and different cultures will make the citizen confuse, and in the end, people of the country will adopt the two cultures and make those as their own. As a result, people will become confused with their own identity, whether they are Asian or western, and it will let to crisis cultural identity because there are two cultures they grew up with and have attached.

However, to determine an exact culture that belongs to a certain race is not an easy job because there is no exact way to explain the actual identity a person possess in modern society. This happened because all the culture in this world already mix together and blend into one. However, to determine what identity a person or tribe belongs to, people usually refers to the biggest and common characteristic a race has. This stereotype can be seen in how people clarify from which country a person belongs to, based on their characteristic. In a website called Facts and Details, Hays (2015) explained about some etiquette and customs that Indonesian possessed, one of them is the custom when a person entering indonesian home:

Indonesians generally take their shoes off and leave them on the front porch before entering a house. Don't have holes in your socks. Do not touch the Koran or sit or stand on a prayer rug. People often sit on he floor. When sitting in the floor women should tuck their legs underneath them, turned down on the floor. and men should sit cross legged. Don't step over someone's cross legs. Males should sit with their feet crossed at the ankles. In Indonesian, this pose is called "bersila" (Hays, 2015).

Based on the quotation above, Hays (2015) claimed that Indonesian people usually took of their shoes and left them on the front porch before entering a person house. Hays (2015) believe that this behavior was indeed Indonesian culture. However, this kind of habit also did by most of Asian people, whether it is a Chinese, Japanese or Malaysian. The reason why this kind of behavior claimed as Indonesian culture is because this habit seen by the researcher done by most Indonesian people. So the researcher claimed it as part of Indonesian.

Koc (2006) said that identity produce within the play of power and representation. This mean that the stereotype of a race cultural identity happened because people saw that the majority of people from the same race did that action,

so people thought that a people from a same race must be did that kind of action too. The example of this statement happened in the quotation above where the journalist who wrote the article thought that taking of shoes before entering a person house did by Indonesian. Based on this stereotype, people thought that every person who took of their shoes before entering a house must be Indonesian. Yet, there are other country that also have this kind of practice out there.

That kind of ambiguity to determine a person cultural identity led to crisis identity. The crisis of cultural identity is closely related to the colonial era, where colonizers that mostly dominated by western colonize Asian and African countries. They not only bring misery but also bring their own culture and implement the culture into their colonized. The result, the colonized people have grown acustomized to the new culture that invades their country, and the new culture, both large and small, will affect life in the country and make the culture of a country related to or similar to its colonial state (Susanto, 2016).

One of the effects of crisis cultural identity is cultural hybridity. Cultural hybridity happened when two cultures mix together and create a new culture that is a hybrid between old and new cultures. Cultural hybridity already blends with people in colonized countries. The new westernization trend that grown in society is the example of hybridity, from music choices that prefer western song and politics, especially in Indonesia that adapts Dutch political concept and law as the basic concept of Indonesian constitution (Praseno, 2011).

Hybridity not only triggered by globalization, but social classes can also cause hybridity among the citizens. Hybridity caused by social classes happened because

upper class people, especially Asian upper class society, mimic western lifestyle to indicate that they were wealthy. Imperialism that happened hundred years ago made a stereotype that western people were more powerful and prosperous than Asian people. That way of thinking made Asian people believe that to look wealthy, they must behave like westerner.

This kind of thinking made Asian people especially those who came from upper class society mimic western lifestyle, such as drinking wine, wear branded clothes and also live in a mansion with western architecture. These mimicry happened for a long time then led to cultural hybridity. This happened because they already mimic these kind of behavior for a long time and used to that kind of lifestyle. They felt comfortable with it and made it as their own family culture. that is why hybridity could happened due to social class a person possessed.

Other than hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence are some impacts of crisis identity. The way colonizers and colonized recognize one another is called Ambivalence (Bhabha, 2004). The feeling that happened between colonized and colonizers can be the negative feeling or positive feels that affect both parties psychologically or socially. The ambivalence that happened for a long time can affect people and led them to do mimicry action. Mimicry refers to the act of impersonating other people's act or behavior, including language style, pattern, accent even to house design or interior (Bhabha, 2004). The act of mimicry happened because people grown attach to some culture and wanted to become like them, so they started to mimic the culture in order to make people the culture they adored, willing to accept them.

