

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

A cultural theorist, Stuart Hall said that “A question of identity is so problematic”¹. The expatriate children might support Hall’s explanation of cultural identity. The expatriate children or mostly known as Third Culture Kid often experience what they mostly calls as identity crisis. In Japan, this Third Culture Kid or its Japanese term calles as *kikokushij* mostly having dilemma toward their cultural identity and used to get marginalized when they back to their homeland due to their native people see them as “the other”². Then those perspectives arouse the quest toward the Third Culture Kids’ cultural identity and their dilemmatic questions popped up such as, “*where do they prefer and where they belong to?*”.

Ruth Ozeki is a third generation of Japanese-American immigrant who depicts about Third Culture Kid’s problematical life in her novel titled *A Tale for the Time Being*. The protagonist, a modern heroin named Naoko Yasutani who considers as a Third Culture Kid whom her dilemma caused by the clash of two contradicting cultures—America and Japan which lead her into liminal state—and social exile like bullying she received from her Japanese classmate. Ozeki reflect this Third Culture Kid dilemma toward Naoko Yasutani when she back to her

¹Stuart. Hall And Paul du. Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity, 1st ed.* (London: Sage. 1996). 4

² Roger Goodman, Ceri Peach, Ayumi Takenaka and Paul White, “*Global Japan :The experience of Japan’s New Immigrant and Overseas Community* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003) 189.

homeland Japan and how she being marginalized or bullied by her Japanese classmates.

Additionally, the term Third Culture Kid is coined by Ruth Hill Useem, a sociologist and professor from Michigan States University, the terminology that she coined in 1950s refers to expatriate/repatriate children or according to David C. Pollock is “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside their parent’s culture(s).”³. In addition, the protagonist in this novel is a Japanese girl who spent most of her formative years in California since she was a baby. One day her father is fired from his company which located in Silicon Valey, the company burst, he lost all of his savings, visas, and forced to go back to their homeland. During in her homeland, Naoko Yasutani having difficult time in re-assimilated with her original culture and end up experiencing social exile from Japanese society, specifically becomes a victim of bullying from her Japanese classmates.

Ozeki’s third novel, *A Tale for the Time Being*(2013) contains a meta-textual display⁴, that highlights relationship between author and reader. The noveltells about a writer named Ruth (a second narrator and a semi-fictional character of Ruth Ozeki itself), who finds a HelloKitty lunch box wrapped by a freezer bag in a shoreline of Vancouver island,Canada. The Hello Kitty lunch box contains a diary of a young girl named Naoko Yasutani; through that diary Nao

³ David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken, *Third Culture Kid: Growing Up Among Worlds* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2009) 13.

⁴Rocio G. Davis, “Fictional Transit and Ruth Ozeki’s *A Tale for the Time Being*”.*Biography* 38 (2015): 89.s

narrates her stories as a repatriated kid who moved back from California to the country of her origin, Japan. As mentioned in Goodreads site *A Tale for the Time Being* has received lots of prestigious awards, such as it put as a shortlist in *Man Booker Prize* in 2013, in *Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction* in 2013, as a best novel in *the Kitschiest Red Tentacle* in 2013, *New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice* in 2013, *Goodreads Choice Award for Best Fiction (nominee)* in 2013, *Association for Asian American Studies, Creative Writing: Prose Book Award*, 2015, *International IMPAC Dublin Award (long-lost)*, 2015, *Yasnaya Polyana Literary Award for Foreign Literature, Leo Tolstoy Museum & Estate*, 2015, and many more.

After reading the novel thoroughly and deeply, the writer found that the novel contains a post-colonial issue and decided to delve the novel using Post-colonial criticism because its concepts are really suits in explaining the Third Culture Kids dilemmatic cultural identity phenomenon. The protagonist who has successfully in Americanized herself, began her conflict as she arrived in her homeland Japan and having trouble in adjusting herself with its culture that finally affect her identity as a Third Culture Kid, whom she affirmed by saying that, *In Japan, they have special private catch-up schools for kikokushijo⁵ kids like me* (42), who mostly deals with identity dilemma because they often feels trap in between two cultures or even more.

⁵Repatriated children, Japanese term of Third Culture Kid.

