

HYBRIDITY IN SHILPI SOMAYA GOWDA'S *SECRET DAUGHTER*

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Abstrak

Studi ini berkaitan dengan dua kebudayaan antara Asia dan Amerika melalui tradisi dan adat istiadat kedua tokoh utama dalam novel Shilpi Somaya Gowda berjudul *Secret Daughter: Secret Daughter*. Tradisi digambarkan oleh Krishnan, lelaki India memutuskan untuk bermigrasi ke Amerika demi mendapatkan pendidikan dan pekerjaan yang lebih baik. Sebagai generasi pertama yang meninggalkan tanah airnya, sangat susah bagi Krishnan untuk melepas kebiasaan dan semua adat yang didapat dan dijalankannya. Pemikiran tradisional membuat Krishnan sangat tegas dengan apa yang dilakukan keluarganya meskipun istrinya adalah orang Amerika dan anaknya, Asha yang tumbuh dan berkembang di Amerika. Konflik mulai terjadi ketika Asha sebagai generasi kedua tidak begitu suka dan memahami adat tradisional yang selalu diterapkan Krishnan. Akan tetapi, Krishnan tetap mengikuti dan menghargai semua adat di Amerika sebagai tuan rumah. Studi ini mengungkap tradisi India Krishnan dan modernitas Barat Asha menggunakan teori *post colonial* dari Homi Bhabha. Studi ini menggunakan teori tersebut, sebab Krishnan menunjukkan performa sebagai seorang kepala keluarga dan mengimitasi cara Barat ketika itu berhubungan dengan kebebasan. Si suami menunjukkan caranya untuk tetap mempertahankan adat istiadatnya. Analisis studi ini menunjukkan pengaruh modernitas terhadap kedua tokoh: adanya adopsi dan adaptasi terhadap budaya Barat dan pencampuran kultur India dan Barat. Secara keseluruhan, analisis membuktikan teori Homi Bhabha mengenai korelasi dan koeksistensi Barat dan Timur yang muncul dalam novel. Interpretasi modernitas mengenali kesalahan konsep kemanusiaan dan mengurai perubahan baru yang signifikan yang lebih baik mengenai detail kehidupan.

Kata kunci: *Tradisi, modernitas, post kolonialisme.*

Abstract

This study deals with two cultures between Asia and America via the traditions and customs of the two main characters in the novel of Shilpi Somaya Gowda entitled *Secret Daughter: Secret Daughter*. Tradition was described by Krishnan, an Indian boy decided to migrate to America in order to get an education and a better job. As the first generation to leave their homeland, very difficult for Krishnan to remove all the habits and customs that come and run. Traditional thinking makes Krishnan very firmly with what his family even though his wife is American and her son, Asha growing and developing in America. The conflict began when Asha as the second generation is not so fond of and understand the traditional customs that have always applied Krishnan. However, Krishnan still follow and appreciate all the custom in America as the host. These studies reveal the Indian tradition and Western modernity Asha Krishnan using post-colonial theory of Homi Bhabha. This study uses the theory, because Krishnan performed as a head of the family and imitate the Western way when it relates to freedom. The husband shows how to retain custom. The analysis of this study show the impact of modernity on two figures: the adoption and adaptation to Western culture and blending Indian and Western culture. Overall, the analysis proves the theory of Homi Bhabha on the correlation and the coexistence of West and East that appear in the novel. Interpretation of modernity recognize the concept of human error and parse the new changes significantly better about the details of life.

Keywords: *Tradition, modernity, post-colonialism.*

INTRODUCTION

To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life. In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound

perplexity of living (Bhabha, 1994, p. 161)¹.

This study uses the novel of Shilpi Somaya Gowda, an Indian author lived in Toronto following her parents who migrated there from Mumbai. Shilpi Somaya Gowda's *Secret Daughter* is a novel which lifted the theory of hybridity in one of the characters in the novel. There is something interesting thing when discussing

¹ Walter Benjamin in Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*.

hybridity, because hybridity is one word which refers to basic sense to mixture. Its contemporary uses are scattered across numerous academic disciplines and is prominent in popular culture. The term of hybridity is about the emergence of new cultural forms from multiculturalism and as the point at which two or more cultures meet and it is also where most problems occur.

