

AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER'S AMBIVALENCE IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S *ALMAYER'S FOLLY*

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Abstract

In this world, many nations experienced colonialism by European countries such as India colonized by British and Indonesia colonized by Dutch. Most of society who lived in postcolonial nation sometimes still confuse about their cultural identity. The researchers is interested to discuss about ambivalence because the researchers believes that the problem of ambivalence often happens among the society of post colonial country. In conducting this research, the researchers used qualitative method to depict clearly about the research finding. Meanwhile to collect the data needed, library research was conducted. The data for this research are dialogues and narration that potrayed ambivalence aspect in *Almayer's Folly* novel. The researchers concludes that Nina, Almayer and Mrs. Almayer are in ambivalence condition that makes them choose the culture that they want by learning and gaining the culture by imitating the culture through other people they knew. Nina suffers ambivalence since she was born from two differences culture of her parent which are Malay and western culture.

Key words: Ambivalence, Hybridity, Mimicry, Post Colonial.

INTRODUCTION

In this world, many nations experience colonialism by European countries such as India colonized by British and Indonesia colonized by Dutch. In *The Empire Writes Back* states that "more than three- quarters of the people living of the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism". It means that there are so many people who were born in this world from generation of colonialism. In other word, there are many people who were born in postcolonial country. Meanwhile, postcolonial has a clear chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period. Postcolonial has been used by literary critics (Kuswoyo, n.d.), (Suprayogi & Novanti, 2021), (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020a), (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020b), (Lennon, 2008), to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization. It means that postcolonial is condition of post-independence of certain nation. Moreover, postcolonial is also used to discuss all study related to the effect of colonization.

Postcolonial literature is writing which has been "affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day". It means that postcolonial literature is all

literature (Rido, Kuswoyo, & Nuansa, 2020), (Rido et al., 2021), (Amelia, 2016), (Rido, Kuswoyo, & Ayu, 2020), (Al Falaq et al., 2021), which its story affected by the process of colonization and the effect of colonization in certain country. In certain condition, many nations got independence and free from colonization, but the society of the postcolonial nation still face another problem which is the crisis in the term of culture (Oktaviani et al., 2020), (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2018), (Qodriani & Wijana, 2020). In other word, society of postcolonial nation still in confusion about their culture and identity because colonialism was not only a power control but it was a cultural control by the colonizer, in which still colonized people tied to. The struggle of the colonized subjects for their cultural identity and the social formation of the new independent nations was an aspect of cultural transformation that led to a conflict with the colonizer's culture. This phenomenon makes them dilemma between keeping their own culture and follow other cultures. However, the contrast feelings that is caused by certain matter, sometimes people or their actions at the same time can be claimed as ambivalence.

The ambivalence is not only because of the relation between the colonized and colonizer. It is also caused by the colonized that wants to be equal as the colonizer. In conclusion, to be equal to the colonizer, the colonized must do such kind of imitation or mimicry. It reflects that the colonized people want to be equal or accepted in their environment which is controlled by the colonizer. As it has been known that the colonized people are powerless than the colonizer, the colonized solves the problem by imitating the colonizer. Beside the colonized people imitating the colonizer culture, colonized people also mix their culture with new culture. The problem of ambivalence also can be seen in the novel of Joseph Conrad entitle *Almayer's Folly* which a story about Nina, a beautiful girl who was born from Kaspar Almayer who is Dutch trader and Malay woman. Nina was sent to Singapore and for ten years was educated as a European. Unexpectedly, Nina returns to Sambir, her mother's hometown because she cannot bear to be treated as a half-caste in a white community. In this moment, Nina encounters with problem about her identity, she confuses about her identity in the term of race, whether she is a Dutch or a Malay Woman.

The researchers are interested to discuss about ambivalence because the researchers believes that the problem of ambivalence often happens among the society of post colonial country. Moreover, the story of *Almayer's Folly* is set in Borneo, one of the biggest islands in Indonesia and because of the setting (Heri Kuswoyo & Wahyudin, 2017), (Kuswoyo &

Wahyudin, 2017), (Kuswoyo & Audina, 2020), (Rido, Kuswoyo, & Ayu, 2020), (Rido, 2015) is closely related toward the real situation of Borneo society which is a society who was born from the mixture of Dutch and Malay races.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ambivalence

Ambivalence in psychoanalysis defines as condition when certain people wanting something but in other also wanting its opposite that is so hard to get. The contrast feeling occurs at the same time, for instance like and dislike toward something at the same time, or hate to do something but must to do something toward object (Gulö, 2018) or action. When the contrast feeling occurs at the same time, this condition creates dilemma (Sari, 2018). From the quotation, ambivalence is contrast feeling or dilemma that occurs at the same time to do the attraction and repulsion from object person or action that characterizes relationship between colonizers and colonized.