A Tale for the Time Being also engaged with bullying issue as the impact of living abroad, specifically in America, the writer tries to relate the issue to the protagonist and how does it affected her social-psychological condition. As someone who has spent most of her formative years in America, the gap between the culture of America and Japan is blatantly different in many aspects, these differences make Naoko having a hard time to assimilate in Japanese culture and denied her half identity as a Japanese. As the consequent, she is bullied physically and verbally, her Japanese classmates call her *gaijin* or foreigner, and mock the English language she uses, this condition makes Naoko even more uncomfortable with Japanese culture, she becomes depressed, facing many problems in Japan she decides to commit suicide and keeps thinking about her happy life in Sunnyvale, California. Thus from all of the explanation above the writer would like to conduct a research entitled; **Identity Crisis and its Formation to a Third Culture Kid as reflected in Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being***

1.2 Identification of the Problem

A Tale for the Time Being discusses the experiences of Naoko Yasutani as a Third Culture Kid that raised and grew up like a second generation in America who repatriated to her homeland, Japan. This novel shows the problem of identity crisis caused by mixing culture that brought her into an in between space (liminal state) and bullying as the impact of social exile from Japanese society. Thus, Ozeki depicted that those experiences that she experienced in her homeland made Nao tried to escapes from reality by surfing on the internet all day long, reading

manga (comics), watching anime (Japanese animations), writing diary, but at the end, she needs to deal with reality by solving her problems such as, fighting her bullies friends, finding her cultural identity, and finding a place where she prefers and belongs to.

As the whole, from the description above the writer would like to examine the identity crisis and its formation that is experienced by the protagonist and its factors that caused it. After the writer reading the book completely and deeply, the writer found the causes which make the protagonist experiences the identity crisis because of those several factors the writer had mentioned above. Thus, the talks about identity crisis of a Third Culture Kid and its formation are important to lift up because it could help to identify who they are in the middle of society and how they positioned themselves.

1.3 The Scope of the Research

The writer would like to create four main scopes to limit this research in order to not being too broad. From the elaborated issues, the writer finally divided them into these following questions;

1. What is Third Culture Kid?
2. What are the factors that create the identity crisis and its formation to a Third Culture Kid?
3. How Third Culture Kid defines her cultural identity?

1.4 Objectives of the Research

The first aim of this research is to examine Naoko's Yasutani identity crisis who identified as a TCK which caused by mixing culture that make her feels trap in between of two culture, and the failure of her re-entry process that makes her being bullied and received social exile from her Japanese classmate. The second aim of this analysis is to examine of how her cultural identity change upon her return to Japan, she choose neither America nor Japan as a place to stay. Thus, this condition represents what mostly Third Culture Kid feels. On the other hand, in this novel Ozeki challenges the hegemony's influence of both superior as well as ex-imperialist country which is America and Japan through the protagonist's cultural identity choice. In addition, this study offers a new perspective from a TCK that represented by Ozeki—known as a transnational writer—through Naoko Yasutani as a female heroine in *A Tale for the Time Being*, hence this study enrich the research collection of literary criticism for a twenty first century or contemporary fiction.

1.5 Review of Previous Studies

In affirming the research, it will be helped by journals, and articles from official sites which is related with the object of the research, among of those sources the writer finally found some valid data related with the topic.

In the collection of essay, *Medirian* Vol. 13 No.02, written by Marlo Starr an English PhD student from University of Atlanta, United State, titled; *Beyond Machine Dreams : Zen, Cyber, and Transnational Feminism in Ruth Ozeki's A Tale for the Time Being (2016)* says that the protagonist in *A Tale for the Time*

Being “testout a variety identities”⁶to escape from her problems. Starr states two approaches that taken by Nao for escaping from her problems. First she went to cyberspace, created her own identity who different than her offline self, second she attempts the Zen practice, learning Buddhism from her great-grandmother, Jiko. Though she failed to apply those two approaches because even people in the online world could smell her weirdness, and she denied the non-dualistic thinking in Buddhism. Lastly Starr mentions that Nao writes her journal as an anti-blog from the online world, pointed her diary to one special person, which is it happened in Ruth’s hand. Hence, the diary creates a bound between Ruth and Nao, they share some similar story which is it created the transnational boundary between two Ruth and Nao which Starr represents them as a two transnational feminist figures.

