



Cultural Marginalization in N.H Senzai's *Shooting Kabul* Novel

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Abstract (10 pt, Calisto MT)

This study aimed at discovering the depiction of cultural marginalization and characters' resistance in N.H Senzai's *Shooting Kabul* novel. The characters of the novel that are Fadi and the member of his family were described experiencing the domination and alienation as the Eastern people. The characters as a minority are marginalized from the society because of the differences in culture. These differences motivate the major society to create a social class, and place the characters in the lower class as a confirmation that they are not equal. The characters judged by their inherent identity, not by their ability. Therefore, the conflict between the characters and the majority becomes a portrayal of cultural marginalization in society. Edward Said's theory in the concept of *Orientalism* was used to uncover the issue in *Shooting Kabul*. The theory discuss about the West as the Occident that dominate the East as the Orient. Furthermore, this study used descriptive qualitative method by describing and analyzing the dialogues and the narrations of the story in the novel. The result of this study described that cultural marginalization was formed by the domination and alienation of the Western people to discriminate the Eastern people. In addition, the study revealed the characters' resistance as the response of the Western discrimination through silence and fight back.

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INTRODUCTION

In this world, there are some countries that are known as multicultural country. One of them is the United States (US). It is formed because the people have differences in culture, race, religion, language, social class, skin colour, ethnic origin, and also political opinions. The differences were influenced by individual or community who migrated to the country. The immigrants come with various reasons: seek the greater job, find religious freedom, run away from persecution in their homeland, or secure themselves from political war. Obviously, the immigrants have different culture with the society, not only from physical look but also from the daily habit and mindset. These differences make the immigrants feel excluded and become a minority. Besides, the society as a majority build a strong boundary to separate them with the minority in order to make them look more exclusive and superior. The majority assume that the minority is outsiders or strangers to society and they felt appropriate to place the minority in the lower classes. The majority use their power to humiliate the minority. Consequently, this gap between the majority and the minority lead to build a cultural marginalization in the society. According to Tyson (2006, p.360), one has to be in a position of power as a member of the dominant group, which in America usually means that one has to be white. In other words, the minority will be equal with the majority if they are same in culture, specifically in the physical appearance.

The majority is increasingly powerful and underestimate people who are different from them. They considers that their culture is vastly superior to all others (Tyson, 2006, p.360). The minority continue to live with insults and ridicule. The majority draws a bold line for themselves, they do not want to mingle with the minority. They forget that in essence all humans are the same.

Case of cultural marginalization can be seen happening to the legendary singer, Freddie Mercury. He has the real name Farroukh Bulsara, and has a strong desire to change his name in order to look the same as the Western. In his past, he was always called by "pakkie" which meant ridicule for the people of Pakistan whereas he came from Tanzania. As an immigrant, Freddie was hard to find a job, so he works as a baggage handler at [Heathrow Airport](#). Freddie was excluded from the society until they know that Freddie has a great voice to become a singer.

Cultural marginalization is clearly illustrated in the novel entitled *Shooting Kabul* written by N.H. Senzai. *Shooting Kabul* revolves around Afghan refugees who fled his country because of the invasion of the Taliban. The main character in the story cannot get along with his new friend at school in Fremont, California because he is always ostracized by his friends. They think he is weird and sometimes away from him. Moreover, the main character always called by his identity background. He and his family struggle to live with the prejudice as a terrorist in their society. Their migration to United States is new beginning of live for their family.

Moreover, the objectives of the study were to find out the words that represent cultural marginalization in N.H Senzai's *Shooting Kabul* and to discover how is the character's resistance in N.H Senzai's *Shooting Kabul*.

In this study, some previous studies were explained to support the thesis. The study that discussed here was quoted from international journal article. The first study was written by Hamid Hammad Abed (2016) entitled *Marginality and Social Rejection in Amiri Baraka's Slave Ship*. The aim of his study was to find out the impact of marginality and social rejection of black characters in Baraka's *Slave Ship* who were brought to America to be sold as commodities. Abed mentioned that *Slave Ship* was a play about the Black Slave viewed as an individual rejected by the society. In the story, the Black Slave

had no name that treated as animal. To analyze the play, he used qualitative descriptive method with the theory of Abbotson. The result of his study was how the social marginality increase the inferiority of the middle class Black.