Hybridity and mimicry are two topics that often raised by authors into their novel. One of the novels that used this theme is “Crazy Rich Asian” novel by Kevin Kwan. Kevin Kwan is a Singapore-American author that best known for his Crazy Rich Trilogy. Kwan was born in Singapore in 1973 as the youngest of 3 siblings from an established old-wealth Chinese family. Kwan lived in Singapore until the age of 11 then he moved to Texas with his father and mother. Kwan earned a B.A. in Media Studies from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, after that he moved to Manhattan to attend Parsons School of Design to pursue a B.F.A. in Photography.

He began his career in writing by working under Andy Warhol at Interview Magazine. He started working his first novel, “Crazy Rich Asian”, while taking care of his dying father, as he drove his father back and forth hospital in Singapore, he reminiscent his childhood in Singapore. The first part of the novel was based on Kwan’s childhood back in Singapore. The second part of the novel was a development of a poem he wrote back in high school entitled “Singapore Bible Study”. Besides reminding himself of his childhood in Singapore, Kwan’s goal to write this novel was to change the stereotypical perception of wealthy Asians' conspicuous consumption, refocusing instead on old-wealth families more like his own, families that exclude "style and taste have been quietly going about their lives for generations."

The phenomenon of hybridity and mimicry exist in “Crazy Rich Asian” novel by Kevin Kwan. The novel itself tells about Rachel Chu, an American born Chinese and an economics professor at New York University. She is dating Nick Young, her colleagues from university. Nick and Rachel have been dating for over a year,

and Nick wanted to bring Rachel to his hometown, Singapore, to attend his best friend's wedding. Rachel, who comes from low-class society shocked by the fact that her boyfriend is one of the descendants of a super-rich family that controls the old money from china.

Nick did not care about Rachel's background as a refugee from China and raised in single-mother household. However, Nick's family, especially her mother, Eleanor Young. Eleanor look down at Rachel's and does not want her to be with her son. The novel will tell about the discrimination that happened to Rachel due to her social status. Beside it, the novel also tells about the life of the upper class from the perspective of Astrid, Eddie, Eleanor, and Nick. Basically, "Crazy Rich Asian" is an insider's look at the Asian Jet Set; a perfect depiction of the clash between old money and new money; between Overseas Chinese and Mainland Chinese; and a fabulous novel about what it means to be young, in love, glorious, and crazy rich (Kwan, 2013).

The phenomena of hybridity and mimicry clearly happened in the novel. Once of the example of mimicry can be seen from the quotation: "Don't worry, once we arrive everything will get sorted." Get sorted. Normally Rachel found Nick's Britishy phrases so charming, but in this instance it was a tad frustrating.

From the quotation above, the researcher found a mimicry act done by Nick. In the novel, the author told that nick is a Chinese-Singaporean. However, he moved to England to continue his study, and due to the environment, he adapt British culture and applied it in his everyday life. One of the examples is the accent that Nick used. He used British accent rather than Singaporean accent. It happened

because of the environment he lived during his college life, he mimics the way British people talk. That is why environment can also influence a person's culture.

Hybridity and mimicry are often analyzed. It is a popular topic in postcolonial analysis. However, this novel has never been analyzed by using postcolonial approach, especially with Homi K. Bhabha theory of hybridity and mimicry. Pourviseh & Pirnajmuddin (2014) had conducted a research about hybridity in Graham Greene's novel entitled *The Quiet American*. Based on the research, the researchers found hybridity suffered by the characters in the novel. Hybridity happened in the novel because of the colonization.

Besides due to colonization, crisis identity can also happened due to migration to another country. The example of crisis identity due to migration can be found in a short story entitled "My Son the Fanatic" by Hanif Kureishi. The story tells about a man named Parvez that migrated to England from Pakistan. From a country with strong cultural and religious adherence like Punjabi, to a free country like England, Parvez finally found freedom for the first time in his life when he moved to England. He can be free and no need to follow the rules and cultural tradition that he used to do in his childhood.

