

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and the last is scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

People will do anything to fulfil their needs in order to get a better life. One of the solutions is by moving to different place. According to a research by United Nations Development Programme entitled *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*, most people do this to get higher incomes, better access to education and health, and improved prospects to their children (2009: 2). This condition makes people have to adapt as soon as possible because every place or every country has their own culture.

Adapting to new culture is not an easy thing to do. There are many barriers to do it, but once they used to it, they already become someone new because of their awareness to their plurality cultures. Their identities are also changing because of two different cultures that they have known are assimilated. This condition at one time can lead them to feel discomfort in their original land, the land they have been immigrated, or even both. Their 'home' where they once were feel comfort, then become their 'unhome'. The complicated cultural

phenomenon above is captured well in one of Ruth Ozeki's novel and makes it interested to be analyzed.

A Tale for the Time Being tells about a sixteen-year-old Japanese girl named Naoko Yasutani who was dying of aching loneliness and her classmates' bullying. She decided to end her life, but before that, she wrote a diary as her last message to the world she has been living. Nao is a native Japanese girl who lived in Tokyo and moved to America when she was baby. Her father, Haruki, is maniac at American things decided to move to Sunnyvale since he was offered a great job there. Their lives were great until one day her father's company were bankrupt and they had nothing to survive on their life in America. This made them back to their native land, Japan.

As Nao transferred to her new school, her classmates bullied her because she cannot speak Japanese fluently. There was lots of both physical and mental bullying they did to Nao. These conditions made her want to escape and go back to Sunnyvale. The crisis made Nao felt more uncomfortable and decided to do suicide since there was no reason to keep her alive. Uncomfortable home and house, classmates bullying, and different culture is enough as the reason of her death.

The first reason of why the writer chooses to analyze Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* is because this novel gives different perspective of the interaction of different culture—Japanese and American culture; homely and unhomely identity—through the identity crisis of a character. Multicultural issue

of West and East, different perspective of Japan and American culture and unhomeliness phenomenon are captured uniquely well in this novel.

The second is because this novel has won many awards like Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction in 2013, Man Booker Prize (shortlist) in 2013, The Sunburst Award for Excellence in Canadian Literature of the Fantastic in 2014, Le Prix Littéraire des Lycéennes (Elle Magazine, France) in 2014, and many more (A Tale for the Time Being, 2014).

There are some previous studies which analyzed Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*. The first is *Narrative Bending: The Subversion of Watakushi Shōsetsu in Ruth Ozeki's A Tale for the Time Being and an abstract from My Amy* (2015) by Michelle Rose Molloy which analyzes fictionality of fiction in the novels. The second is *Teacher, Detective, Witness, Activist: On Pedagogy and Social Justice in Asian Canadian Literature* (2014) by Kabesh Lisa which talks about understanding pursuit of justice from the literary works. The third is *Ruth Ozeki's A Tale for the Time Being: Materiality and Ecospirituality* (2016) written by Begona Simal Gonzalez. The fourth is written by Mojca Krevel entitled *Time Being on Time: A Postmodern Tale* (2016). The fifth entitles *A Tale of the Fractal Being: Literary Subject in Ozeki's A Tale for the Time Being* (2015) by Mojca Krevel & Uroš Mozetič. The sixth is Rocio G. Davis's *Fictional Transits and Ruth Ozeki's A Tale for the Time Being* (2015), and the last is an essay by Alison Gibbons entitled *A Tale for the Time Being: History, Humanity, Hope* (2013). As

the other analysis of Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*, this study completes the previous studies through different lenses.

1.2 Research Questions

The focus of the recent study is to explore the notion of unhomeliness, through Nao's character adopted in the novel of Ruth Ozeki's, *A Tale for the Time Being* and how the novel tells about the triggers of it. The focus will be translated into two questions as follows.

1. How is Nao's unhomeliness depicted in the novel?
2. What are the triggers of the unhomeliness experienced by Nao in the novel?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the research questions above, this study is intended:

1. To explain how Ozeki depicted Nao's unhomeliness in the novel.
2. To find out what are the triggers of the unhomeliness phenomenon experienced by Nao.

1.4 Significances of the Study

There are two kinds significance of this study, those are theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it is expected that this study will give contribution to get better understanding of the definition of Homi K. Bhabha's unhomeliness and what can cause the phenomenon. Practically, the result of this study is expected to make the readers realize about how important tolerance in the cross-cultural world for someone's life.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Using Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness, the analysis found the relation of how different culture and society affected the psychology of a character in the novel and how it is described by the author. Furthermore, this study analyzed about the triggers of unhomeliness phenomenon. This study is limited on analyzing the narration of the narrator and the utterances of all the characters in the novel related to the research questions.