Furthermore, the term of ambivalence is adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizers and colonized people. It means that ambivalence is condition when colonizers and colonized people influence each other in the term of language (Qodriani & Wijana, 2020), (Ayu & Pratiwi, 2021), (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020), (Rido & Sari, 2018), (Pustika, n.d.), culture and others. In other word, colonizers can be attracted by colonized people in the term of culture, language or other things but also the colonizers can reject the language, culture of colonized people along the interaction in the time of colonialism or even post colonialism. In other hand, the colonized people also can be attracted by the culture, language of colonizers or the colonized people can reject the culture of the language of the colonizers when they are having interaction along the colonialism or post colonialism.

Besides, ambivalence does not only represent the different thoughts that appears at same time but also can represent the contrast feeling toward society. The racial groups and other social groups mostly represent the colonized groups and colonizer groups. The ambivalence from racial or the colonized groups occur toward the colonizer because of different stereotypes and attitudes between them (Sinaga & Pustika, 2021), (Puspita &

Pranoto, 2021), (Sari, n.d.), (Puspaningtyas & Ulfa, 2021), (Muliyah et al., 2020). The colonizer prejudices toward the colonized which makes the colonized hates them but the colonized also admires the colonizer at the other hand because of the colonizers has great power. Moreover, the ambivalent between the colonized and colonizer can be related to mimicry and hibridity.

Mimicry

Ambivalence cannot be separated from mimicry, it is reflected that colonized people imitated the colonizer, in order want to be equal to the colonizer. The colonized seems similar with the colonizer but the described condition cannot be stated as the same thing. Therefore, mimicry locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behavior of the colonized. The colonized mimics the colonizer is not only to adopt the colonizer culture but also to get equality. Therefore, they can be accepted in the colonizer society. The effective way for the colonized to be accepted in colonizer society is that the colonized have to imitate in many aspects of all things related to the colonizer. For instance, by imitating in fashion aspect, the colonized will wear the dress that the colonizer wears. After imitating from many aspects, the colonized has similar dress, language, and life style with colonizer. The sense of mimicry reflects that the colonized people want to be equal or accepted in their environment which is controlled by the colonizer. By doing imitating fashion, language, and also lifestyle of the colonizer, automatically the colonized people mix their own culture with colonizer culture as called as hybridity.

Hybridity

The intension between the colonizer and the colonized produces what is called as hybridity. In postcolonial discourse it refers to the cross-cultural exchange. It means that hybridity is the result of the intensity of colonizers and the colonized people in the term of cross-cultural exchange. Hybridization can be happen in many aspect such as language, culture, race or even politics. Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical ‘purity’ of cultures untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to

overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favor of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate.

Character and Characterization

Character is the person in story which is show certain characteristic of human such as the idea of the moral constitution, moral uprightness and other simpler notion such as finding self -identity process (Mertania & Amelia, 2020), (Yulianti & Sulistiyawati, 2020), (Kardiansyah, n.d.), (Amelia & Dintasi, 2019). In *Story and Structure* stated that "reading for character is more difficult than reading for plot, for character is much more complex, variable, and ambiguous. Anyone can repeat what a person has done in a story, but considerable maybe needed to describe what a person is". It means that identifying character in the story would be more difficult compare to understanding the plot of the story because character is more complex and can show many ambiguous that make the reader confused about the characteristic of the character.

Characterization is the process by which the researchers reveals the personality of a character. There are two ways of presenting a character; first is direct presentation which the author tell the reader straight out, by exposition or analysis, what a character is like, or has someone else in the story tell the reader what he is like. Secondly, indirect presentation, which is the author, uses to show the reader the character in action; the reader infers what the character is like from what he thinks or says or does. The researchers uses characterization theory which is both direct and indirect characterization to reveal the action of characters in *Almayer's Folly* in facing the ambivalence problem.

METHOD

This research is conducted through library research as the research design. Library research takes the data from books that correspond to the novel to find more information in order to give comprehension in doing the analysis. This research also applies descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research is an effective way to obtain specific information about phenomena related toward human being such as behaviors, culture, society. Therefore the researchers uses the qualitative research because of phenomena of ambivalence within individual and group as well. Data viewed as information that stands in a form of facts and data mainly used to strengthen and as the referral to the decision-making. While data

source are the origin of the data or the place where the data come from. In this study, the data are all narration that portrayed ambivalence aspect that found in *Almayer's Folly*. While the novel *Almayer's Folly* written by Joseph Conrad in 1895 is the data source for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ambivalence of Nina

Nina experiences ambivalence in Singapore because of the “unhomeliness”. She has been taken from her home, Sambir, to Singapore to be acculturated as a European. There she “encounters “newness” that is not part of the continuum of past and present” (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 7). Nina does not imitate the new European culture, which would enable her to create an in-between space and undermine the authority of the Europeans. Nina has no particular familiarity either with the European culture or the Eastern culture. She is neither a Dutch nor Malay. For this reason, she is miserable in Singapore and cannot adapt to the society she is forced to live in. When Captain Ford talks to Mr. Almayer that Nina is not happy living in Singapore and it is better for Nina to stay in Sambir with her mother.

