



**THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CHANGES OF CULTURAL IDENTITY
IN KEVIN KWAN'S *RICH PEOPLE PROBLEM***

THESIS

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
JEMBER UNIVERSITY**

2022



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in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Sarjana Sastra in English
Studies

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

1. Allah SWT, because with an abundance of His love and guidance, I can finish this thesis with patience and sincerity;
2. My beloved Parents, Mr. Prayudha Arifianto and Mrs. Sumartatik. Thank you for the wholehearted love me, never-ending prayer, support and for always considerate;
3. My beloved grandmothers in Heaven and My beloved grandfathers. Thank you for the endless prayer, love, support, and always by my side;
4. The special one, Ketrin, Piero, Destya, Ulan, Keke, Ken, Fitria, Linda, Safira. Thank you for the beautiful time, attention, jokes, laughter, tears, and stories that you have given. See on top fellas;
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10. All of my friends from English Department 2016 that I cannot mention one by one;
11. My Almamater

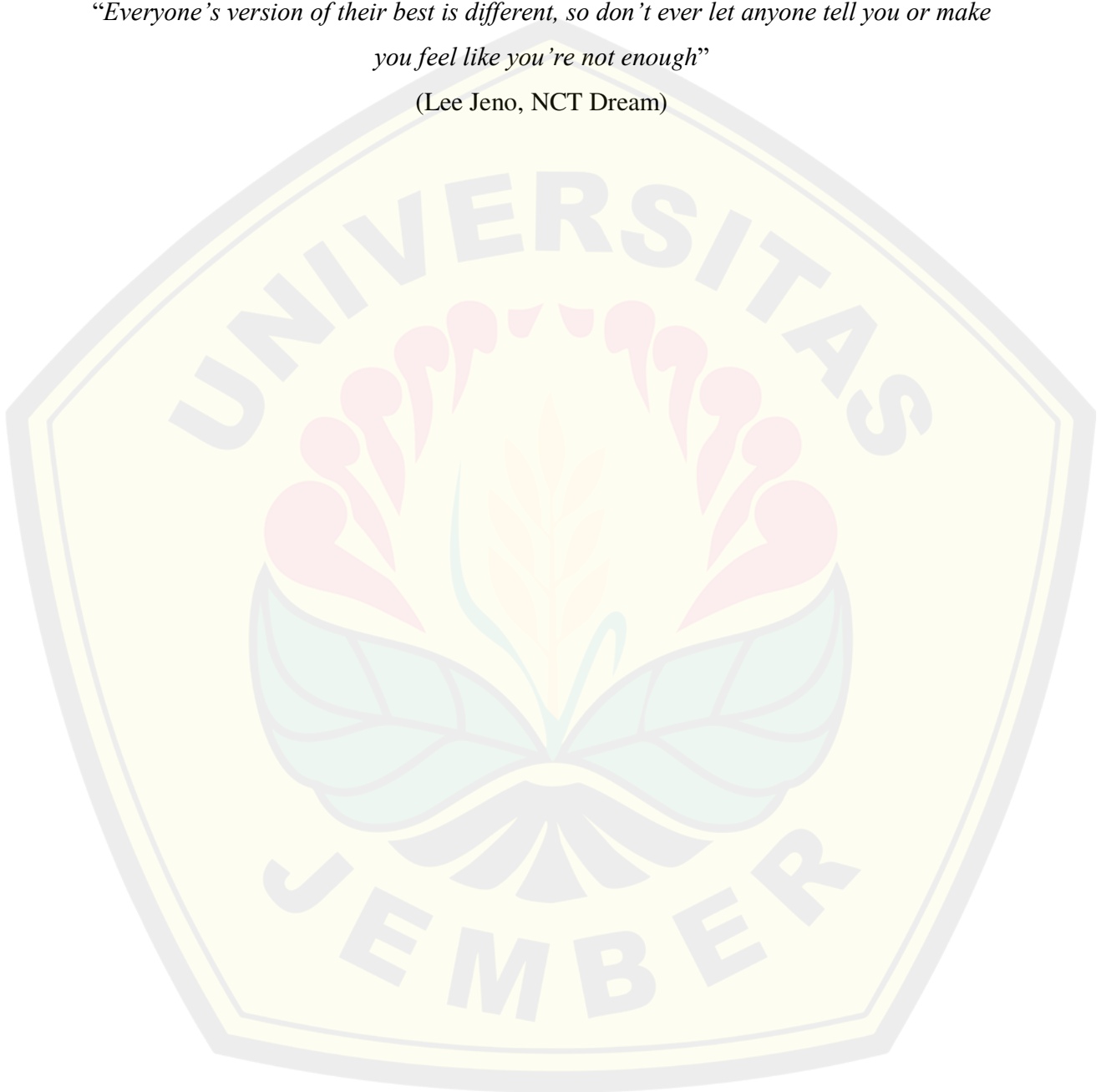
MOTTO

“Not because the God doesn’t know you’re crying, but He knows that you’re strong”

(Mark Lee, NCT Dream)

“Everyone’s version of their best is different, so don’t ever let anyone tell you or make you feel like you’re not enough”

(Lee Jen0, NCT Dream)



DECLARATION

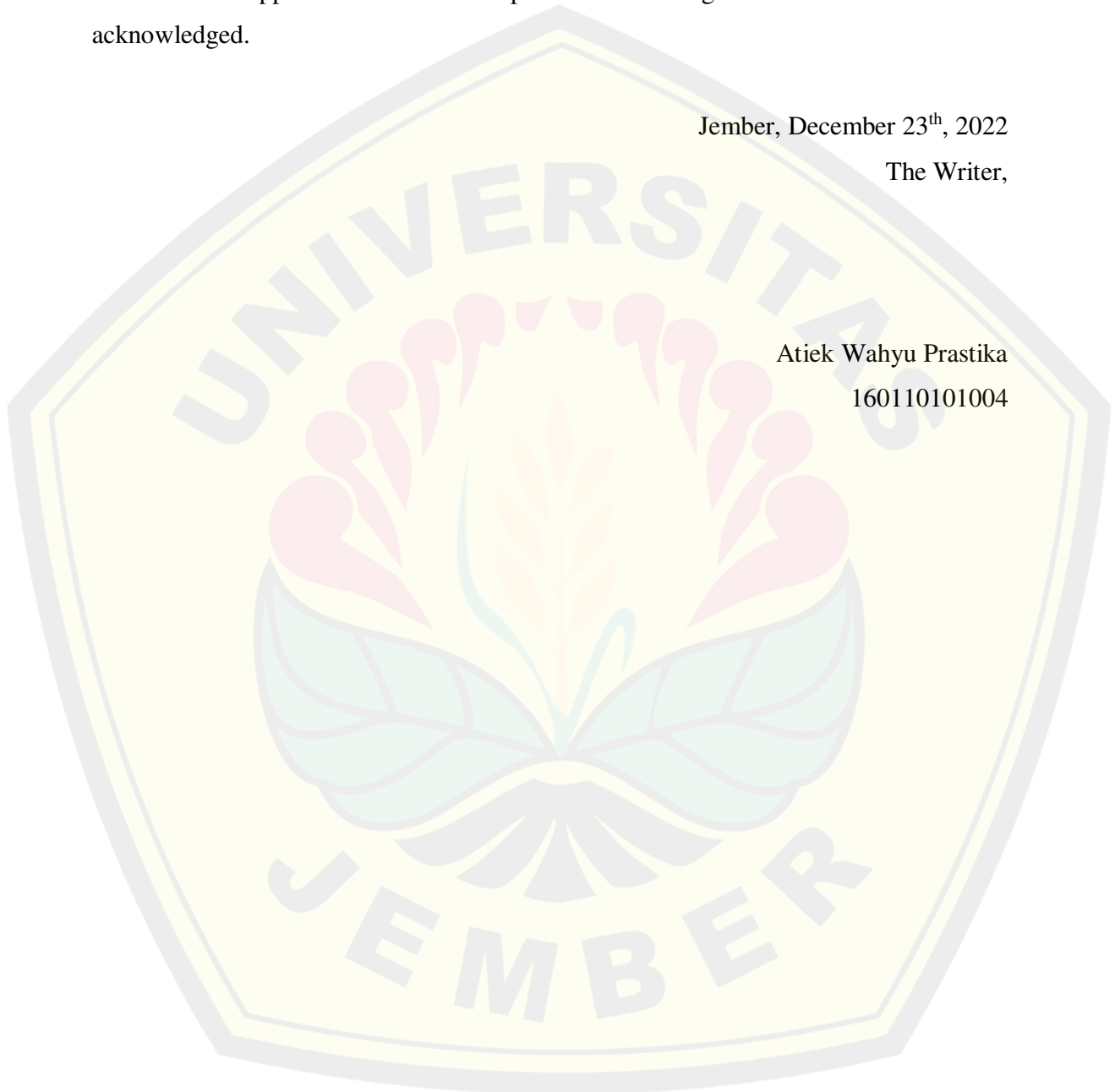
I declare that this thesis entitled “**THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CHANGES OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN KEVIN KWAN’S *RICH PEOPLE PROBLEM***” is an original writing. The analysis and research contained in this thesis have never been done for any degree or publication. I also validate that the sources utilized and support received in the process of writing this thesis have all been acknowledged.

Jember, December 23th, 2022

The Writer,

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THESIS

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SUMMARY

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CHANGES OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN KEVIN KWAN'S *RICH PEOPLE PROBLEM*; Atiek Wahyu Prastika, 160110101004; 40 pages; English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Jember University.

