

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the introduction of the study that includes; the background of the study, the limitation of the study, the problem formulation, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Migration is such a common thing to be done by people around the world. Even they did this global tradition since thousands years ago. Either the distance is near or far from the homeland, everyone can do migration. According to Brah in his article entitled *Thinking through the Concept of Diaspora*, migration or another term can be mentioned as a diaspora that is a movement, a journey, or travel from a homeland to the host land to live and re-live, to produce and re-produce, and to transform and re-transform (444).

Nevertheless, there is a specific contradiction between both definitions, even though the essence of both definitions is the same, a journey. It is dealing with the contrast cause that causes people do a migration or a diaspora. "Migration is the crossing of a spatial boundary by one or more persons involved in a change of residence" (Kok 20). The scope of the definition is just limited in the journey itself, and the cause of it just limited into the change of residence. Meanwhile, Loktongbam (56) explains about the term of diaspora as, "Later in the 1980s and onward, the term diaspora was used to illustrate different types of

people expatriate, expelled, political refugees, alien residents, immigrant and ethnic, and racial minorities tout court". The term 'political refugees' can be understood that diaspora is done by people because of the political conflict or chaotic which happened in the homeland. The threatening feeling about their future life makes them seek a safety in other countries. In order to get a better life, to gain a new hope, to chase a dream, or to flee from the bad life and to be re-born, they have to move to another place although they live in an alienated place.

Diaspora phenomenon results some concepts dealing with cultural issues. One of them is cultural capital. Cultural capital refers to those who migrate to the host land by bringing some aspects from their original culture such as skills, values, languages, customs, traditions, life experiences, beliefs, and so on as a tool or approach for living their life in the new land (Kilduff and Corley 2). This is resulting acculturation, since they bring along almost all of the stuffs from their origin culture, automatically they will not fuse themselves completely to the host culture.

Moreover, Ang also explains, diaspora will always let some collective memories about homeland in their mind (6). It will make the one who did diaspora will always remember about their homeland, not only the life experience, but also the atmosphere, the air, and some small things about homeland will cling in their mind. It creates some descriptions of an ideal place to live also. They will start to compare between homeland and host land, but the result is always homeland where become the best place to be lived by them. Finally there will be a willingness or desire to come back home.

From the explanation above, there are two common effects which are experienced by immigrant, there are assimilation and acculturation. Berry explains the definition of assimilation as “A contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. The individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures” (Berry 9). People who experience assimilation will forget their original culture and norm. They tend to follow host land’s culture, norm, style or point of view to be applied in their daily life. Usually it happens toward the second generation of immigrant. It can be understood, since mostly the second immigrant was born in the host land, during childhood they lived in the host land’s style, or because of social intercourse which applies host land’s culture makes them be more close to the host land’s culture.

In contrast, Redfield et al, as Berry’s explanation, explains acculturation as,

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena, which result when groups’ individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. (7)

Almost the same with assimilation, there is a congregation between two different cultures. It more affects to immigrant in the first place they migrated or moved. Nevertheless, there is also distinct contrast between assimilation and acculturation. As Lahey’s explanation which taken from Berry, “There are two basic criterions of acculturation: maintenance of original cultural identity and

maintenance of other groups' relations" (107). They still keep homeland's culture even though they have a new life. They still keep an interaction and communication with host land's residence, but they royal and still respect with their original culture, even difficult, they will never forget who actually they are. However, they still diffuse to the host society and respect their culture.

It is a common thing for people recently moved to get either acculturation or assimilation. Assimilation usually experienced by the second generation, meanwhile acculturation happens to the first generation. Berry explains acculturation as, "Acculturation could be shown by rejecting the cultural influence from the hostland's society and changing back to a very 'traditional' way of life, rather than inevitably towards greater similarity with the dominant culture" (701). They refuse to accept a whole culture of the host land. They still maintain their traditional culture from their homeland even though it is not suitable to be applied in the host land. It usually happens to the first generation of immigrant, as the one who do diaspora.

Another effect that usually suffered by immigrants is they will commemorate memories of homeland. There is a factor that causes people will remind the pieces of their past life, which brings them to remember the homeland. Salman Rushdie explains, "Human would not be able to get precisely the thing that was lost, that human would, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or village, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands" (10). Even though people did diaspora have lived in the host land for a long time, there must be something that

makes them remember about their original culture, habit, and of course about their own homeland, even in the small and trivial thing.

There are several ethnics around the world which usually do diaspora is like Chinese, Indians, Japanese, Dutch, Americans, Australians, and Arabs.

Between 1850 and the 1950s, a growing number of Chinese workers, mostly male peasants from coastal provinces, started leaving their homeland to seek employment opportunities in Southeast Asia. Between the 1950s and the 1980s widespread violence and instability in the region shifted the destination of Chinese migrants to more industrialised areas including North America, Europe, Japan and Australia. (abcnews.go.com, par. 3)

Chinese does diaspora in order to avoid a war or a political conflict that happens in their homeland. However, apparently, the problem does not stop after they did it, they have to face another effect dealing with the culture that is very different between their homeland and the host land. Some of them solve it by fusing themselves to the new culture, but some of them, especially the first generation, still cannot loss from their homeland's culture and choose to keep and maintain it, even though they live far from the homeland.

