

THE HYBRID IDENTITY ON LEILA IN CARYL PHILLIPS' *THE FINAL PASSAGE*

(Identitas percampuran pada Leila di Novel *The Final Passage* oleh Caryl Phillips)

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Abstract

The Final Passage is a novel by Carl Phillips, who is a black writer. This novel offers many post-colonial conflicts as the power of the story which covers the themes of multicultural and multiethnics. Conflicts faced by Leila tell about herself as a mulatto who does not find a place in her environment either in the Caribbean or England. Hybridity has led to problems such as unhomeliness and otherness. This thesis uses a close postcolonial analysis and applies hybridity by Homi Bhabha who concerns with the study of mix cultures. This study uses a qualitative research by applying novel text in the story as the main data. The data is analyzed to show the conflict that gave rise to the emergence of hybridity in the presence of Leila as a mulatto. As a result, a mixture of cultural hybridity create new things within Leila that leads to profound grief. At the end, hybridity becomes a means to create a new existence which always be full of risks.

Key words: *Mullato, Hybridity, Post-colonialism*

Abstrak

The Final Passage adalah novel karya Carl Phillips, seorang penulis kulit hitam. Novel ini menawarkan isu poskolonial di dalam ceritanya yang merupakan kekuatan cerita tentang tema-tema multikultural dan multiethnis. Konflik yang dihadapi oleh Leila bercerita tentang dirinya seorang mulatto yang tidak menemukan tempat di dalam lingkungannya baik di Karibia atau Inggris. Hibriditas telah memunculkan masalah atas "unhomeliness" and "otherness" dalam dirinya. Thesis ini menggunakan analisi poskolonial khususnya teori Hibriditas oleh Homi Bhabha yang merupakan percampuran dua budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif yang mengaplikasikan teks novel di dalam cerita sebagai data utama. Data tersebut dianalisa untuk menunjukkan munculnya hibriditas yang memunculkan konflik didalam keberadaan Leila sebagai mulatto.

Sebagai hasilnya, Hibriditas merupakan percampuran budaya yang menciptakan hal baru dalam diri Leila yang berujung pada kesedihan mendalam. Pada akhirnya, hibriditas menjadi alat untuk membuat eksistensi baru yang tentunya selalu penuh dengan resiko.

Kata kunci: *Mulatto, Hibriditas, Poskolonial*

Introduction

The Finnal Passage is Phillip's first novel published in 1985. This novel is an exploration of racial conflict the societies of the London. It occurs in Leila's life. She is 19 years old and she lives with her sick mother. She never knows her father. Her mother, who is 40 years old, has never told her about him as her skin is lighter than that of most of the other Caribbean islanders. She believes that she

was product of an affair of her mother with a white man, as her skin is different from the other people in her island, therefore they believe that she is a mulatto.

Meanwhile, Leila always questions herself whether she has any Negro blood or not. She often feels that she does not belong to a certain race because both races do not regard her as the part of their societies. She get discrimination because of her mixed parentage. She is

refused by white society and also black society. That is the kind of oppression that should be wiped out. This oppression absolutely does not appreciate the right of human being, especially for the people of mixed parentage.

Leila who is a mulatto is analyzed based on her hybrid identity. She is the product of miscegenation as a hybrid identity. In the *Key Concept Postcolonial Study*, (Ascroft, 2007:127) states that miscegenation is sexual union of different races, specifically whites with Negroes. The term miscegenation is the same like mulatto. Since Leila who is a mulatto is colonized by the others, as said before that she is regarded "different" and it means inferior. Therefore, Leila is colonized person because she is inferior in the society.

Homi Bhabha uses the term hybridity and the third space. The term is used to point the products of miscegenation or mixed-breeds. There are many problems which are experienced by miscegenation, sometimes, the miscegenation is rejected by society and sometimes they are not able to adapt to the society because they have got the half blood of two different races. Therefore, a certain society does not accept them as part of a certain culture because they are not one hundred percent belongs to their society.

Based on the discussion above, it is suitable to use theory of hybridity to analyze the problem of mixed-breed in *The Final Passage* since theory is used to criticize the product of miscegenation. The theory will be used in order to provide a better understanding of *The Final Passage* especially in relation to Leila's hybridity.

There are many reasons in selecting *The Final Passage* as the object matter. The first, one of the main problems in *The Final Passage* is an exploring of racial conflict. However, the racial conflict here is different from the other novels because the conflict here does not occur in the black race but in the mixed-breed. Therefore, the novel can be viewed from the postcolonial study, especially through Bhabha's perspective. The second reason of choosing the novel as the object matter is that the problem of the mixed-breeds also occurs in our societies, for there are many native people who marry to the foreigners. It often causes a problem to the product of miscegenation, who thinks that they do not belong to a certain culture. Sometimes, they are rejected by the societies because of their difference. Meanwhile, this issue still becomes the prominent issue in our society.

Research Methodology

This article uses the library research in collecting data concerning to the postcolonial issue and hybridity. This research is qualitative research. Qualitative data are taken from the form of words (written or spoken forms) and visual images (pictures) that are observed in collecting data concerning to the postcolonial issues, and the data taken from books, papers, articles, biography of the author and other resources taken from the internet. Finally, the analysis

of this research is presented in a descriptive way. All of the data were obtained from the Library of Faculty of Letters, library of Jember University.

Moreover, we study carefully all of the sources to discover facts and information about postcolonial issue especially from Homi Bhabha's perspective, hybridity. After finding sources, the next step of this research are close reading and make some notes to give a code for the important information related to the topic.

The thesis is composed in some ways. First, the writer collects, classifies, and verifies the data from the book as the main resource. Second, library research will be applied by gathering the information and the data from several books. The writer classifies the data collected. There are opinion, argument, fact, dialogues and the statement represent the death drive.