This research is an analysis of the changes of cultural identity based on the Representation Theory by Stuart Hall to find the experience of the cultural changes in the novel *Rich People Problem*. In this analysis, I focus on the main character, Nicholas Young who is an immigrant living away from his homeland.

This research uses qualitative research because all data uses words rather than numbers. The primary data are taken from the quotation in the novel; *Rich People Problem* which related to cultural changes. The secondary data are taken from books, journals, articles, websites, and also theses which refer to this research.

There are two research questions, they are: how does the change of cultural identity represented by the character in the novel, and what is the critical position of the author. To answer the research question, I use several methods such as: reading the novel comprehensively to understand the cultural changes in the novel, watching Kevin Kwan's interview in several websites, searching for sources related to cultural changes, and also searching for how the environment gives contribution for the cultural changes that is mentioned by Kevin Kwan indirectly in the novel.

The results of this study indicate that the cultural changes are found through one of the characters here, Nick, from his conversations with other characters as well as several phenomena in the novel related to the topic of the problem that I focus on and also I search for the facts in the real world. Furthermore, I found that Kevin Kwan as the author of the novel also has experience of the cultural changes and he wrote the novel to remember about his childhood.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FRONTPAGE	i
DEDICATION	ii
MOTTO.....	iii
DECLARATION.....	iv
THESIS.....	v
APROVAL SHEET.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	vii
SUMMARY.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of The Study.....	1
1.2 The Research Question.....	3
1.3 The Goals of The Study	3
CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	4
2.1 Previous Research.....	4
2.2 Theoretical Framework	5
2.2.1 The Study of Representation Theory	5
2.2.2 Stuart Hall’s Cultural Identity Theory	9
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	12
CHAPTER 4. THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CHANGES OF THE CULTURAL IDENTITY IN KEVIN KWAN’S RICH PEOPLE PROBLEM....	16
4.1 The Changes of Nick’s Cultural Identity as a Diasporic Subject....	16
4.2 The Critical Position of The Author.....	33
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION.....	38
REFERENCES.....	41

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the basis of steps to do research. This chapter provides the background of the study, the research question, and the goals of the study.

1.1 Background of The Study

Rich People Problem (2017) is a literary work written by Kevin Kwan. This is the third series of the *Crazy Rich Asian* book trilogy. Kevin Kwan is an American - Singaporean. He was born in Singapore in 1974 and moved to America at 11 years old. He wrote novels because he wanted to remember his childhood memories. In this book, he tries to tell about a group of rich people who face various problems in their lives. One of the characters in this story is a young man named Nicholas Young, more commonly called Nick, by his family and friends. Nick was born and raised in Singapore, the country of his parent's birth. Nick's extended family, especially his grandmother, still maintains a strong Chinese culture. However, when he grew up, he continued his study in New York, America. The difference between American and Chinese cultures is very contrasting, so he has to adjust to the new culture. When he was in America, he felt that he was compatible with the culture there because he was free to do what he liked and did not have to be bound by strict rules, like what he experienced while in Singapore, where he grew up with a strong Chinese cultural background.

We, from the simple explanation above, can tell that there is a cultural change that was experienced by Nick. From old culture or Chinese culture, this was introduced and taught to him from childhood by his family to the new culture or American culture, which he got while undergoing his education. There are many factors behind the cultural changes experienced by Nick. The biggest factor came from his environment when he stay in New York, besides that his feeling of wanting to be free from his family's strict ideology made him think that New York culture was very suitable for him who had an open minded and did not like anything restrictive. From

the brief explanation above, I try to analyze these cultural changes by looking at the factors that influence them.

I use two theories to analyze the cultural changes in the main character in this novel. First, Representation theory means using language to represent or to say something meaningful about the world meaningfully. According to Stuart Hall, it is an essential part of the process of production and exchange of meaning between members of a culture. One approach in representation is a constructionist approach that has the most significant impact on cultural studies. There are two significant variants or models in the constructionist approach; first is the semiotic approach, and the second is the discursive approach associated with Michael Foucault that more concerned with the effects and consequences of Representation. So I decided to use the discursive approach for my thesis.

Culture Identity is the second theory that I use. According to Stuart Hall, Cultural Identity is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception. It is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or social group with its own distinct culture. In this way, cultural identity is both characteristics of the individual and the culturally identical group of members sharing the same cultural identity or upbringing. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification, or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture, not an essence but positioning.

I analyzed cultural changes in the main character in the novel, using representation theory to describe the cultural changes experienced by the main character by looking at the factors that influence these changes. In addition, I use Cultural Studies as a supporting theory to study the original culture of the main character. From here we will know the differences between the two cultures and what factors influence these cultural changes. That has resulted in questions related to my

research. These questions form the basis of my research regarding the things that affect the cultural changes that occur in the main character of the novel.

1.2 The Research Question

There is some research question, there are:

1. How does the change of cultural identity represented by the character in the novel?
2. What is the critical position of the author?

1.3 The Goals of The Study

1. To describe the ways how the character in the novel represents the change of cultural identity.
2. To know the author's position on the change of cultural identity constructed in the novel.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The second chapter provides previous research on the same topic and some theories to support this research. The main theory of this research is Representation.

2.1 Previous Research

There are previous researches, first Wati's thesis entitled "Cultural Identity and Cultural Dislocation in Jean Kwok's *Girl in Translation*" (2015). She explained the construction of cultural identity and cultural dislocation in Kimberly Chang, a Chinese immigrant who is born in Hong Kong and moved to the USA when she was a child. She tries to examine the events related to the two issues using Stuart Hall's cultural identity. According to the author, this analysis deals with the intrinsic elements and the extrinsic elements of the novels. This thesis contributes to cultural identity theory to my thesis since I also talk about cultural identity.

The second is from Fikriya's thesis entitled "The Complexity of Cultural Identity in Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*" (2016). In her thesis, she tries to breakdown the cultural identity of the main character and the process of becoming the main character to gain her identity by using Hall's Cultural Identity and Diaspora theory. According to Hall's theory, identity is a social construction. There will always be a process of becoming, and it is not a fixed process. This thesis's explanation and description of Hall's perspective give me an idea for my thesis because I also used Hall's Cultural Identity theory.

The third from Fajar's thesis entitled "The Representation of Feminist Perspective in Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish*" (2016). The aims of this research are to gain an understanding of the representation of feminism in the midst of Pakistani American Muslim Societies that is considered a strongly patriarchal culture. From this thesis, I can understand how to apply Stuart Hall's representation theory in analyzing a novel.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 The Study of Representation Theory

Representation, according to *Oxford Dictionary*, has two relevant meanings for the world. First, to represent something is to describe or depict it, to call it up in mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us is our mind or in a sense. Second, representing also means to symbolize, stand for, be a specimen of, or substitute for. Representation theory becomes one of the tools I used to analyze the representation of cultural identity in Kevin Kwan's *Rich People Problems*. The representation of cultural identity in the novel will be analyzed through language, the way they communicate, signs, ideas, and their social life, which represent cultural identity through the characters. Stuart Hall, through his book entitled *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practice*, states:

"Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people [...] Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, signs, and images which stand for or represent things." (Hall, 1997: 15)

Hall's explanation above means that representation is the main part of the process of production and exchange of meaning of the concepts in our mind to others through language. Language is one of the media through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings are represented in culture (Hall, 1997: 1). The language also functioned as a sign. The signs, whether they are "real" objects in the world such as images, sounds, and others or even some imaginary objects, are used for or represent our concepts, ideas, and feelings to other people. This is how *representation* comes in. Representation is the link between concepts and language that enables us to refer to either the "real" world of objects, people, or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people, or events. Representation is not a static process because it can change along with the knowledge or the conceptual map carrying by ones that

different forms with another. Furthermore, representation works through the concept of signs and meanings, so we can say that it is a constructive process about new understanding that can produce new meanings because the concept itself can be changed, as I said above, and it always has new meaning. Through representation, the meanings are produced and constructed.

The concept of representation has come to occupy a new and important place in the study of culture. Representation connects meaning and language to culture (Hall, 1997: 15). The concepts and meanings are related to each other. For example, we have pictured in our minds as the concept of a thing and to understand the meaning. However, the meaning cannot be communicated without language, so we should represent it *via* the word for it. The word stands for or represents the concepts and can be used to reference a "real" object in the world or even some imaginary object. And this is how we give meaning to things through language or how we are able to express a complex thought about things to other people or communicate about them through language in ways that other people are able to understand.

The representation systems are divided into two important systems; they are the mental representation and language representation.

"Mental Representation: all things which we carry around in our heads. Meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thought, which can stand for or represent the world. Whereas language is to represent and exchange meanings and concepts, we can only do that when we also have access to shared language. Language depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into a various language which stand for or represent those concepts." (Hall, 1997: 17)

Both of the systems of representation at the meaning process in culture have related to each other and give us two ways of giving meaning. First, it enables us to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences or a chain of equivalence between things, people, objects, events, abstract ideas, etc. and a system

of concepts, conceptual maps. Second, it depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages that stand for or represent those concepts.

There are three important approaches that describe how language is used to represent the world; first is *the reflective* approach to representation; language is said to function as a mirror; it reflects the true meaning of an object, person, idea, or event as it already exists in the world. Essentially, the *reflective* theory proposes that language works by simply reflecting or imitating a fixed “truth” that is already present in the real world (Hall, 1997:15). *The intentional* approach is the second approach that argues the opposite, suggesting that the speaker or author of a particular work *imposes* meaning onto the world through the use of language. Words mean only what their author intends them to mean. This is not to say that authors can go making up their private languages; communication – the essence of language – depends on *shared* linguistic conventions and shared codes within a culture. The author’s intended meanings/messages have to follow these rules and conventions in order to be shared and understood (Hall, 1997:15).