The second study entitled *Depicting the Orient in Wilkie Collins' The Moonstone* carried out by Amna Matar Al-Neyadi (2015). The goal of his study was for depicting the reflection of attitudes towards Orient and allowing Victorian reader to challenge the stereotype belief of Orient. When writes the story, Collins used *opium* and *tobacco* as a connotation of the Orient. Al-Neyadi used narrative technique and theory of Edward Said to analyze the story. In the end of his writing, the writer explain both characters (West and East) clearly that the West is realistic and the East is religious.

The third study was conducted by Akram Poralifard (2013) entitled *A Critical Look at Orientalism as envisaged in James Justinian Morier's Haji Baba of Ispahan*. Poralifard mentioned that the aims of the study was to reveal various layers of meaning as a result of four different reading novel. When analyzing the story, Poralifard used the ideology of Edward Said and his critical theory of Orientalist discourse. The result was, the fourth reading investigates the discrepancies and the contradictions in the novel and its history of reception in terms of deviations from the objectives of Orientalist ideology.

Based on the related studies above, the writer attempted to make a comparison to find the differences and the similarities in the studies. In the first study, the writer found out the similarity with this study. It focused on marginality, that individuals rejected by American society because of the cultural appearance. The individuals were being separated and treated as a different part of society. However, the first study used the theory of Susan Abbotson to strengthen the study. After make a comparison, the writer discovered a similarity of the second and third study. It was the using of Edward Said ideology and the theory of Orientalism to analyze the study. Notwithstanding, both studies have differences which the second study was raising the issue of Orientalism in Victorian era. It showed how India people treated unfairly by British society and struggle with the prejudice. They were often labeled as thieves because they are impoverished. The third study tried to uncover the meaning of Orientalism in that novel by using four different reading method. The critical reading generate the different perspective of the novel, and the ideology of Orientalism declared in the third reading. In the study, the writer found out the representation of Orientalism in the novel implicitly since the author of the novel is a British. The characters in the novel illustrated as a Persian muslim yet have a corruption on moral, cultural and religious life. The author attempts to signify that the Persian is the "other" and the European is the "self".

METHOD

In this study, the writer used the qualitative approach. The data were being collected by reading, understanding, and analyzing the object through the documents, and journal articles. According to Endraswara (2011, p.5), the descriptive qualitative method is the method in research that is described in words form or picture if necessary, not the numerals. Moreover, Bogdan in *Introduction to Qualitative Research Method* states:

“Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected in the form of word or picture rather than number. They often contain quotation and try to describe what particular situation or vie of the world, like in narrative form. The written words are very important in the qualitative.”

The statement means that qualitative method use critical thinking by comprehending and analyzing the text or picture. It does not use number or calculating, statistical and

technical analysis. The result of the method presented in the form of text or picture which contains several quotations from the experts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural marginalization is depicted by the characters which are Fadi and the member of his family. Fadi is the character who suffered from cultural marginalization at his school. When he was 11 years old, Fadi was forced to flee from Taliban that control his country, Afghanistan. He never imagined he would start his middle school in Fremont, California. He struggle to interact with his new friend and new culture in American middle school that it was so complicated.