Discussion

As hybridity is a term of abuse for those who are producing of miscegenation or mixed-breeds, this research tries to discuss about the hybrid identity on Leila. Bhabha says that hybridity initiates new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation (1994:1). Therefore, hybridity refers to the mixing of cultural symbols and praxis from two cultures. The cultural symbols occurred in the case of Leila is the way of life. She adopts the way of life of both races. Since she is a mulatto, she tries to find her real identity by living in Black and also Whites' societies. This hybridity, however, makes her difficult to find her identity. As the mixing breed of Black and White she is still confused whether she is White or Black, from the explanation above Leila is a mulatto, she tries to find her real identity. When she married with Michael who was Black and poor man from St Patrick, Her mother wants a party in her child's wedding, but nobody walked with the wedding cake, danced or sang in the street because the people think that Leila is not part of the society.

The next day, Saturday Leila was married. But there was no string band, and nobody danced or sang in the street. And nobody walked with the wedding cake firmly balanced on their head. The service was as her mother had wanted it, strictly conventional, with Leila dressed from head to foot in a lacy white dress, large raindrop-like earrings in both her ears: and Michael looking smart in a dark blue suit, a white shirt and a tie. He had made an effort and it showed. Leila was grateful. (Phillips, 1985:48) In Leila's wedding party, her mother wants there is party for her child such the other Caribbean people always hold and Leila does what she wants, Leila wear white dress and large raindrop like earrings in both her ears. Although the society refuse her by there was no string band, and nobody danced or sang in the street. It means that while Leila is a mulatto and different from the other, but she is married by Caribbean culture. After she married with Michael and her mother goes to England for medical treatment, Leila makes decision to live in England. In England, she is alone because she finds her

mother died and so did her married. Michael soon returns to his habit, coming and going whenever he chooses to, leaving all household chores to Leila. He stops talking to his wife, is frequently drunk again and quits his job after only a few days to go into a business together with a newly-found friend of him. Also, Leila discovers a blonde hair on the shoulder of his jacket and draws her own conclusions. When she realizes that they have run out of money she starts working on the buses, but on her first day she has a breakdown and she is informed by the examining doctor that she is pregnant again. At the end of the novel Leila has come to realize that Michael is not going to be part of her future. It can be seen in quotation below:

She stripped the pillowcases off from the pillows and held one open. Then she took it across to the wardrobe and filled it with all the clothes that she had bought for herself since coming to England. There was not much, just a scarf, a pair of gloves and a jumper. She took out Michael's clothes from the wardrobe, then she emptied her drawer of unanswered and half-written letters. The drawer beneath hers was full of Calvin's English clothes, and she stuffed what she could in the pillowcase until it was full. (Phillips, 1985:200).

The quotation above shows how Leila is confused about her identity. In Caribbean, while Leila is not part of Black society she follows the wedding party as the other Caribbean and in England, whites society she changes Calvin's clothes with English clothes. It means that she follow whites dress or white culture because she changes the Calvin's clothes with English clothes, but she feels unsatisfied while her son wears English clothes.

During the past century, for a variety of reasons, more people have been crossing national and cultural borders than ever before. This, along with constantly developing communication technology, has seen to it that clear-cut distinctions, divisions and borders are no longer as easily definable as they once were. This process, now commonly referred to as 'globalisation,' has led to a rising trend of 'multiculturalism' and 'cultural hybridity,' terms often connected with celebratory views of our postmodern, postcolonial world as a colorful melting pot of cultures. However, what these celebratory views conveniently avoid recognizing, is that the increasing occurrence of hybridity places a growing number of people in a painful space in between identities where they are neither just this nor just that

A place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the Other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the 'moment' of politics. (Bhabha, 2001:10)

The feeling of otherness and unhomeliness are the condition of what Bhabha calls to hybrid. The explanations below explicitly discuss the unhomeliness of Leila in

Caribbean and England. In the novel tells that Leila has experiences of living in both societies, and then the otherness of Leila in both societies.

Hence, Bhabha suggests that hybridity is not so much a convergence of two original identities into a new transcendent one, but rather that the hybrid identity will always be intrinsically split. He states that the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (Bhabha, 1990:211). However, it is very hard for Leila to make herself fully emerge.

Conclusion

Leila, the fact that her skin is lighter than the other Caribbean is defined that she is the others. In addition, this perception makes her believe that she is different and she is regarded as other by both societies. She feels that she does not belong to a certain race because both races do not accept her as the part of them. She is not accepted by Whites because she is indicated has a Black skin and she is also not accepted Black because her physical appearance is not Black at all. Black regards her as a White girl, while Whites regard her as a Black skin. This condition also makes her in the feeling of unhomeliness. Even she is in the Black or in the Whites' society. She still thinks that she is not part of those societies. In the Whites society she feels that she does not belong. This condition makes her alienated and feels like psychological refugee. The psychological refugee in this case is the psychology of Leila who feels that she is not in her own society although she is in her own society.

The last conclusion is about her identity as a mulatto that makes her in complicated conditions. Since, she gets the bad treatments not only from Blacks but also the Whites. When they know that her skin is lighter than the other, they will directly be far from her. The same treatment she also gets from Whites. Black rejects to associate with her since they believe that Leila is a mulatto girl.

Acknowledgement

This article can only be finished with the great help and assistances from many helpful people. Therefore, we would like to convey our best appreciation to our honourable. All of lectures of English Department who have taught us much precious knowledge during studying at Faculty of Letters, and all of staffs of Central Library and Faculty of Letters' library for helping to borrow the books and references. In order to avoid the copy righted from the film source, this journal does not show the images from each scene as the discussion.

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