The Constructionist approach (sometimes referred to as the *constructivist* approach) is the third approach that recognizes the social character of language and acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning (Hall, 1997:25). According to the description of *the constructionist* approach, we must not confuse the *material* world where things and people exist and the *symbolic* practices and processes through which Representation, meaning, and language operate. Constructionist is not focused on the material world for conveys meaning, based on this approach to represent our concepts, we can use language systems or whatever system. Hall describes that the meaning does not depend on the material quality but on symbolic function. A particular sound or word stands for, symbolizes, or represents a concept that it can function, in language, as a sign and convey meaning – or, as the constructions, signify (1997: 26). Here, we can

see the meaning is constructed through the language to deliver our concepts in representational systems.

I decide to choose the third approach, the constructionist approach. I use this approach because the object that will be analyzed is the characters who construct the cultural identity perspective in the novel *Rich People Problem*. Kwan tries to represent cultural identity through the characters in the novel. He uses the text in the novel as the media to represent his critical perspective. There are two variants or models of the constructionist approach based on Hall's explanation, the semiotic approach by Ferdinand de Saussure, and the discursive approach by Michael Foucault. From the explanation I decide to use the discursive approach by Michael Foucault. Foucault mentions that there are three ideas in the discursive approach to representation. They are the concept of discourse, the issue of power and knowledge, and the questions of the subject (Hall, 1997: 43). In Hall's book, Foucault explains that representation does not only use language to construct meaning but also use discourse as a system of representation to analyze the meaning by using knowledge.

"By 'discourse,' Foucault meant a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language." (Hall, 1997: 44)

The concept of discourse is about language and practice. It is to overcome the distinction between what one says (language) and what others do (practice). Foucault argues that discourse constructs a topic. It defines and produces the object of our knowledge to make a topic that can be meaningfully and talked about and reasoned about (Hall, 1997: 44). Foucault also says that discourse never consists of one statement, one text, one action, or one source, but it appears across a range of text, and as forms of conduct, a number of different institutional sites within society. The similarity that occurred in discourse is included in discursive practice.

Foucault states that he was concerned with the production of knowledge and meaning, not through language but through discourse (Hall, 1997: 44). As has been explained before, it means that the construction of meaning is concerned through the discourse. Foucault also states, "We can only have knowledge of things if it has a meaning, it is discourse –not the things in itself- which produces knowledge." (Hall, 1997: 45). The use of the discursive practice is to analyze the representation because it uses discourse as a system of representation. I use this approach in this research in order to confront the representation of cultural identity through the characters in Kevin Kwan's *Rich People Problem* and the ideology of the author.

2.2.2 Stuart Hall's Cultural Identity Theory

According to Stuart Hall, cultural identity is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture. In this way, cultural identity is both characteristic of the individual but also of the culturally identical group of members sharing the same cultural identity or upbringing. There has been discussion about identity in all the disciplines, including the disciplines of philosophy or metaphysics, in these recent years. Deconstruction has performed in all disciplines to criticize the initial idea of identity. Therefore the process of deconstruction shows subjective questions such as the process of developed identity formation, which is influenced by cultural criticism or other disciplines. (Hall, 1996: 1)

For identity, there are two ways of answering the question about identity. The first is by observing an important event deconstructing the many concepts or critics which already exist. It is not to replace the old concept with the new one. It is operating 'under erasure,' the old concept replaced with different concepts that continue changing. The second is the indicating problem within the concept of identity. The authenticity and authority to which the concept of "cultural identity" for

Hall, can lay claim are questionable because practices of representation always implicate the positions of enunciation from which they are formulated.

Hall's second definition of "cultural identity" is so poignant: it points out that what we call "identity" is an ongoing process "of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'". Identities are not a priori; they do not transcend culture, history, time, and place. They are historical; they "come from somewhere"; they change in and through power relations that are temporal, placed, spatial, and situational. The past does not just wait idly by; rather, through social imaginings of the past, as well as material relations of the past that live on in the configurations of contemporary relations, it is active; the past transforms and can be liberating or debilitating. This is why Hall is so apt in describing identities as "the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past". (Hall, 1996: 110-121)

We, in analyze cultural identity, need to investigate the constitution and politics of identity. There are distinctions in two ways of analyzing identity (Hall: 1990). There are two forms of struggle and two models of the production of identities. The first model argues that there is some intrinsic and essential content of any identity which struggles against common origin or common structure of experiences with a particular identity (Grossberg, in Hall 1996: 89). Therefore identity is trying to discover the 'authentic' and 'original' context of identity. The second model explains that identity is always changing because there is no 'complete' authentic identity. Identity is always incomplete, relational, and in-process (Grossberg, in Hall 1996: 89). Human experiences, events, and problems in their life, which influences their identity always to transform. As Hall's states that identity is influenced by temporary and unstable effects and makes the identity evolves.

Hall's Perspective of Culture Identity

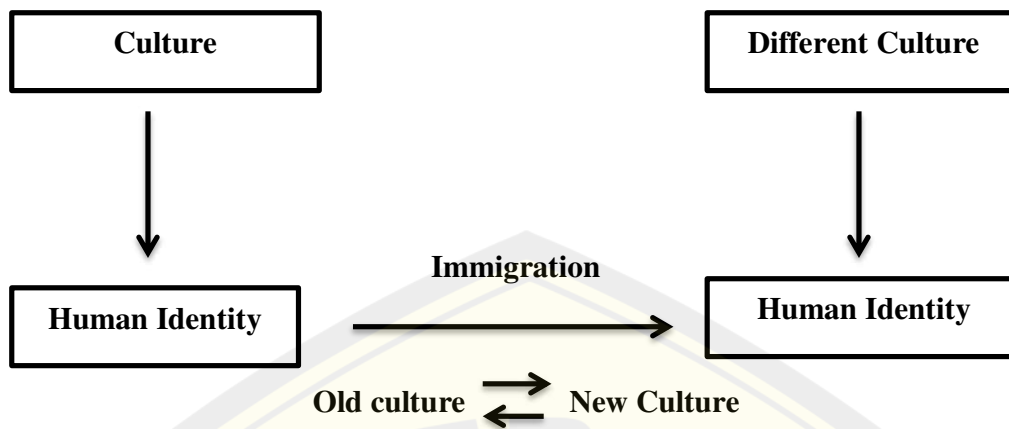


Diagram 1. Hall's cultural identity scheme in Hall's book *Question of Cultural Identity* (page: 1-17).

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research design and methodology are important to understand how this thesis is formulated and how the data are properly used. In this chapter, there are four subchapters. The first subchapters explain the type of the research, the second subchapters shown how the data are collected, the third subchapters is used to explain how the data are processed, and the fourth subchapters is about the data analysis.

3.1 The Type of Research

The type of this research is qualitative research. In this study, the data used are narrative data or descriptions. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 2) define qualitative research as research that uses real background, aiming to interpret the phenomena, and is done by involving various methods, including content, narrative and semiotic strategies. This qualitative research in this thesis is to analyze the data which is related to the cultural changes experienced by the main character in the novel *Rich People Problems* by Kevin Kwan. Primary data will be taken in the *Rich People Problems* novel, besides that, it will use other data related to this research from other media as supporting data.

3.2 Data Collection

I read comprehensively to collect the data. Primary data is taken from *Rich People Problems* novel that is related to the research question and tells about the cultural identity of the main characters. The cultural identity in the novel is divided into two cultures. First is the old culture that is Chinese culture, which has many rules that must be followed. In the novel, the writer tells that people who grow up in Chinese families are also required to maintain traditions in their families that have existed for generations. In addition, people who grow up in Chinese families or in eastern culture will still be controlled by their families; even they have their own life or married, they are not free to choose what they like or what they want, their family will interfere with their personal affairs, and/or their decisions for their future. Chinese

culture is still identical to limited freedom. More than that, Chinese culture in *Rich People Problems* novel is described that there is still a gap between social classes. There is still an ancient thought that the high class is prohibited from interacting with the low class. Second is a new culture that is American culture, which has many differences from Chinese culture. American culture is identical to individual freedom; this can be seen from the people that grew up with American culture are free to choose what they want and do what they want. Their family did not bind them under strict rules. People who grew up in this culture really respect the privacy of others, even if it's parents with their children. In the novel, these differences are clearly illustrated. This is what I use as data to analyze the changes of cultural identity in the main character in *Rich People Problems* novel.

The secondary data are from books, journals, articles, websites, and also theses which refer to the historical context of the changes in the cultural identity of the main character. The data includes an explanation of temporal, place, and situational, which affect the changes of cultural identity in the character in *Rich People Problems* novel. In addition, I also use the data from the biography of this novel's writer to determine the writer's position on cultural change and also to find out why the writer represents the changes of cultural identity in his novel.

3.3 Data Classification

I classify the data after collecting the data based on the topics. The primary data in this thesis are selected and taken from the novel *Rich People Problems* by Kevin Kwan. The topics told about the ways how the change of cultural identity is represented by the character in the novel. I categorize the data from the two cultures that become a cultural identity of the main character, that is, old culture or Chinese culture and new culture or American culture. Chinese culture still has limitations on individual freedom. They have strict rules that must be followed and traditions that must be maintained. There are also still social gaps in their social life.