Different from Starr, a professor of English and American Literature from University of Navarra, Rocio G. Davis analyses the fictionalization of autobiographical genre in his journal article entitled *Fictional Transits and Ruth Ozeki’s A Tale for the Time Being* that was published in 2015 by Biography Vol. 38.1. The aim of his analysis is “to look at Ozeki revisits the idea of a writer creating a reader, highlights levels of meta-textual performances and uses the implied author as a narrative strategy” (89). In the twenty-first century the fictionalization of autobiographical genre grower as David mentioned, he takes the work of J. M. Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello* (2003) or *A Diary of Bad Year* (2007) and Davide Eggers’s *A Heart-breaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000)

⁶ Starr 100.

as an example of this genre. *A Tale for the Time Being* is a contemporary work which also categorized as a semi-autobiographical genre, on his research Davis focuses on relation between two narrators who position themselves as reader (Ruth) and writer (Nao). In sum, the contemporary autobiographical genre is different from the twenty century because it uses author's self-conscience to construct their self as a character in the novel, Ozeki playing with the narrative form in order to make "the reader participates in the process of the textual construction generates more complex epistemological possibilities for the text and heightens the reader enjoyment"⁷.

An English literature researcher from University of Turku, Daniel McKay relates the works between two Asian American author, Ruth Ozeki and Kaerii Sakamoto with the titled; *The Right Stuff; Kamikaze Pilot in Kaeri Sakamoto's "One Hundred Million Hearts" and Ruth Ozeki "A Tale for the Time Being"*. This journal generally talks about the perspective of Kamikaze pilot— Special Attack Corp —during the World War II. The writer here would like to focus her research to Daniel McKay point of view toward the Kamikaze pilots especially toward Haruki, Naoko's uncle in *A Tale for the Time Being*. As Daniel McKay says there are endless discourses which talk about the Kamikaze pilot both form writers from East and West perspectives. *A Tale for the Time Being* is sophisticated; it talks about another perspective of a Kamikaze pilot named Haruki Yasutani toward World War II. His narrative is not told from Haruki itself. During her holiday in her Jiko's temple, Naoko met the spirit of her uncle during

⁷ Davis 92.

the Obon festival⁸, from the encounter with her uncle's ghost, Naoko started to dig his story through Jiko and the secret diary and letters he left. McKay said that during the World War II, the graduated students insisted to become the soldiers, the Shinto's doctrine⁹ taught during the war, like the soldiers not entirely die but they will reincarnate in the afterlife. As a Kamikaze pilot, Haruki rejects the war itself, as Jiko voices "Haruki never hated America. He hated war. He hated fascism. He hated the government and its bullying politics of imperialism and capitalism and exploitation. He hated the idea of killing people he could not kill". From the journal wrote by McKay, *A Tale for the Time Being* also voices the unheard story from an individual perspective of a kamikaze pilot, and how it passed by old generation (Jiko) through young generation (Naoko).

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Post-colonial Criticism

Post-colonial study has been gaining its prominence in 1970s though, this approach first used in 1990s to voice "the anti-colonial political movement", after World War II ended (Tyson : 418). According to Ashcroft et al in *Post-colonial studies : Key Concepts* says that *Post-colonialism deals with the effect of colonialization on culture and society* (2007 : 168), or Post-Colonial is the study

⁸Japanese-Guide states that Obon Festival is a Buddhist event that arranged one in a year to celebrate their ancestors, Japanese believed that during this festival the spirit of their ancestors return to the world to visit their families.

⁹ Shinto is the major polytheistic religion in Japan. The word Kamikaze is derived from Kami which means devine (gods). Japanese highly value morals and norms in their life according to Shinto's; including Kamikaze pilots itself that they would die for it, like sacrifice their life in a war is an honorable deed for them.

of residual effect from colonized era. The type of colonial effect is not only in physical term like invading a new land but nowadays it appears through a smooth way, like spreading the culture through media or investing the money to undeveloped country. In *Globalization and Post-Colonialism: Hegemony and Resistance and the Twenty-First Century*, Krishna says;

An important aspect of postcolonialism is its sensitivity to issues of cultural domination : economically developed and dominant nations invariably set standards and constitute the model against which others are evaluated or evaluate themselves. (2009 : 4)

In *Critical Theory Today*, Tyson define Post-colonial criticism is “both a subject of matter and a theoretical framework” (418). He adds that Postcolonial criticism as a subject of matter “analyze literature produced by culture that develop in response to colonialism”, and as theoretical framework it “seek to understand the operation—politically, socially, culturally, and physiologically—of colonialist and anti-colonialist ideology” (418). In Postcolonial literary criticism the researchers mostly relate about author’s works that have colonized or colonizer background in their analysis, and how does it affect to its characters.

