

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five subchapters. They are background of the study, statements of the research question, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a part of culture that grows and develops in society. Authors are members of society and they create a literary work by taking life experiences such as thoughts about the moral teachings of life and then give it back to society. The authors do a deep contemplation to understand the nature of life through the creative process, then they create a literature as a reflection of real life. Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, Peter Brooker in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* state,

“literature was universal and expressed general truths about human life. . . [and] talked comfortable good sense about the writer's personal experience, the social and historical background of the work, the human interest, imaginative ‘genius’ and poetic beauty of great literature”. (2005:1)

The quotation above means that the literature is a life portrait or image of the real world. Life and literature have relationship that cannot be separated, because literature is the reflection of life.

There are so many kinds of literary works, such as poem, drama, short story and novel. Novel is defined by Eagleton as “ a piece of prose fiction of a

reasonable length” (2005:1). The minimum length of the novel is thirty thousand words or one hundred pages. Meanwhile, according to Merriam Webster Dictionary, novel is “an invented prose narrative that is usually long and complex and deals especially with human experience through a usually connected sequence of events” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/novel>). Many novels usually tell the story of human life to interact with others and the environment. The author tries as much as possible to give the reader an image of real life or fiction story through the stories contained in the novel. One of the topic of novel which can describe a real life in the story is about colonial era.

In colonial era, during nineteenth century, Britain has the largest imperial power, and in the early twentieth century, one quarter of the earth’s surface ruled by British Empire, including New Zealand, India, Ireland, Australia, Canada and significant holdings in Africa, the Middle East, South America, and Southeast Asia. The domination of British Colonial continued until the end of World War II, “when India gained independence in 1947, and other colonies gradually followed suit. By 1980 Britain had lost all, but a few of its colonial holdings” (Tyson, 1999:364).

Related to the previous explanation, a novel that tells story about colonial era is *The Inheritance of Loss*. This is the second novel by Indian author Kiran Desai. Kiran Desai was born on 3rd September, 1971. She is the daughter of Anita Desai, an Indian English author. She is a diaspora Indian author that settled in the United States. *The Inheritance of Loss* first published in 2006. It won a

number of awards including: Man Booker Prize for that year, the 2006 Vodafone Crossword Book Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award in 2007. *The Inheritance of Loss* is chosen as the source of data because the theme is closely related to colonialism and there is the resistance of character against the oppressor.

The Inheritance of Loss is set in 1980s, the novel tells story of Sai Mistry. She is an orphan because her parents died. She left her school and lived with her grandfather, Jemubhai Patel in Cho Pyu, Kalimpong. She lives with her grandfather but she feels depressed and not free. Jemubhai is an Indian who has lost his Indian identity, he becomes like a Westerner. He hated his family, community and everyone for not being British, because he feels more dignified and superior for being British.

Moreover, Nimi, Jemubhai's wife also experienced the oppression and the lack of freedom. Nimi is an Indian woman who is innocent and traditional. Jemubhai embed stereotypes that the West is better than the East to Sai and Nimi. Both, Sai and Nimi do resistance as a form of response to Jemubhai.

Based on explanation above, this study is going to analyze Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* by applying postcolonial criticism. According to Bill Ashcroft in *Postcolonial Studies* (2007:168), "postcolonial criticism (or postcolonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies". It means promoting the study of the effect of postcolonial or colonial influence on the culture or particular community in a way to express the result of colonialism.

It is supported by Anshuman Prasad that stated in his book *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis*:

“Postcolonial theory and criticism (or postcolonialism, in short) represents an attempt to investigate the complex and deeply fraught dynamics of modern Western colonialism and anticolonial resistance, and the ongoing significance of the colonial encounter for people’s lives both in the West and the non-West.” (2003:5)

It means postcolonial criticism investigates the effect or influence caused by colonizer and how the resistance of colonized against colonialism to fight for its existence.

In addition, “Postcolonial studies critically analyses the relationship between colonizer and colonized from the earliest days of exploration and colonization.”(Bertens, 2014:192). In the relationship between colonizer and colonized, it will create imbalanced relationship in the form of domination-submission. Edward Said gives explanation about the relationship between colonizer and colonized, domination and submission, as he calls Occident and Orient. His theory namely Orientalism. “Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1978:3). Said argues that most European colonists saw East as “the other” in explaining themselves. Orientalism became an ideology that makes the West as the center in relation to the East. This is done to distinguish the West as the superior or the holder of power with countries called Orient. The colonizer as the Occident that dominate the Orient will discriminate and make negative stereotypes to the colonized. Leela Gandhi states, “These stereotypes, Said tells us, confirm the

necessity and desirability of colonial government by endlessly confirming the positional superiority of the West over the positional inferiority of the East.”(1998:77). And the result of colonizer’s domination is that the colonized people do resistance as a form of response to the colonizer. According to Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*:

“Resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power-“ (1994:110)

It means that resistance is not only in the form opposition but also in the form subversion as ambivalence acts. It is because the colonized do resistance against the colonizer’s authority not only in fight way, but also the colonized can do resistance as ambivalence acts. Ambivalence acts means on the one hand the colonized accept the colonial power, but on the other hand they reject the colonial power by showed the hidden weaknesses in the practice of colonizer’s hibridity.

Moreover, the study on the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai and the study use postcolonial criticism and resistance have been conducted before. The first study was a journal written by Suman Swati and Shuchi Srivasatava in The International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts, and Literature (IMPACT:IJRHAL) ISSN(E): 2321-8878 in 2014 with title “Raju and Rosie, an Epitome of Resistance”. The second previous study was done by David Jefferess, B.A., B.Ed., M.A. from McMaster University in 2003. His study entitled “ Changing the Story: Potcolonial Studies and Resistance”. And the third

previous study was done by Hsi Lin Pan from National Cheng Kung University in 2010. The title of his study is “Performative Others: Sovereign Authority and Subaltern Community in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*”. Meanwhile, this study will be analyzed using the concept of postcolonial resistance in Kiran Desai’s novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, entitled “The Resistance of Female Character in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*”. So, this study is different with the previous study.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of study above, this study analyze postcolonial criticism portrayed on Kiran Desai’s novel “*The Inheritance of Loss*”. Therefore, the researcher formulates the research question as follows:

1. How is the relationship between the colonizer and colonized portrayed by characters in the novel?
2. How is the resistance of female character against the colonizer or oppressor?
3. Why is the resistance portrayed by the female character against the oppressor different?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In line with question above, the purpose of this study are:

1. To elaborate the relation between the colonizer and colonized portrayed by characters in the Kiran Desai’s novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.

2. To elaborate the resistance of female character against the colonizer/oppressor portrayed in the Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.
3. To elaborate the differences of resistance that carried by the female character in the novel.

1.4 The Significances of the Study

This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the result of this study can provide a better understanding on the theory of postcolonial especially the postcolonial resistance. Meanwhile practically, the result of this study is expected to the reader to give awareness of the importance of national identity, the values of freedom and humanism about colonialism that still happen today through the globalization.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is postcolonial theory that focus on postcolonial resistance portrayed in the novel. Meanwhile, this study limits the postcolonial resistance carried by the female character, Sai Mistry and Nimi Patel. The source of data is a novel *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai. The data of this study are the utterances of the characters and author's narration in Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* which indicate postcolonial criticism and resistance.