While in American culture, there are no limitations on individual freedom. They do not have to follow strict rules or keep any traditions. Besides that, there is almost no gap between social classes. More than that, I categorize the historical context related to the topic that consisting of a description of the time and situation in Singapore before Nick decided to go to America, and also a description of the time and situation in America when Nick was there. In addition, there is also an explanation of the reason why Nick went to America, by looking at the situation at that time to find out about the changes in the cultural identity in the novel. I also categorize the biography of the writer to find out the writer's position and why the writer represents the changes of cultural identity in his novel.

3.4 Data Analysis

This thesis uses the inductive method as the method of analysis. The inductive method is the process of reasoning that is applied to conclude the subject matter. It means that the discussion goes from particular to a whole group of ideas, phenomena, or situations (Young, 1982:10). After the data are taken, the analysis is conducted. The selected data are analyzed using Stuart Hall's theory about cultural identity and Representation. The first thing to do is to expose Nick's cultural identity. I analyze the old culture of Nick or Chinese culture and analyzing his new culture or American culture by explaining the characteristics of each culture. From this, we can see that there is a significant difference between Chinese culture and American culture. Then I explained about the cultural change due to the immigration carried out by Nick from Singapore to America. I also analyze the contextual background of the changes to find out what is the background of the cultural changes in the main characters in this novel.

The next step is doing any research to find out the critical position of the author's. Other than that I also look at his biographical and at historical context to find out the writer's position on the issue of cultural change in his novel. The results of this analysis will show the reasons why Kevin Kwan represents cultural identity in his novel. In addition, by conducting this analysis, we can find out his position on the

change of cultural identity in the novel. The last step of this research is drawing a conclusion after doing the analysis with the stages that I have described. We will find out the reasons for the change in the cultural identity of the main character in the novel.



CHAPTER 4. THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CHANGES OF THE CULTURAL IDENTITY IN KEVIN KWAN'S *RICH PEOPLE PROBLEM*

This chapter intends to examine how the changes of the cultural identity in Kevin Kwan's *Rich People Problem* are represented by the main character in the novel. The first sub-chapters, I talk about the changes of Nick's cultural identity. The second is the discussion about the critical position of the writer.

4.1 The Changes of Nick's Cultural Identity as a Diasporic Subject

According to Latorre (2014) the diasporic subject can be defined as an individual that journeys through diverse levels of cultural and social domain in order to create a newfound identity. This subchapter will explain how Nick lives as an immigrant living away from his homeland and how he deals with nostalgic feeling. The differences of culture make him adapt a new culture in the place where he immigrates. However, he tries to maintain his old culture. It makes him hybrid, between two cultures.

Nicholas Young or Nick is the main character in this novel, *Rich People Problems*. Based on Kwan's first novel *Crazy Rich Asians*, he is a Singaporean who has been in New York for a very long time. As the sole successor of the respected Young surname, his parents sent him to the best schools, including Oxford. After getting his degree, he moves to New York and works as a professor at New York University.

“New York is my home, [...]” (Kwan, 2017:37)

“Mom, we live in New York. That house has no benefit to us [...]” (Kwan, 2017:60)

The quote above takes place in New York when Nick has a call with her mother who was in Singapore. It shows that Nick and his wife, Rachel, live in New York, far from Nick's homeland, Singapore. They have lived in New York for a long time and consider New York to be their home and from the quotation above, Kwan

shows the reader that Nick and Rachel have no intention of returning or settling back in Singapore. The differences in culture and traditions between China and America make Nick have to adjust to his new environment. The impact of the different environment changes Nick's thought and the way he lives. Hall state that identity is such a concepts which is always changing and under erasure (Hall: 1996:2).

Identity is never singular, always changing and transforming. In modern times many people become immigrants. They moved from their home land to a new land. It's make immigrants have to adapt to their new environment. This makes immigrants feel the experience of an ever-changing identity process. The process of immigrant's adaptation tends to keep a part of homeland culture in the new land. Meanwhile, their identity changes through the time. As I said before, I used the constructionist approach to analyze the changing identity through language. Therefore, the representation of the changes of cultural identity can be analyzed through Nick's character that represents the changes of cultural identity which he experiences after moving from Singapore to America.

There is always a reason behind someone in taking particular decision including Nick's mother who decides to send Nick to continue his education in America. As the heir of a family that is respected by many people, his parents hope that Nick gets the best education there and can make his whole family proud. Although Singapore is one of the countries with the best quality education in the world, his parents want him to continue his education in America. This is because America has many high-quality universities that can be adapted to be wishes of Nick and his parents. In addition, the different quality of education is also the reason why Nick's parents decide to send Nick to continue his education outside Singapore, one of them is America. Moreover, the decision of continue his education to America, changes the life of Nick as Chinese man who lives in the foreign country.

The differences between Singapore and New York can be seen from their cities. New York is a metropolitan city which has many skyscrapers and hope for

immigrants to get better lives. America is the golden mountain for immigrants who want to be successful. Although Singapore also has skyscrapers but it is not more than New York. Apart from being visible from the city, Singapore and New York also have differences in their culture and traditions. Culture and tradition have different description, the main difference between those two terms according to Roehrich (2019) is the actual set of things that each describes. Culture is a term that is not only limited to beliefs and behavior, although they are included in it. It also includes knowledge, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. A more contemporary definition is “culture is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourse, and material expressions, which over time, express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of a life held in common” (Roehrich, 2019). On the other hand, tradition will describe as a belief or behavior. A deeper definition would define it as “the form of artistic heritage of a particular culture, beliefs or customs instituted by societies and governments, such as the national anthem and national holidays, beliefs or customs maintained by religious denomination and church bodies that have a history, customs, culture and, to some extent, a collection of teachings”. Roehrich (2019) also said that family may also pass tradition down through the generations. Simply, traditions are a part of culture.

Nick is a diasporic subject living far from his homeland, Singapore. He, who comes from a rich family, continues his education in America at the decision of his parents. As we know, many Singaporeans have decided to become immigrants to America. There are many factors behind this, one of which is education. Although Singapore is one of the countries with the best quality education in the world, many parents want their children to continue their education in America. Similarly, Nick’s parents decide to make Nick continue his education in America. Their decision makes Nick have to live away from his homeland and his family. He has to go to a country that has a lot of cultural differences from his homeland. Nick, who was born into a Chinese family, at that time, is required to live in an environment where Chinese

descents become a minority. Although American and Chinese cultures are very different, Nick feels comfortable with American culture. This is because American culture is not as strict as Singaporean culture. Kevin Kwan also explains that after completing his education, Nick continues to live his life in New York. He decides to work as a professor at New York University.

Based on Kwan's first book *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013), Nick comes to America sent by his parents to continue his education there. As the heir of a family that is respected by many people, his parents hope that Nick gets the best education there and can make his whole family proud. Then after completing his education, Nick decides to stay in New York and work as a professor at one of the universities there. During his life in New York, he hides his identity as the heir of one of the richest families in Singapore and lives a low-profile life. Nick really enjoys his life, away from the shadow of his family's wealth and the title of heir attached to him.

“[...] I'm not sure, quite honestly. Part of me feels like all this happened a lifetime ago. Our daily lives are so removed from everything going on here. On the one hand, I can't ever forget the way Rachel was treated and how my grandmother couldn't trust me. [...]”
(Kwan, 2017:99)

The second thing that Nick has to deal with as a diasporic subject is he must live in a new place which is very different from the environment he grows up in, Singapore. During his life in New York which has a different culture from Singapore and far from his family, Nick often feels unfamiliar with his environment in his new place. He also often has a nostalgic feeling about his life in Singapore, although we know that Nick can quickly adapt to New York culture. Homesickness and nostalgia are experienced by immigrants living away from their homeland. In this case, Singaporean immigrants suffer homesickness and nostalgia in America because of many cultural differences between those two countries. They usually feel that when they try to adapt to a new culture which is very different from their hometown.

Nick who was born into a wealthy family has been introduced to and familiar with countries outside Singapore since childhood. Another privilege that Nick got from his rich family was that he could study in the best places that his mother had prepared, in England before he finally decided to continue his life in New York. This makes it easy for Nick to adjust to his new environment despite the differences in culture and traditions between Singapore and New York. Unlike most immigrants who find it difficult to adapt to their new land, which different from their hometown. However, Nick, who is far from his family, also feels homesick, when he got the news that his grandmother fell ill. He realized that he more or less missed his hometown, Singapore.

Nick living away from his family and all the wealth of his family, sometimes feels unfamiliar with his life in this new place. When he was in Singapore there is a waiter who is there for him around the clock, but when he is in New York he does everything himself. Memories of his past while was in Singapore suddenly flashes in his mind. Nick suddenly remembers his childhood memories in Singapore when he has lunch with Rachel, his wife. The two of them are talk about Nick's grandmother who is sick, and then the childhood memories he spent with his grandmother slowly flashes through his mind when he look at the cup in his hand.

“Nick looked down at his cup of tea. The saucer was emblazoned with an image of Queen Elizabeth II, and seeing the gold patterning at the edge of the porcelain suddenly took him back to a memory of Tyersall Park, of sitting in the ornate eighteenth-century French pavilion overlooking the lotus pond with his grandmother when he was six years old, being taught how to properly pour a cup of tea for a lady. [...]” (Kwan, 2017:64)

We can see how close Nick is to his grandmother, from the quotation above that I took from this novel. As the only descendant of the family to carry on the Young name, Nick is deeply loved by his grandmother and his whole family. Apart from her grandmother who still has the same thoughts as other old-fashioned Chinese women, they love their sons more than their daughters. Nick is also the only grandson who

ever lived in Tyersall Park with his grandmother. However, their relationship becomes strained when Nick decides to marry Rachel despite of not getting the blessing of most of his family, especially his grandmother. Then, when he hear the news that his grandmother is seriously ill, Nick feels so sad, not only because he is living far from his grandmother, but also because the condition of their relationship is not good. At such times, Nick recalled his childhood memories that he spent with his grandmother.