She would not have Nina—not an hour longer—in the house. Fact is, I heard of this affair and took the girl to my wife. My wife is a pretty good woman—as women go—and upon my word we would have kept the girl for you, only she would not stay. Now, then! Don't flare up, Kaspar. Sit still. What can you do? It is better so. Let her stay with you. She was never happy over there. Those two Vinck girls are no better than dressed-up monkeys. They slighted her. You can't make her white. (*Almayer's Folly*: 23)

The quotation above shows that Nina was not accepted by white community in Singapore. Nina cannot feel a sense of belonging to the European society in Singapore since she was mocked and bully by the white people. Her past is ambivalent because she was raised from her Malay culture. Her present is also ambiguous because of her unfamiliarity with the new culture in Singapore. She becomes an in-between girl who is her past is ambivalent and her present is innovated by a new culture.

Nina's choice regarding to the ambivalence

Because of Nina's ambivalence, she encounter with two different cultures which the culture of his father she learn when she was in Singapore and the culture of her mother she gained when she went back to Sambir. Although Nina stay in Singapore for a long time and learn the culture of western people there, she consciously still choose the cultural identity of her mother since she was being mocked and rejected by western people when she was in Singapore.

Almayer looked at her furtively, but the face was as impassible as ever. She turned her head slightly towards her father, and, speaking, to his great surprise, in English, asked— "Was that Abdulla here?"
"Yes," said Almayer—"just gone."
"And what did he want, father?"
"He wanted to buy you for Reshid," answered Almayer, brutally, his anger getting the better of him, and looking at the girl as if in expectation of some outbreak of feeling. But Nina remained apparently unmoved, gazing dreamily into the black night outside. (Almayer's Folly: 34-35)

The fact that Nina rarely speaks in English with her father although she knows how to speak in English very well indicates that she rejects the language of her father and indirectly reject the culture of his father. But when Nina uses the English language she will use it the moment when she is angry to his father or to the colonizer.

Ambivalence of Kaspar Almayer

Kaspar Almayer is one of the characters who cannot deal with the in-betweenness resulting from the difference between himself and the people of different cultures and origins. Being of Dutch origin, but not having been to Europe before, he is one of the most alienated figures in the Malay region. He feels isolated due to the fact that he is different not only from the Malays, but also the Europeans living in Sambir. Kaspar Almayer's ambivalence can be seen through the description of his house that portrays his condition where he is not sure in which culture he belongs.

On the narrow strip of trodden grass, [...] the morning fires smoldered untended, sending thin fluted columns of smoke into the cool air, and spreading the thinnest veil of mysterious blue haze over the sunlit solitude of the settlement. [...] His own house was very quiet; he could not hear his wife's voice, nor the sound of Nina's footsteps in the big room, opening on the verandah, which he called his sittingroom, whenever, in the company of white men, he wished to assert his claims to the commonplace decencies of civilization. (Almayer's Folly: 66)

The ambivalence Kaspar Almayer experiences is shown in the words such as “smoke”, “mysterious”, “vaguely” and “gazed sleepily at the unwonted appearance of Sambir”, all of those words have indication of uncertainty and ambiguity. Almayer does not speak with his daughter and his wife. He uses the term “sittingroom” only when other white men are in his house. That is why he cannot identify himself with his wife and daughter and Kaspar Almayer let the white community to decide which culture he belongs.

Kaspar Almayer’s choice regarding to the ambivalence

After having cultural ambivalence between western culture and Malay culture, Kaspar Almayer tends to choose western culture as his cultural identity in his life. Almayer try to be a successful trader which become the characteristics of western people compare to Malay people.

Almayer had heard of him before he had been three days in Macassar, had heard the stories of his smart business transactions, his loves, and also of his desperate fights with the Sulu pirates, together with the romantic tale of some child—a girl—found in a piratical prau by the victorious Lingard, when, after a long contest, he boarded the craft, driving the crew overboard. This girl, it was generally known, Lingard had adopted, was having her educated in some convent in Java, and spoke of her as “my daughter.” He had sworn a mighty oath to marry her to a white man before he went home and to leave her all his money.