According to research that had been conducted by Waworuntu & Arianto (2019), Parvez suffered a cultural conflict with his son. His son, Ali, asking Parvez about his cultural identity, because Parvez himself is a Muslim who grown up in a strong cultured family and educated with eastern culture. However, when Parvez came to England, his resolve wavers and his cultural identity started to fade and got

influenced by British culture. Parvez suffered cultural hybridity. He was not only mimic British culture but he also prefer British culture than his own culture.

Beside of it, Parvez accepted and acknowledge British culture. He thought that western culture is better than eastern, so he admitted that Britain and western culture is better than eastern that is why he copied the British lifestyle and felt ashamed when his child follow eastern culture.

This research was conducted to identify hybridity and mimicry that happened in Crazy Rich Asian novel by Kevin Kwan. The researcher was using Postcolonial approach with Homi K. Bhabha theory of Hybridity and Mimicry to analyze the novel. The focus of research in this paper are same with two previous study before, however the novel that researcher use are different. By doing this research, the researcher wanted to show about the hybridity and mimicry that happened with Asian people especially Chinese people as reflected in the novel.

1.2. Identification of Problems

From the problems that researcher analyze from Crazy Rich Asian novel, the researcher will focus on the problems that have a relation with postcolonial issue. The reason is that the researcher found many phenomena in society that has a relation with orientalism in the novel that can be researched further. According to that statement, the researcher identifies some problems that have a relation with postcolonial studies.

1. Crisis cultural identity as a result of Globalization that showed in the novel
“Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.

2. Social gap between middle class and upper class as seen in the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.
3. The effect of environment to Asian people culture as seen in the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.
4. Hybridity reflected in major characters of the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.
5. Kinds of Mimicry shown by the main characters of the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.

1.3. Limitation of Problems

From the problems stated above, the researcher limited into two main problems that will be discussed in the paper:

1. Hybridity reflected towards the characters in the novel Crazy Rich Asian by Kevin Kwan.
2. Kinds of Mimicry shown by the main characters of the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.

1.4. Formulation of Problems

The researcher formulates the problems as follow:

1. How hybridity reflected towards the major characters in the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan?
2. How mimicry due to migration and environment shown in the novel Crazy Rich Asian by Kevin Kwan?

1.5. Objective of the Research

The objective of the research are:

1. To analyze out what types of hybridity found in the major characters of the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.
2. To figure out kinds of mimicry shown by the major characters in the novel “Crazy Rich Asian” by Kevin Kwan.

1.6. Significance of the Research

There are two significance in this research,

1. Theoretical significance

With this research, the researcher hopes that it can help other researchers with their research in these studies. The researcher also expected this research is able to give some knowledge and become a reference to other researchers who want to research this topic. By reading this paper, the researcher hopes that readers will more understand about subaltern that can be found in the novel.

2. Practical significance

The researcher hope that by conducting this research, this research can be useful for the readers and give more knowledge about the impact of crisis cultural identity to a person culture. Furthermore, the researcher hope that this research can also become a reference for other researchers and it will help other researchers to know more about the subject.

1.7. Definition of Key term

Postcolonialism : The ways race, ethnicity, culture, and human rights represent after colonization ended. The term postcolonialism used to refer any literature work that has relation with the colonialism era.

Hybridity : Hybridity is a process of combining two different cultures into a new culture that is a mix between old and foreign cultures. In hybridity, the old culture does not disappear entirely but the old culture mix with the foreign culture and create new culture that is the combination between the old and foreign.

Mimicry : Mimicry is an act of imitating and taking other cultures into their own culture as the way to get accepted by people from other cultures. Mimicry can be seen as an attempt to survive from a colonizer, in order to not get discriminate by the colonizer, people from colonized country did mimicry act to get accepted by the colonizer.

Ambivalence : Ambivalence is the way colonizer and colonized recognize one another. Ambivalence can be seen as the way of thinking between colonizers and colonized, they wanted to be recognize by one another so they did mimicry act to mimic other culture. However they also still wanted to hold their own culture.