“You know what I mean [...]”

“Nick stared up at the window of Rockefeller Center, still lit this late hour, avoiding Rachel’s eyes [...]” (Kwan, 2017: 37)

The quote above shows that Nick is actually very worried about his grandmother and still cares a lot about her. However, on the other hand, Nick still can’t forgive his grandmother, so he refuses to admit that he is really worried about his grandmother’s condition. As the only descendant of the family to carry on the Young name, Nick is deeply loved by his grandmother and his whole family. Nick is also the only grandson who ever lived in Tyersall Park with his grandmother. However, their relationship becomes strained when Nick decides to marry Rachel despite of not getting the blessing of most of his family, especially his grandmother.

“[...] They had once been extremely close-Nick being the adored only grandson who bore the Young surname and the only grandchild who had lived at Tyersall Park-but it had now been more than four years since they had last seen or spoken to each other. [...]” (Kwan, 2017:36)

“Su Yi had ambushed them during what was supposed to be a romantic getaway in the Cameron Highlands of Malaysia, commanding Nick to end his relationship with Rachel. [...]; he had uncharacteristically insulted his grandmother in front of everyone-something that had probably never happened to this revered woman in her entire life. Over the past few years, the gulf had only widened as Nick defiantly married Rachel in California, leaving his grandmother and the majority of his large family off the wedding invitation list.” (Kwan, 2017:36)

Another thing faced by a diasporic subject is that they have to adapt to their new environment, so does Nick. He needs to adapt to society to survive his life. In this case, the diasporic subject as a subordinate must obey and adapt to the dominant culture. Nick who is born and grows up in Singapore with a strict Chinese culture in his family has to learn and adapt to the culture in New York. Adapting in new society is important because to survive socially Nick must feel accepted in his new environment. Nick, as someone who grows up with a strict Chinese culture feels that the culture does not suit him. He does not want to be bounded by the rules or traditions that exist in his family. As we know that Chinese culture has many rules and traditions that must be passed down from generation to generation. That's one of the reasons Nick does not have too much trouble adapting to New York culture.

As Hall said, that cultural identity is an identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of one's self-concept and self-perception. This is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or social group with its own distinct culture (Hall: 1997). Chinese people will keep and preserve their Chinese culture, wherever they are, even when they are not in China. This also done by Nick's family, even though they live in Singapore, they still maintain the traditions in Chinese culture, especially the grandmother Shang Su Yi. These rules and traditions are what Nick got before he went to New York.

One of the American cultures that suite him is about individual privacy. In Nick's family individual privacy is very rare to non-existent. Parents are free to violate the privacy of their children and argue that it is natural, even though it is a very private thing and they still do it to their married children. However, in America respecting the privacy of others is mandatory, even for parents to their children. Based on Rainie and Madden in their research (2015) most Americans hold strong views about the importance of privacy in their everyday lives. The majority of Americans believe it is very important for them to be able to maintain privacy in their daily activities, even when they are at home, at work or when they are moving around in public. This made

Nick not find it difficult to adapt, because the new culture he adopted matched his views. In this book Kwan represents Chinese parents regarding the privacy of their children.

“[...] She’s not some Singaporean girl you can interrogate about every bodily function. She’s American. They don’t discuss things like that with just anyone!” (Kwan, 2017:184)

“I am not just anyone. I am her mother in-law. I have a right to know when she’s ovulating! [...]” (Kwan, 2017:184)

“[...] I’m not going to answer any more of these questions. It’s so weird and inappropriate! And don’t you dare bring any of this up with Rachel either. Have some respect for our privacy!” (Kwan, 2017:186)

Nick, who is used to western culture, especially America, refuses to talk about privacy with his mother. This is because American culture really values one’s privacy, even American parents do not bother with their child’s privacy and this makes Nick, who lives in an American environment, accustomed to taking care of each other’s privacy, even though he is an Asian. This is in contrast to his mother who is an Asian and lives in an Asian environment, who thinks that parents have the right to know all things that are private about their children and their children’s partners.

Moreover in the process of adaptation, language becomes another important thing. Language is a bridge for someone to communicate with other people. For this reason, language is the first thing that must be adopted in the adaptation process. This is also done by Nick when he decides to continue his education in America and live there. Nick speaks English and Malay when his stay in Singapore, but because his family is Chinese, sometimes he also use Mandarin or other dialects of Chinese origin when communicate with his whole family. More than that, as we know the main language spoken by Americans is English. This makes it easy for Nick to adjust his life while living in New York. In other side, although he feels American culture is very suitable for him, he still maintains his Chinese culture. One example that we can

take is he still communicates using Mandarin or Chinese dialect with his family in Singapore or with his wife even though they are in New York. His wife who also has Chinese descent did the same thing. She also still uses Mandarin in communicating with her family.

““Hey, Mom! How’s Panama?” Rachel answered in Mandarin. Her Mother was on a Chu family reunion cruise through the Panama Canal” (Kwan, 2017:58)

“You and Nick Should have come. All your cousins would have enjoyed spending time with you. [...]” (Kwan, 2017:59)

“[...]“Way to go. Using me as an excuse to get off the phone with your mom.” Sylvia cackled as she licked her finger clean.” (Kwan, 2017:61)

“Rachel smiled. “Sometimes I forgot you can speak Mandarin.”” (Kwan, 2017:61)

Nick communicates with his neighborhood in New York more often using English. This is of course because the main language spoken in America is English. However, Nick, who is used to communicating in English with his environment in America, rarely uses Mandarin or Malay like when he was in Singapore. In addition, Nick’s minority is also the reason why he is accustomed to using English. Although on the other hand Rachel is also of Chinese descent and can speak mandarin, they both prefer to use English to each other. As an example, when Nick contacted his mother who is in Singapore. When his mother mixes English and Malay, Nick choose to only respond in English. Here is some proof when his mother mixed English and Malay, Nick only used English.

“*Aiyah*, why did you take so long to call back? Where are you?”

“I was at concert when you called.”

“[...] No, Mum, it was a ROCK CONCERT, not the Rockettes.”

“[...] *Alamak*, I hope you wore earplugs. [...]”

“[...] No, lah! But she’s his wife [...]” (Kwan. 2017:33-34)

In addition, Nick tries to follow the habits of Americans that are different from Chinese who live in Singapore. Kwan represents one of these habits through the different breakfast styles of the two countries. From the earliest days of the republic, Americans broke their fast in the morning by eating whatever was most easily available, which often included bread, eggs or leftovers (Mekouar, 2019) and along the times, American breakfast has many choices such as oats, scrambled eggs, muffins, toast, croissants, etc. On the other hand Chinese people who live in Singapore usually have breakfast with traditional cakes sold in the market.

“The cook had brought home the most scrumptious Singaporean breakfast delicacies from the market. There was *chwee kueh*-delicately steamed rice-flour cakes topped with [...]; freshly grilled *roti prata*-crisp, buttery Indian bread served with a curry dipping sauce; *chai tow kuay*-daikon radish cakes pan-fried with egg, [...]; and *char siew bao*-sweet barbecued-pork buns.” (Kwan, 2017:183)

Futhermore, Nick, who is used to eating authentic food while in Singapore, has to adapt to America food which is very different from what he eats in Singapore. Other than that, Nick who grew up in a rich family and was prepared to become the heir to his family's wealth was used to being served by his housemaids during his stay in Singapore, but when he immigrates to America, he has the opportunity to become a more independent person by doing everything himself, without the help of his housemaids as he lived in Singapore.

Stuart Hall in his book said that “cultural identity” is so poignant: it points out that what we call “identity” is an ongoing process “of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’”. Identities are not a priori; they do not transcend culture, history, time, and place. They are historical; they “come from somewhere”; they change in and through power relations that are temporal, placed, spatial, and situational (Hall, 1996:110-121). In this novel, Kwan describes Nick as someone who experiences a change in cultural identity because he immigrates, which automatically changes the environment he lives in, as well as the necessity to adapt to the new environment in order to be accepted in

American society. According to Hall, “culture identity” will continue to process and change, so does Nick. He continues to adapt to the American environment because it has many differences with Singaporean’s.

Nick grew up in Singapore with a family that still maintains their Chinese culture strictly. Li (In Chen, 2019: 254) explain that Chinese culture is ‘a culture of family’ it is because their culture by and large family-based and family-oriented. According to Chu (In Chen, 2019: 254) family culture is a dominant ideological system in the social tradition of Chinese people, which has stemmed from the society-wide generalization of a whole set of family norms, values and customs, such as the rule of the patriarchal principle, respect for superiority and seniority, worship for ancestors, and creed of familial continuity and prosperity, with the family and clan as concrete entities of existence bonded by blood or marital relations.

From a young age Nick is uses to the Chinese traditions and he is taught the strict family rules. His grandmother still applies Chinese culture to his family that is the reason why he can become the heir to his family's wealth. In Chinese culture only men can become leaders in the family or can be the successors of the family business. This is called patrilineal, which means that descent was calculated through men (Jordan, 2006). Chinese families in general are eager to have a son in their family, and it would be better if they had their first son. This tradition exists because men can carry on their family clan, family business, and become the next leader, if the father is not there. The family business will be continued by the eldest son and he will also be the pillar of the family, it can be said that he is the right hand of his father. Therefore, Chinese society is eager to have the firstborn son, or at least have a son in their family. This is also due to the tradition that women will leave her house and follow her husband to live with parent in-laws.