“And Captain Lingard has lots of money,” would say Mr. Vinck solemnly, with his head on one side, “lots of money; more than Hudig!” And after a pause—just to let his hearers recover from their astonishment at such an incredible assertion—he would add in an explanatory whisper, “You know, he has discovered a river.” (Almayer’s Folly: 6)

Almayer adapts the idea of a successful colonial trader indicates that he prefers western culture to Malay culture and that is why he visit Lingard and marry Lingard’s daughter so Almayer can learn and gain the culture of Lingard who is successful trader, who is has western culture within himself. What makes Lingard so impressive is not his personality as an individual but his fame as a successful trader and his superiority over other pedlars. Almayer’s idea of a successful trader results from the fact that he really admires the

lifestyle and prestige of Lingard as a respected and rich man. Therefore, Almayer considers Lingard as a hero when he met Lingard for the time in Macassar many years ago.

Ambivalence of Mrs. Almayer

Mrs. Almayer has also been uprooted from her own culture. That is why similar to Nina and Kaspar Almayer, Mrs. Almayer also experiences ambivalence although she has something to make sure which culture she should choose when she was in the condition of ambivalence.

The past memories of Mrs. Almayer remind her which culture she should belong when she was in ambivalence condition. Mrs. Almayer's thoughts, after these scenes, were usually turned into a channel of childhood reminiscences, and she gave them utterance in a kind of monotonous recitative—slightly disconnected, but generally describing the glories of the Sultan of Sulu, his great splendour, his power, his great prowess; the fear which benumbed the hearts of whitemen at the sight of his swift piratical praus. And these muttered statements of her grandfather's might were mixed up with bits of later recollections, where the great fight with the "White Devil's" brig and the convent life in Samarang occupied the principal place. (Almayer's Folly: 30)

Since Mrs. Almayer past memories is not ambiguous, that is why she is able to recite the glories of the Sultan of Sulu. Moreover, she experiences ambivalence because her past memories are mixed up with her later recollections of her contact with the European culture. Similar to Nina, she deals with the conflicts by rejecting the in-betweenness resulting from the vagueness of past, present and future.

Mrs. Almayer's choice regarding to the ambivalence

Similar to Nina, Mrs Almayer interacts with the European culture. She maintains her identity as a Malay woman and consciously rejects the European culture and the way of living. Although she seems to obey the authority of the colonial power and conceals her hatred towards the Europeans.

But in imagination she pictured to herself the usual life of a Malay girl—the usual succession of heavy work and fierce love, of intrigues, gold ornaments, of domestic drudgery, and of that great but occult influence which is one of the few rights of half-savage womankind. But her destiny in the

rough hands of the old sea-dog, acting under unreasoning impulses of the heart, took a strange and to her a terrible shape. She bore it all—the restraint and the teaching and the new faith—with calm submission, concealing her hate and contempt for all that new life. She learned the language very easily, yet understood but little of the new faith the good sisters taught her, assimilating quickly only the superstitious elements of the religion. (Almayer's Folly: 17)

Mrs. Almayer's choice regarding to the ambivalence condition she faces can be seen clearly that she choose to remains as a Malay woman who appears to submit to the authority, she hides her real feelings. That is why she does not harmonize with the cultural values imposed on her, but partially mimics them to hide her feelings.

CONCLUSION

The researchers concludes that Nina, Almayer and Mrs. Almayer are suffer from ambivalence and makes them choose the culture that they want by learning and gaining the culture by imitating the culture through other people they knew. As in Bhabha's words, one of the main reasons leading to ambivalence is difference which he defines as “the interrogatory, interstitial space between the act of representation – who?, what?, where? – and the presence of community itself” (*The Location of Culture* 3). All of them suffer from difference as they are exposed to a different culture which they do not belong to. Nina suffers ambivalence since she was born from two different culture of her parent who are Malay and dutch. In the end, Nina chooses Malay culture which is the culture of her mother and rejects western culture which is the culture of her father.

On the other hand, Kaspar Almayer comes to ambivalence condition because he is a Dutch man who has never been to Holland and does not know about the culture of Dutch man but lives in Sambir. Kaspar Almayer in the end tries to learn and gain the culture of Dutch man through other Dutch man who also lives in Sambir. Meanwhile, Mrs. Almayer is a Malay woman who suffers from ambivalence because she was adopted by Lingard who has western culture within himself and married with Kaspar Almayer who also Dutch man. In the end, Mrs. Almayer ensure herself that she is Malay woman by rejecting all western culture she knows from Lingard and Kaspar Almayer. She convinces herself that she is a Malay woman by wearing a traditional cloth, speaking in Malay language and follows the life style of Malay people

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