A Chinese who are success in the hostland give a big influence for other chineses to do same thing. But mostly they do not see the hostland as a measurement or model of success. They tend to believe that their application in using their own culture in the host culture which support the success (Kilduff and

Corley 5). This is the uniqueness of Chinese, they still defend their original culture to help and support their life in the hostland. This issue also happens in Amy Tan's work, a novel entitled *The Kitchen God's Wife*, which tells about the struggle of Winnie toward her life in China, as her homeland, and after she did diaspora to live in America, as her host land.

Generally, Amy Tan in her novel tells about the female major character, Winnie, who moved to America to flee from the bad circle made by her ex-husband. However specifically, Amy Tan tells how Winnie, the main character, did the same thing as others Chinese immigrants who moved to America after the communist came and post war happened in China, and tries to move on from her homeland to the host land to fix her bad fate in a strange land she never visits.

As mentioned above, diaspora is a movement or journey from the homeland to the host land because of expulsion or political conflict in the homeland. It is supported by Brah (443), he describes the term of diaspora as people's journey because of a population movement, persecution, forced to flee in the wake of political strife, expulsion, or conflict and war. People do a diaspora as the result of complicated things happened in their homeland, such as Winnie in Amy Tan's novel. She lived in China when a war between China versus Japan happened, makes the China's system chaos and the state was not safe enough to be lived by the civils. The communist, which came and authorized the state that made all of the transportations that would leave or come in China were banned. However, luckily, Winnie could leave China before it happened.

Acculturation, as one of the effect of diaspora, also experienced by Winnie as the first generation. Nelson and Teske in 1974, as described by Padilla and Perez (37), explain that, material traits, behavior patterns, norms, institutional changes, and values are included in acculturation's changes. Winnie still speaks Mandarin to communicate with her daughter, even sometimes Pearl cannot understand what her mother is talking about. Moreover, in some cases, Winnie still could not adjust herself with the American's point of view dealing with somethings. Thus this study more concerns to the first generation, which is Winnie, who experiences acculturation than assimilation.

She also cannot avoid memories about homeland. Memories that Winnie does not want to remember suddenly appear after she heard the news which mentions her ex-husband died in China. Moreover, it enforces her to haunt and reunite with her memories during her past times in China. "The haunting power of past memories, intensified in traumatic incidents, forces the individuals to create an eligible picture of past; this would ensure a secured sense of 'self'" (Lotfi 1912). It makes her create a sense to be more careful towards herself especially towards her daughter even though they live in the different continent with their homeland. During her life in America, she still lives with the shadow of her ex-husband. It is dealing with his bad act toward Winnie during they lived together in the war era in China. Winnie uses those memories, as an alarm to do not come back to her homeland and to keep it from her daughter. Even though she really wants to reach her hometown, illustrated by how she still remembers in detail her life in China. However, she does not want those memories make Pearl becomes

curious and make her visits China. Those acts of Winnie show how the effect of diaspora which is experienced by the first generation of the immigrant.

Thus, literature helps the society to know more about diaspora issue simply. Through literary work, the author illustrates the example of the diaspora case and it is described fictionally, it deals with why people do diaspora and some effects of it, it makes easy for the society to comprehend it. It stimulates the society to be tolerance that there are many cultures in the world, which they have to understand, not to assert their own culture to other people, and not to underestimate or doing prejudice to other cultures. Literary work also supports the society to understand the immigrant feeling, how hard their live is relates to their terrible life in the homeland and their struggle to survive in the host land.

Therefore, the issue of diaspora is very important to be discussed because up until now diaspora still becomes the important issue, which is discussed by people around the world. The cause of diaspora is not only because of a war, it could be political conflict or chaotic emerged by certain community in a state. In addition, those who do diaspora also experience some effects because of living outside the homeland; there are acculturation or assimilation and memories of homeland. That is why this study is intended to analyze the issue, because to know the factor and the effect of diaspora is very important.

B. Problem Formulation

The statements of the study can be represented as follows:

1. What is the cause for Winnie in *The Kitchen God's Wife* by Amy Tan to move to America based on Diaspora's theory?

2. How is Winnie's, in Amy Tan's novel *The Kitchen God's Wife*, life going on after she moved to America as the effects of diaspora?

C. Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the female major character, Winnie, as the first generation of Chinese immigrant in Amy Tan's novel '*The Kitchen God's Wife*', dealing with the cause why she did diaspora and her act as the effects of diaspora.

D. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To illustrate how Winnie's, the female major character, life in China before she did diaspora and why she did it based on diaspora's theory in Amy Tan's novel *The Kitchen God's Wife*.
2. To explain about Winnie's new life in America as the effects of diaspora in Amy Tan's novel *The Kitchen God's Wife*.

E. Significance of the study

This study hopefully can help student, especially English Literature Department of Sultan Agung Islamic University, in learning diaspora, the cause and its effects, as reflected in the literary work. This study can be the source of information and further research to understand about diaspora and how diaspora's effects which are experienced by immigrant.

F. Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter consists of introduction in which the study gives the illustration of the background and significant reason in choosing the topic, the problem formulation, the limitation of the study, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

The second chapter covers the review of related literature; there are several subchapters in the second chapter including synopsis of the novel and the discussion of some related theories such as diaspora, acculturation, and the memories of homeland.

The third chapter discusses the research method that was used in this study. It consists of several subchapters including the object of the study, the types of data and data collecting method, description of the method and procedure of the analysis.

The fourth chapter discusses the findings and discussion. It consists of two subchapters, including Winnie's diaspora experience and the effects of diaspora experienced by Winnie. Afterwards, the second point divides into two points, there are acculturation and memories of the homeland.

The fifth chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion of the analysis of this study.