Kwan describes the tradition that I described above through the depiction of Shang Su Yi who really loves his only son, Nick’s father. This is shown by the distribution of the greatest wealth given to Nick’s father, even though he has many

younger sisters. In addition, his entire younger sister lived separately from his mother Shang Su Yi. As I have said that daughters will leave the house and follow their husbands, this family also follows the tradition. With this tradition, Nick who is the only child and only grandson who carried the name Young, can experience growing up and living with his grandmother Shang Su Yi in the main house, Tyersall Park, compared to his other cousins who can't live there.

In Chinese families, keeping traditions is very important. All family members are obliged to maintain their traditions in a sustainable and hereditary manner. Nick has to follow a lot of rules that make him feel like he can't be free to do whatever he wants. Despite the traditions that exist in Chinese culture, Nick thinks that the rules that exist in his family are very unreasonable. Nick and his cousins have to maintain their attitude they are not allowed to do things that can make their family look bad. They do not tolerate even the smallest problems. Even his family demands that he never make mistakes so that his family is still seen as good by others.

The rules in his family that restrict make Nick not want to follow these rules any longer. When he is sent to New York to continue his education, Nick is required to adapt to the New York culture which is very different from the Chinese culture in his family. America's different culture made Nick's view of life changed. Nick is used to an environment that does not care about a person's social class or background. In addition, Americans tend to think that everyone has an equal position, making Nick feel more comfortable with the culture of his environment in America. This is deeply embedded in their cultural values. It makes them uncomfortable with overt displays of respect such as being bowed to. This culture is very contrast to most of cultures in Asia. Asian people will show it directly when they respect someone who is considered to have a higher position than them or towards someone who is older than them. According to Markus & Conner (2013) people in American culture tend to show an independent psychological signature –a sense of self as individual, separate, influencing others and the world, free from influence, and equal to if not better than,

others when compared to people in East Asian or South Asian culture. This concept contrasts with the concept of Chinese culture which is family-oriented. This is what makes Nick able to quickly adapt to American culture and feel comfortable with that culture. Because since childhood he has been controlled by his family, makes him want to live his life without being controlled by his family or others.

Americans think that everyone's position is equal. This is deeply embedded in their cultural values. It makes them uncomfortable with overt displays of respect such as being bowed to. This culture is very contrast to most of cultures in Asia. Asian people will show it directly when they respect someone who is considered to have a higher position than them or towards someone who is older than them. This has been taught since they were little. Similarly, Nick was taught to respect those who are older than him or have a higher position than him. Even though he has lived in an American environment with such a culture, it does not make him forget it. He kept it up well.

Nick was born and raised in a family that still holds strong Chinese traditions. Just like Chinese women, Shang Su Yi who is Nick's grandmother loves her sons more than her daughters. This makes Nick's father, who is the only son in the family inherit the family fortune. However, due to one incident, Shang Su Yi gave the family inheritance to Nick. This happened before Nick decided to marry Rachel, who was a girl from a middle-class family. Nick is against his family's rule that requires him to marry someone from an upper family, just like his family. This of course made his family angry, especially his grandmother. During his life in New York and away from his family in Singapore, Nick became a low-profile person and did not care about his family's wealth.

“Nick sighed. “Ah Ma, as you know, is an old-fashioned Chinese woman. She has always favored her son over her daughters- they were all just supposed to marry and be taken care of by their husband's families, while my father got Tyersall Park. [...]”” (Kwan, 2017:62)

“[...] Jacqueline revealed to me that back in the early nineties, when my father decided to move to Australia pretty much full-time, it so angered my grandmother that she decided to change her will and

disinherit him from Tyersall Park, she skipped a generation and make me the heir to the property. But then after I married you, she supposedly changed her will again.” (Kwan, 2017:63)

The quotation above shows that Shang Su Yi, as a Chinese woman who still holds Chinese traditions, tries to keep these traditions in her family. Including making his only son the main heir to her property, but because her son was disobedient to her, Su Yi changed her inheritance rights to her only grandson who held the name Young, Nick. Therefore, she wanted the best for Nick, took great care of Nick and forbade him doing things that went against Su Yi, but Kwan in this novel wrote that Nick disappointed his grandmother with the decision he made by marrying Rachel.

“This girl does not come from a proper family! Rachel still vividly remembered Su Yi’s condemnation [...]” (Kwan, 2017:36)

The quote above shows that Su Yi did not approve of Nick marrying Rachel, because she did not come from a proper family according to Su Yi. As a Chinese woman who comes from one of the most respected families in Singapore, Su Yi wanted all of her descendants to marry someone who came from a family she thought were a worthy family to be with her family. She did this so that her family would be respected and not looked down upon by others. This is also because all of Nick’s cousins are married to someone from a prominent family. As is typical of another rich people who will also marry rich people, Nick’s family also does that. That is why almost all of Nick’s family disagreed when he wanted to marry Rachel.

Nick, who has lived in America for a long time, thinks differently from most of his family in Singapore in living his life. He began to think that Chinese culture was too unreasonable for him, compared to America culture. While in America, he lived a very different life from his life in Singapore. Nick does not like to show his wealth in Singapore, he prefers to live a simple life without the shadow of his family’s wealth. Even this makes Rachel not knowing that Nick is an heir to a very rich family in Singapore, Rachel only knows that Nick comes from a rich family. He was also more

open and accepting that other members of a wealthy family, never discriminating against others based on their social class or background. He has repeatedly shown himself to be friendly and kind, easy to get along with most people who meet him. Therefore, when most of his extended family looked down on Rachel, he was furious. Especially to his grandmother and make their relationship tenuous.

“[...] But here in New York, Shang Su Yi’s shadow didn’t loom as large, [...] she and Nick had been blissfully enjoying married life far away from any family interference [...]” (Kwan, 2017:36)

“[...] I dunno...I think part of me is till so angry at her for how she treated you.” (Kwan, 2017:58)

Nick has lived in New York for a long time and has grown accustomed to American culture in his life, but he is also still learning about his homeland culture. The other thing about his identity is he is hybrid. That is because he was born and raised in Singapore with Chinese descent which makes him familiar with the traditions in Chinese culture and on the other hand Nick has lived in America for a long time because of his education and his job, has also adopted American culture in his life. This made him have two different cultures in his life.

However, as much as he likes being a part of American culture, there is a part of him that still maintains his Chinese culture. This is because he thinks that he needs to maintain the original culture that he has learned since childhood. In addition, his entire extended family also continues to maintain traditions in Chinese culture, so he feels that he does not need to lose his Chinese identity, besides he also feels proud to be part of Chinese culture. For this reason, while in New York he tried to communicate using mandarin or Chinese dialect with his wife, Rachel, who is also of Chinese descent, or when he communicated with his family in Singapore. The simple thing about choosing the language he uses is a representing of how he remains Chinese when he has adopted American culture.

Another thing that proves that Nick is proud to be Chinese is that he has not forgotten the traditions in Chinese culture that he has known for a long time. In this novel, Kwan describes one example of a tradition that Nick still remembers is the Chinese funeral tradition, when he attended his grandmother's funeral. Nick still remembers the traditions of Chinese funerals, even though he has lived in New York for a long time and far from those traditions. He easily explained to Rachel that did not know about the traditions even though she has Chinese descent, during the funeral procession with the Chinese tradition.

“Rachel noticed something glistening between Su Yi's teeth. “Um, what's that in her mouth?” ”

““It's a black pearl. It's an old Chinese custom...the pearl ensures a smooth transition into the afterlife,” Nick explained. “And do you see the Faberge case besides her?” ”

““Yeah?” Rachel noticed a small rectangular bejeweled box next to the pillow.”

““Those are her glasses, so she can have perfect vision in her next life.” ” (Kwan, 2017:272)

“[...] “Rachel-Oliver's not joking,” Nick cut in. “This is a paper tomb offering. [...] It's an ancient ritual.” ” (Kwan, 2017:274)

As the story in this novel continues, Nick seems to no longer reject the Chinese culture in him. However, he still rejects the traditions within his family which he finds unreasonable. Nick realizes that in the end he had two very different cultures within him. The differences between the two cultures made him feel comfortable between both cultures and proud of him being part of American culture as well as Chinese culture. Nick, who is easy to adapt to the new culture in New York environment, can easily be accepted by American and easily socializes with them.

The explanation above of how Nick loves Chinese and American culture shows that he has a hybrid identity. This made him easier to adapt to the American culture, and he had no trouble being part of Chinese immigrants when he lived his life in New York, even though he becomes minority. One example that shown by Kwan to

emphasize to readers that Nick has hybrid identity is he will uses mandarin or Chinese dialect when communicates with his wife or family, and uses English when communicating with people outside his ethnicity. Nick has a hybrid identity to prove that an immigrant usually has two different cultures and still maintain their homeland culture while adapting to the host culture in the place where they migrate.

Nick becomes a diasporic subject that different from the other immigrants. In general, immigrants have difficulty adapting to their new environment. That is usually because immigrants are forced to immigrate and hope that they can get a better life, but in fact they experience difficulties and discrimination by society in the host land. As a result, immigrants are not comfortable staying in the host land for too long, they miss their homeland and assume that they only feel comfortable in their homeland, which in turn makes them want to back to their homeland as soon as possible and do not want to settle in the host land. On the other hand, through this novel as we know Nick has no trouble adapting to American culture and he can easily blend into American society. This is because Nick became an immigrant in America to continue his education and did not do it by force. It made him does not want to back to Singapore and decide to settle in New York. However, he still keeps his memories about Singapore, whether it is about culture, food or something else. In this novel, the author shows to readers a positive view of being a diasporic subject that is rarely known by others, that the diasporic subject is not always get discriminated or have difficulty being accepted in the host land society.