Hibridity and Liminality

The concept of Hybridity has become a buzzword in Postcolonial literary criticism since 19th century. This concept originally come from biology field which later it is used in explaining the mixing phenomena such as in language and

other cultural aspects. In the post-colonial criticism, mixing culture refers to the encounter of two cultures between colonized and colonizer. It is used as an anti-colonial tool regarding identity, culture and language in countering of the imperialist discourses. According to Ashcoft et al, “hybridity frequently used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply “cross-cultural exchange” (2007 :136).

The central theorist in Postcolonial studies, HomiBhabha referred Hybridity as an in between space or liminal state, he exemplified this concept with a stairwell in explaining the phenomenon of in between as the effect of the encounter of two culture or other binary opposition such as between colonizer and colonized (the others), West and East, *migrant and other post-colonial subjects* (Kuorttir and Nyman : 2007).

Taking a closer look to Liminality, which the term derived from the Latin *limen* meaning threshold. This term first introduced by an ethnologist named Arnold Van Gennep in 1909 which inserted by Bhabha under Post-colonial realm. As RatanChakraborty explains in his journal Liminality¹⁰ is;

The term threshold evokes images of entering and leaving passages crossing and change. It marks the point at which choices and decisions must be made in order to move on, and it would be unusual to think of it as a place to stay, a place of permanent existence. (145)

In Bhaba’s *The Location of Culture*, he also refers liminality as in between space

¹⁰ Arup, RatanChackraborty “Liminality in Post-colonial Theory : A Journey from Arnold Van Gennep to Homi K Bhabha”. (2017) 145.

or a border lives, “it is in this sense that the boundary becomes the place form which something begins...” (5), which means that in this space the fluidity of culture and identity is shown and it redefined in everyday lives, where identity transformation takes place.

Cultural Identity

In the novel it is not clear that whether the protagonist finally choose Japan, Canada or French as her current home, but the writer assumes that the author has given such a clue to the readers to draw their own conclusion. In order to make it clear the writer will analyze it through Stuart Hall’s concept. His point of view about cultural identity can be explained from his concept that written in an essays titled *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, he divided that at least the are two perspective in viewing the figuration of identity;

1. Identity of Being

Identity of being can not be separated from historical experience, Hall says that Identity of being is “a shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common... it belongs to the future as much as to the past” (1993 : 223).

2. Identity of Becoming

Identity of becoming is not something static, it can be shaped from outer influence, such as the person moves to a new place and the systems or norms from

that new place influenced them and it could be redefined their identity if they has lived there for a long time. On his essays Hall says that “Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well of ‘being’ (1993 : 225).”

1.7 Methods of the Research

1.7.1 Collecting Data

In collecting data for this research, the writer applies library research method by reading several related books to support this analysis. The primary data is the novel itself, *A Tale for the Time Being*. The other is the secondary data, which is obtained and collected by books, articles, journals, or essays which supports the research and also data that are browsed from internet to find other relevant sources.

1.7.2 Analyzing Data

The writer read and analysis the primary data deeply by using Postcolonial’s concepts which are *hybridity* and *liminality*, marginality, cultural identity’s concept form Bhabha and Stuart Hall. In analyzing this research, the writer finds the relation between the issue and theory and then describes descriptively about the life of Naoko Yasutani who representes theThird Culture Kids dilemma toward their cultural identity.

1.7.3 Presenting Data

In the next step of analyzing the novel, the writer tries to explicate and analyze the data by using my opinion and interpretation. At the end, the writer descriptively presents the data in the form of analysis and describes the phenomenon of identity crisis and its formation through Naoko Yasutani in *A Tale for the Time Being*.