Robert J. C. Young (1995: 5) in his book, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, explains the term of hybridity that in the nineteenth century it was used to refer to a physiological phenomenon; in the twentieth century it has been reactivated to describe a cultural one. It means that someone who has an hybrid identity must stand with both feet to run two cultures simultaneously, because hybridity is a situation of doubleness. Hybridity also entered into the study of postcolonialism. The term postcolonialism encompasses "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft et.al. 2002 : 2). The wide definition of postcolonial a possibility of providing various other fields to mingle with postcolonial theory. Post-colonial theory is arguably one of the most variation field and discussed once debated in literary and cultural studies (Ashcroft et al. 2002: 193). The term of hybridity commonly refers to the transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization (Ashcroft et al. 2007: 108)

The setting of the novel itself is in the United States where the existence of West people and their culture does affect the society. The story in the novel has given a clear understanding regarding the progress of Indian immigrant. This novel offers an understanding of the theme of post colonialism in such different way of narrative telling, under the relationship between characters and the global movement of modernity. There are many different factors which cause the movement of the immigrant from their homeland to another country, it can happen voluntarily or forcibly. Some people move from their homeland because they really want it. They prefer to move although their homeland is in a conclusive condition. The depiction of both tradition and modernity can be seen throughout the characters' way of thinking; their attitude towards family members; and their attitude towards each other.

This study uses the theory of post colonialism or post colonial theory of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) that witnesses the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation of social authority within the modern world order, within the ideological and geopolitical divisions of India and US. In the most literary works; moreover in the postcolonial studies, the West represents modernity while the East represents tradition. The play of colonial power coordinates knowledge or ideology with the strategy of differentiation – between the East and the West, defence, fixation – from tradition to modernity, and hierarchization (high/low,

ours/theirs) (Bhabha, 1994, p. 73). Post colonialism concerns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences. Here, even though the character of Krishnan is originally India, the migration over 10 years in America is considered has a big impact to his character and belief. He still maintain his own culture deeply. The influences of modernity then will be explored by the act of the characters in the novel – depend on their attitudes toward modernity itself.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Cultural Maintenance

Increase or decrease in someone's cultural identity is social factors that affect the maintenance of minority cultural system. The minority always make their own group in order to feel comfortable as the finite. It could be that they live and work in respectable society and create a fringe or lower class, and thus they are often associated with race. The limit has implied that the political nature of the attack directly into the personal and social identity. (Spencer, 2006: 8). People who tend to have contact with the relationship between newness and conservation, cross-cultural adaptation and identity maintenance experience in their effort at determining their own future, sustaining cultural maintenance and obtaining self sufficiency and independence within the prevailing social and economic system (Wall, 2010: 33).

Using the host language as a way to survive while respecting the host is the right way to maintain the identity of hybridity. Because language can unite a wide variety of countries and cultures. But considering all the memory is also required for immigrants who live far from their homeland. Collective memory is a part of the dynamic of culture, continues to evolve and change (Hannan, 2009: 7).

It means that tradition of someone is wholly established in a society and it is believed over generations. It constructs a personal way of thinking, attitude, and behavior. Based on Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), tradition stands on the point when it becomes a rule for particular societies. It contains the details of life: where you can sit, or not; how you can live, or not; what you can learn, or not; who you can love, or not (Bhabha, 1994, p. 15).

Cultural Identity

The establishment of identity is a never ending process. Both self identity and social identity are actually influenced by the condition of one's environment and his/her interactions with the other societies. Stuart Hall recommends two kinds of process in defining the cultural identity, which are essential cultural identity and nonessential cultural identity. Essential cultural identity is

formed by the background resemblance which society has in a specific place, based on the culture, ethnic, and race. Whereas, the second formation is nonessential cultural identity that concerns about the differences (Hall, 1992: 224). In the process of conformation of the identity, the postcolonial society tends to go back to their origin cultural identity. Hall in Loomba argues “a sort of “one true self” ... which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in a common (1998: 181)”.

Identity is not a result of a process, yet it is a process. Hall emphasizes that identity is a “production” which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation (Hall, 1990: 222). The cultural identity reflects the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us with stable, unchanging, continuous actual history (Hall, 1990: 223). Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture (Hall, 1990: 226). Description of history the ancestors declared people continue to expect them to maintain their cultural identity constantly.

Cultural identity “is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’” (Hall, 1990: 225). It is not a genuine insight. There is a cultural identity in history. Cultural identity will change continuously. It is not permanent as long as there is culture and power. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (Hall, 1990: 225).

Cultural identity crisis can be resulted by things that are very detrimental to the human.

forced migration, either as a quest for employment, including indentured servitude, or as the result of enslavement, scattered large numbers of peoples around the globe, and large populations of their descendants have remained in the Diaspora, or separated from their original homeland (Tyson, 1999: 421).

Identity of past history cannot be separated from the memory that has been embedded in the homeland. “Memory is flexible and adaptive, and its contradictions are inherent in its nature. We remember what we wish to remember or what we need to remember, and our memories evolve with time and with our present circumstances (Nguyen, 2009: 6)

ANALYSIS

First Generation

Hybrid identity is first generation is represented by the real Indian in the novel, Krishnan. Krishnan is a first generation. He was born and growth in India, and after understanding and run so many Indian traditions in his homeland that is so attached to him, he went to America to undergo a career as a doctor and marry American girls. Quite a lot of what he knows about America as his wife comes from there, but he still retains the culture of India which has been brought and already deeply ingrained in him.