The explanation of how the positive side of immigrant life described by Kevin Kwan is enough to give us the view that many people are starting to accept the diversity of cultures around them. Moreover, many immigrants can live well between two different cultures, they can decide to keep in mind the culture of their homeland but still adapt well to the culture in the host land. In addition, the description of changes in cultural identity also makes us understand that culture is something that

continues to change from time to time because it is influenced by changes in its surroundings and is not something complete.

4.2 The Critical Position of The Author

This subchapter is intended to expose the critical position of the author of *Rich People Problem*. Kevin Kwan is an American – Singaporean male writer. He was born in Singapore in 1974, as the youngest of three boys, into an established Chinese Singaporean family. While in Singapore, Kwan studied at the Anglo-Chinese School and lived with his paternal grandparents. Kwan's father and mother, an engineer and pianist respectively, moved the family to the United States when Kwan was 11. The family moved to Clear Lake, Texas, and Kwan attended Clear Lake High School. He attended the University of Houston-Clear Lake, where he earned a BA in Media Studies, after that he moved to Manhattan to attend Parsons School of Design in order to pursue a BFA in Photography (Lodhia, Pooja : 2018). Kwan was born in Singapore to a wealthy Chinese family, spends his adolescence in the America. Both of the country has fundamental differences in various aspects of life.

In Singapore, Chinese ethnicity is the majority. On the other hand, Chinese and other Asia ethnicities are minority in America. Singapore is a state-capitalist country with a Shared Values philosophy. It puts communitarianism over individualism. Meanwhile, America is a capitalist country with egalitarianism. The belief places all Americans, regardless of their background, in an equal position. It then allows Americans to have the same opportunity in pursuing their dream and succeeding in life as long as they have determination (Wyman, 2015).

Kevin Kwan was inspired to write his first novel *Crazy Rich Asians* in 2009, when his father was battling cancer. When his father was sick, he and his family returned to Singapore for his father's treatment. It was during in Singapore that he and his father often recalled their life before moving to America. Kevin Kwan was in Singapore until his father died, than he returned to America. When coming home to America, he often told his friends about his life in Singapore, then his friends asked him to make a book

from the stories he had. Moreover, Kwan actually really wanted to be a writer which made him learn creative writing from high school to college. After much deliberation and also after facing the death of his father, Kwan decided to write his first book from a collection of short story about his life in Singapore which he told his friends.

Kwan, in his book also brings up the topic of Asian lives as diaspora subjects in America which aims to convey to the readers that Asians exist in America too. In addition, Kwan wants to explain to readers that the life of immigrants in the host land that has cultural differences with the homeland is not always bad. There are many positive views on immigrant life that are rarely known to the general public. At the time of writing his book, Kwan also wanted to show that Asians are not as bad as Americans think.

Kevin Kwan tells the readers about positive views on immigrants' life through Nick. In his novel, Nick is described as having no difficulties in living his life as an immigrant. He is not discriminated against and can adapt easily to American society, even though he comes from a minority and has many cultural differences between his Singaporean culture and American's. Similarly Kevin Kwan as an immigrant also experienced what Nick experienced through the novel. In his interview Kwan says that he does not experience difficulties as faced by other immigrants because of he would interact so freely with everyone around him, even though he is a minority. That's why Kwan can easily be accepted in American society.

“[...] I grew up in a town where there were really three other Asians. But I did not have the sort of identity issues that they had. [...] because I would interact so freely with everyone, [...]” (Talks at Google, 2017).

Kevin Kwan as an author, who is part of a minority in America, tries to convey his opinion about immigrant life in America through the portrayal of characters in his novels. One of them is how Kwan enjoys the process of adapting to American culture and being accepted in the community, but he still remembers the culture of his homeland. This is illustrated through the character of Nick, who becomes American

but still remembers and maintains Singaporean culture. Kwan also tries to show the readers that the world is changing and people are diverse in every way especially their identity. Being an immigrant who has two different cultures is something natural. This is because an immigrant must undergo an adaptation process to be accepted by society in the host land. Kwan describes Nick who was originally a Singaporean who had to adapt to American culture, consequently, his cultural identity becomes a hybrid because of the adaptation process that made him feel comfortable being American but on the other hand there was a belief not to forget his memories about his homeland, Singapore.

In this novel, Kwan focuses on how hybrid identities are built to survive the domination of cultural influences so that immigrants does not forget their homeland, but still can adapt well in their host land. In an interview, Kwan said that someone should be proud of their identity. According to Kwan, Immigrants from Asia who have two cultural identities must have a balance to proud of their identity, history, and the amazing legacy of where they come from, and that way they can show how great their ancestry was, but in other hand also proud to be part of American society (Talks with Google : 2017).

A brief explanation of Kevin Kwan above gives us enough information about how Kevin Kwan was in the past. He is also an immigrant who must go through a process of adaptation, and enjoyed his life in America. Kwan easily adapts to his new environment, he did not experience difficulties as faced by others because he would interact so freely with everyone. Kwan, who has no difficulty in the process of adapting to his environment in America, makes him comfortable with the culture there. However, on the other hand he is still proud to call himself an Asian. He is in the middle of the two cultures, he is proud to be Asian and also proud to be part of American society. The explanation above shows that Kwan is a pro-multicultural person, he is hybrid. This can be seen from the way he accepts the new culture in his

life, but also remains proud of his original culture and also the way he describe Nick in his novel.

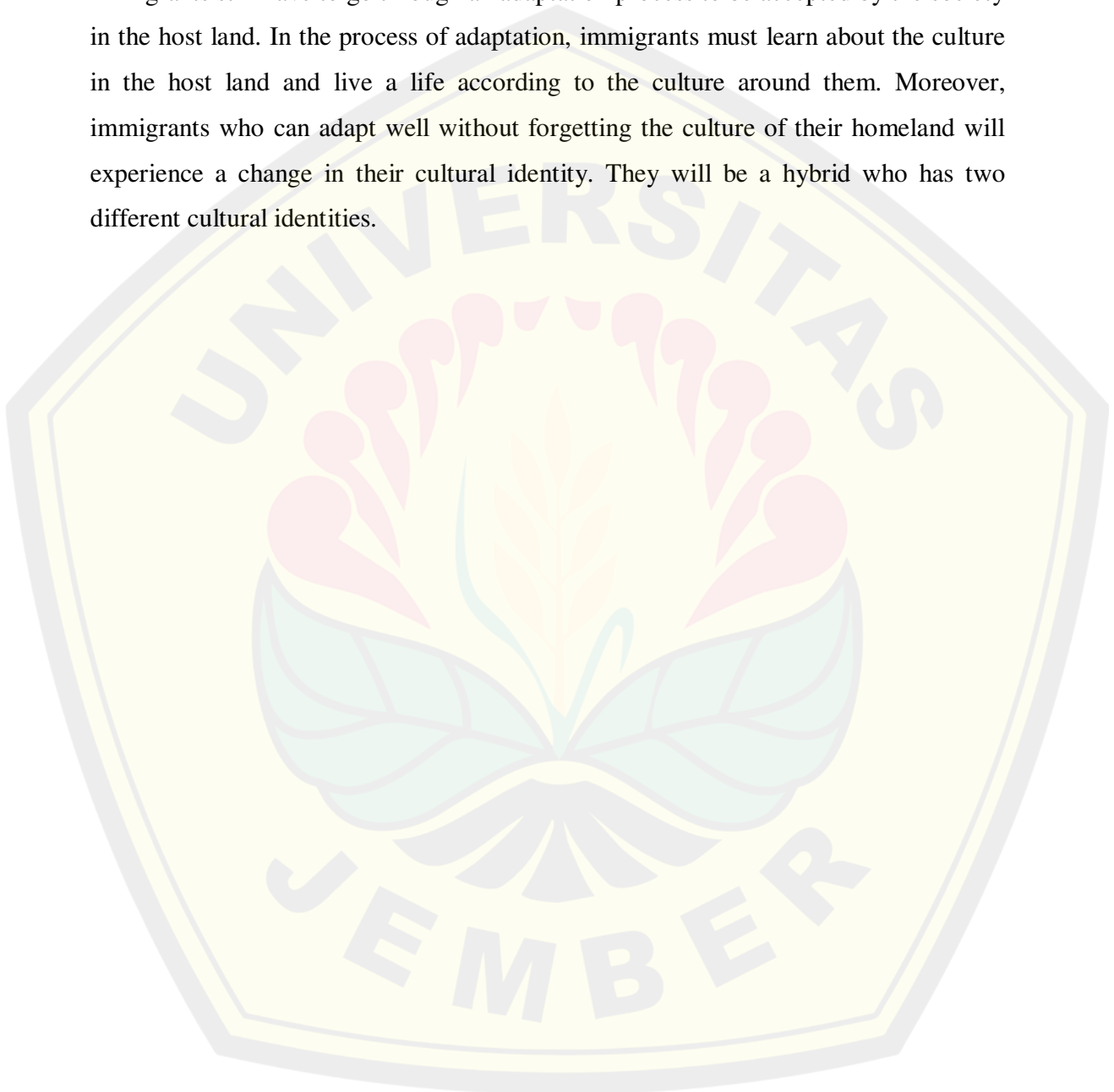
Today, America is one of the countries where immigrants from different cultural backgrounds gather, with the hope that they can have a good future. It makes America a country with a lot of cultural diversity and makes Americans have an open mind about the different cultures around them. America is also a country where the host culture mixes with foreign cultures brought by immigrants, making America a multicultural country. Many Americans respond well to this, because they realize that immigrants are also part of America, for that Americans who are pro-multicultural person accept them and respect these differences. More than that, multiculturalism has been taught to children since elementary school so that they can respect the cultural differences or the minority groups around them. It aims to provide an understanding of tolerance from an early age so that they can live side by side with minority groups.