After Kris has a daughter, his nature to maintaining and preserve the customs in India are increasingly being conducted primarily on his daughter. Especially in the case of compliance, because the Indian culture to respect and obey the parents is very upheld. For instance, in India, the cultural values emphasize that the elderly members of the family be treated with “honor and respect (Chadha, 1999: 8).

Kris want to Asha become a successful person like him and obey what his parents say, as already done by Kris on his parents, because Asha always busy being a journalist who is not supported by Kris.

Your grades have been suffering ever since you started spending so much time on that school paper. Maybe it’s **time to cut back, so you can focus on your studies.** (Gowda, 2010: 149)

That is always done by the first generation, wherever they live and whatever happens they will retain their own culture, because they were born and grew up there. It is very ingrained, they are the first people who went out of his country and live in a new country that has more power.

Second Generation

Hybrid identity in second hybridity generations is represented by Krishnan’s daughter, Asha. Asha is a second hybridity generation. She was born in India but she was raised in America. She was taught how to be an Indian and also taught how to be an Americans by their environment. In other word, she live in two cultures, Indian’s culture and America’s culture. She has her childhood, teenage and become an adult in America. Most of her life was spent in America. Thus her thoughts was mostly influenced by America’s culture than Indian’s culture. Therefore, this generation will never perceive of them as real Indian because they are more comfortable in identifying their selves both as India and American.

Based on John McLeod, although the migrant children enjoy better settlement and place in new country, they still identify their selves as their origin country because “their sense of identity borne from living in a diaspora community [is] influenced by the past migrant history of their parents or grandparents” (McLeod, 2000:207).

Asha feels that her life in India is bad. India is like a nightmare. Asha's thought is revealed by following quotation.

She thinks of her childhood in California, her bedroom twice the size of those Dharavi homes, her Harper School uniform and Ivy League education. **All those years spent wondering about her parents. Maybe they did her a favor.** (Gowda, 2010: 319)

Asha who loves her life in America justifies that the second hybrid generation feels more affected to America culture. As her thought that America is a better place than her homeland, she prefer to America's culture to Indian's culture.

When she was visited and a walk for the first time, Asha felt uncomfortable with the situation that exists in India. Meena his friend invited him to eat in a place that is very different than the restaurants that exist in America he used to visit.

"This? This is we're having lunch?" Asha looks at the street vendor and then at Meena in disbelief. "I ... I don't think I should do this. I'm not supposed to eat street food ..." (Gowda, 2010: 207-208).

Second generation of hybridity have different point of view in identifying their identity. This generation has modern notion of home. They think that their home is not India, because their home now is America. Their personalities also get many influences from America culture. They find many new things, chance and happiness in America. Thus this generation prefers identifying their selves as India-America than real India.

Indian Cultural Values

Even though the main character, Krishnan living in the US for a long time, work and build a family in America has not made his spirit faded to still trying to maintain his Indian culture. He not only practice the Indian cultural values within himself but also within his family even his wife is an American. In his family, he trying to maintain his Indian culture through the Indian cultural values by the interaction among the others Indian people around where he live such in his neighbours, friends, and also his daughter's friends.

Because the customs of India which is always applied by Krishnan at home, Asha felt confined. She lived in America that is synonymous with freedom and a party for a youth. Many of her friends are invited to go to a party in the middle of the night, traveling out of town, but because Krishnan very uphold the customs of India, Krishnan always prohibit Asha.

I want to go to parties and be a normal teenager. Why you can't understand that? Why don't you ever understand me? (Gowda, 2010: 149)

Asha always feel constrained by any rules made by her father, Kris. She wanted to be like her friends who live like American girls, can enjoy the excitement of a party with no curfew. But it cannot be done, because Kris did not want to Asha be strangers in the family.

CONCLUSION

To revise the problem of global space from the postcolonial perspective is to move the location of cultural difference away from the space of demographic *plurality* to the border line negations of cultural translation (Bhabha, 1994, p. 223).

. In the novel *Secret Daughter*, Gowda tells about the life and struggle of Indian American in the US. Living in a new country is difficult. Indian Americans have to survive in a place where cultures are totally different from their home country in India. Their Indian cultural values do not seem to fit the American life style. The significant differences make them face a very difficult choice. They have to choose whether they accept the American culture or keep their Indian culture in order to survive in their new country.

The Indian American characters in the novel of *Secret Daughter* can be considered as tough characters, we can see how hybridity is depicted in Shilpi Somaya Gowda's *Secret Daughter*. They always try to maintain their Indian culture although they live in the US now. They do not easily follow what society suppose them to do. They try to find a way to understand their problem. They do not have to choose either they have to live with Indian cultural values or American cultural values. They do not want to get rid of the past by removing their Indian cultural values. Through the Indian cultural values and the memory of homeland, the Indian Americans are still able to maintain their Indian cultural values.

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