Multiculturalism or cultural pluralism is an ideology that recognizes and glorifies differences. The differences in question are individual differences with other individuals or differences in the values adopted, such as differences in systems, culture, religion, habits, and politics. Multiculturalism is basically a world view which can be translated into various cultural policies that emphasize acceptance of religious, plurality, and multicultural realities that exist in people's lives. It can also be understood as a world view which is manifested in political consciousness. (Azyumardi Azra, 2007)

A multicultural society is one that includes several cultural communities with their overlapping but none the less distinct conception of the world, system of meaning, values, forms of social organizations, history, customs and practices. (Parekh, 1997 in Azra, 2007). As the history show, multiculturalism in Western countries was seen to combat racism, to protect minority communities of all types, and to undo policies that had prevented minorities from having full access to the

opportunities for freedom and equality promised by the liberalism that has been the hallmark of Western societies since the Age of Enlightenment.

The existence of thoughts about multiculturalism at this time, being an immigrant is not as bad as one thinks. This is because many people tolerate cultural differences around them, so being a minority is not as bad as imagined. However, immigrants still have to go through an adaptation process to be accepted by the society in the host land. In the process of adaptation, immigrants must learn about the culture in the host land and live a life according to the culture around them. Moreover, immigrants who can adapt well without forgetting the culture of their homeland will experience a change in their cultural identity. They will be a hybrid who has two different cultural identities.



CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Today, in 21st century, most of the people in the world do immigration to get a better life. At this time those who become immigrants do not only move because of political problems such as refugee and so on but they also move to get better facilities from their place of origin. Such as educational facilities or jobs that are better than where they come from. As immigrants, they need to do adaptation to live in the new land. By doing adaptation most of them they change their identity and culture. Hall views the cultural identity and cultural dislocation not merely as an instant process since confusion; cultural shock, depression, and social pressure emerge during the adaptation process. Meanwhile in his novel, Kevin Kwan shows another side of immigrants who have no difficulty in adapting to their new environment, immigrants who easily blend in with their surroundings even though they come from different cultures. This happens because many factors influence, one of which is a person's personality. As described by Kwan on his main character, Nick.

Kevin Kwan in his interview said that the stories in his novels are a depiction of his childhood with the people around him, which he wrote to commemorate his childhood when he was in Singapore. Kwan is also an immigrant from Singapore and lives in an American environment that has different cultures and traditions from his hometown. Just like Nick, Kwan had no difficulty adapting to his new environment in America. He easily adapted and was accepted by the American community in his environment. Nick and Kwan also have similarities in their personalities; they are both friendly people and easily get along with anyone regardless of other people's social class status. That is one of the reasons they both easily adapt to an environment that is very different from their hometown. Kwan and Nick also both have Chinese ancestry. This *Rich People Problem* is the third book in a trilogy written by him and his entire novel in this trilogy talks about the life of Singaporeans who are of Chinese descent.

In this research I focus on the main character of this novel, namely Nicholas Young or Nick. Nick is an immigrant from Singapore who settled in New York after

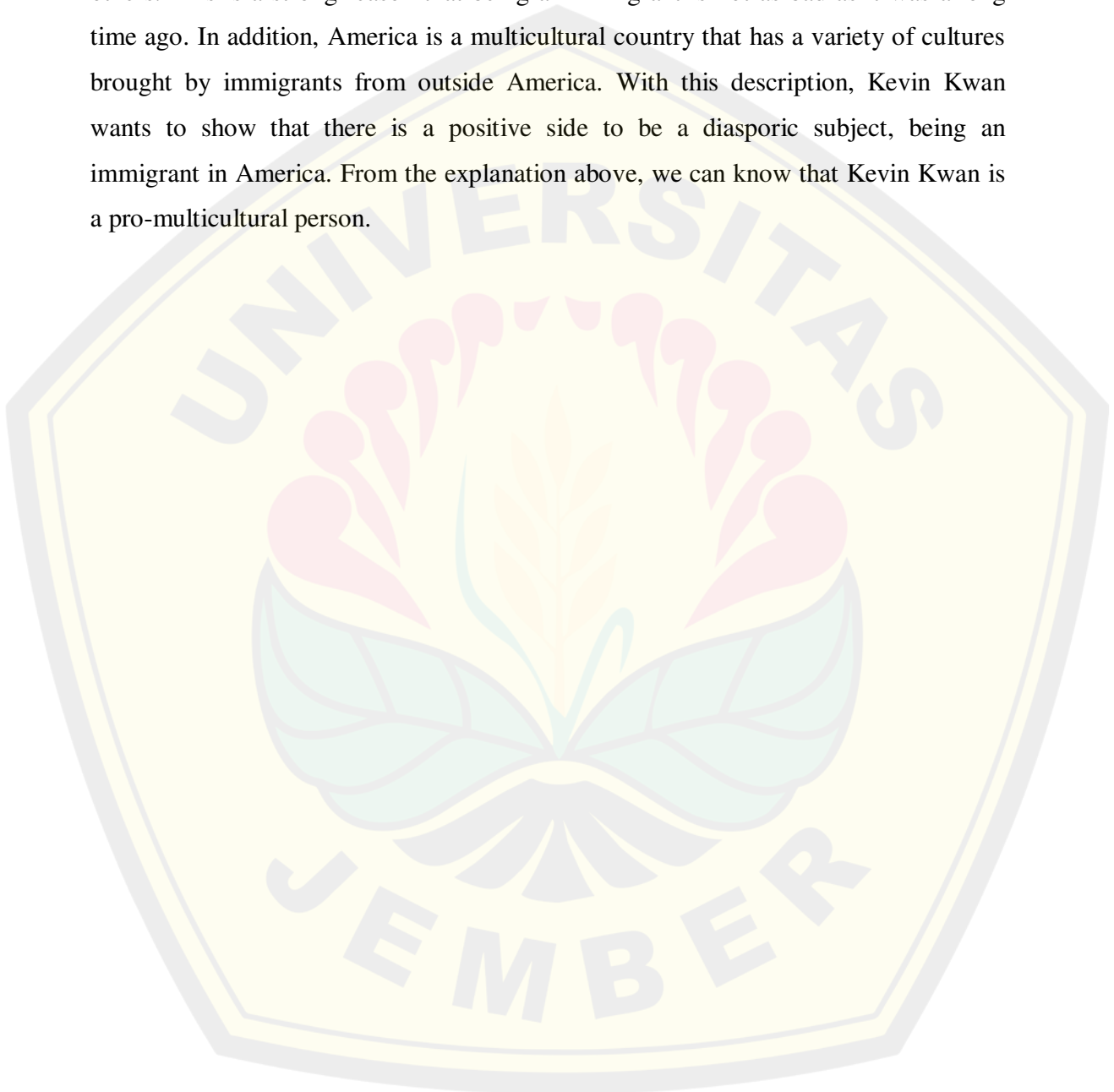
completing his education there. While in Singapore, Nick grows up in a family that really respects Chinese traditions and culture. This makes Nick inevitably have to participate and carry out the traditions in Chinese culture. Nick thinks that Chinese culture is not suitable for him, because he has to obey many rules. Then when he becomes an immigrant, Nick has to adapt to American culture which is very different from Singapore, he do this so that could be accepted by American society. However, even though the two cultures have many differences, Nick has no difficulty in making the adaptation process. This is because Nick enjoys his life as an immigrant and feels that he is more suited to American culture.

Nick, who is an immigrant, can also be called a diasporic subject because he is someone who has migrated from his homeland to a new place, the host land. Being a diasporic subject in America, does not mean Nick has to lose the cultural identity of his homeland. While in America, Nick tries to keep in mind the traditions and Chinese culture, on the other hand he also adapts well to the American culture around him. For the example when Nick communicates with Rachel, his wife, he will use Mandarin because Rachel is also of Chinese descent and while he communicates with non-Chinese, he will use English. Nick is living his life well in New York even though he has two different cultural identities. As an immigrant who still remembers the culture of his homeland and also carries out the process of adapting to American culture, Nick has a hybrid identity. Nick thinks that he should not forget the culture of his homeland and it is also not a bad thing if he still remembers it. Nick feels proud to be Chinese and also proud to be American.

Nick becomes a diasporic subject that different from the other immigrants. This is because Nick does not experience difficulties in undergoing the adaptation process, he also does not experience discrimination by the society in the host land. In addition, there is no compulsion in the process of becoming an immigrant, making Nick enjoy his life in the host land more than immigrants who migrate by force. Through Nick, readers are shown that immigrant life does not always face difficulties

or discrimination when undergoing the adaptation process in the host land. Immigrant life also has a positive side as experienced by Nick.

This discussion leads to the results of how the lives of immigrants from Asia in America in the 21st century, with the development of civilization and human thought, cultural differences are no longer a barrier for people to get a better life, just like others. This is a strong reason that being an immigrant is not as bad as it was a long time ago. In addition, America is a multicultural country that has a variety of cultures brought by immigrants from outside America. With this description, Kevin Kwan wants to show that there is a positive side to be a diasporic subject, being an immigrant in America. From the explanation above, we can know that Kevin Kwan is a pro-multicultural person.



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