The Representations of the Cultural Marginalization in *Shooting Kabul* by NH.Senzai *Being Dominated by Occident People*

In this novel, the characters are being depicted experiencing bullying in his school. Fadi, who is one of the characters, that experiences the bullying as the result of cultural marginalization. It is represented through this following quotation:

“LOOK! IT’S OSAMA,” shouted a familiar rough voice. Fadi stepped out of the boy’s bathroom and froze like a rabbit hearing a hawk. The door squaked shut behind him. He gazed down the hall, looking for the source of the voice. But the hall was bare, with only a few stranglers rushing to class before the bell rang.” (Shooting Kabul, 2010: 144)

In the quotation above, the character experiences cultural marginalization because of his religion and nationality. It can be seen when he is called “Osama”. When the Occident called him as “Osama”, it indicates the form of domination that the character experiences as the indictment of his cultural identity as a “muslim” that is being generalized as the criminal by the Occident. In this case, the character is being accused as the terrorist. Furthermore, the form of domination can be seen in the word “LOOK!! IT’S OSAMA” by using the capital letter that shows the character is being shouted at by the Occident. It indicates that the character is being humiliated in public. In the quotation above also reveals how the Occident think that they are more powerful than the Orient by doing bullying toward Fadi. “Rabbit hearing a hawk” represents how small and weak Fadi is. As the Orient, Fadi is being described to be the powerless one. Furthermore, it also shows how the Occident try to intimidate the Orient by acting as the one who has the power that is being represented as ‘hawk’. Thus, they also try to spread the fear toward Fadi so that Fadi, who is the Orient, feels intimidated by the Occident.

Being Alinated by Occident People

The cultural marginalization can be found in the term of alienation that is being experienced by Fadi and his family. It is depicted through this following quotation:

“WELCOME TO SAN FRANSISCO, announced the sign at the head of the cavernous international arrival hall. Fadi stood in the immigration line and looked around the sprawling airport in awe. Two other planes had arrived at the same time as their virgin Atlantic flight, and the sea of pearly gray carpet swarmed with people, all waiting to have their papers processed.” (Shooting Kabul, 2010: 45)

In this quotation above, it can be seen in their arrival, Fadi feels alienated in the new country. “Stood in the immigration line” shows that Fadi is an immigrant who tries

to live in the Occident's country. The word "awe" reveals that Fadi feels inferior because the new country is too fascinating for him that he thinks he is not belong in there. The way how Fadi knows the detail in the airport shows that he is being amazed also wondered because he is entering a new country with different culture.

Resistances in Shooting Kabul by NH. Senzai

Resistance through Silence

The first form of resistance that can be seen as the response of the Eastern is silence. It can be seen through the following quotation:

"He looked quizzically from Fadi to Ike and Felix. "Any problems here, boys?". "No. We just needed to take a leak," said Ike, as if everything were normal. "And you?" asked the Principal Hornstein, turning toward Fadi. Fadi's throat was dry, his tongue stuck on the roof of his mouth. He looked at Ike and Felix, who were standing like innocent choirboys. "No," he finally mumbled. "No problem." (Shooting Kabul, 2010: 146)

In the quotation above, it can be seen how Fadi shows his resistance by keeping quite. "Fadi's throat was dry" indicates that Fadi hesitates whether he should speak up or not. There is a pressure also ambivalence in Fadi's heart. Furthermore, "his tongue stuck on the roof of his mouth" represents that there is something serious if Fadi speaks up. He realizes that when he speaks up then it will give him another problem. Therefore, instead of getting involve in another problem, Fadi choose to silent as his resistance. By saying "No," and "no problem" shows that Fadi choose to keep silent in order to avoid another problem that he may get.

Resistance through Fight Back

The emotion that is being suppressed for a long time makes Fadi explode. After stay silent and not complaining about the bullies, Fadi shows the form of resistance through fight back. It is being represented in the quotation below:

"Noooo! I need that to win the competition! Blind rage flowed through Fadi, fueling a sudden burst of energy. He spotted Mariam's tin box and he growled—a deep, guttural animal sound. He twisted around and grabbed Ike by the shoulders. With superhuman force he pulled him down. Before Felix could react, Fadi used his legs to flip Ike to the ground and scrambled on top of the redhead's stomach". (Shooting Kabul, 2010: 184)

The feeling that has being suppressed for a long time has explodes. Fadi cannot stand the bullies anymore because they have gone too far. "Fueling a sudden burst of energy" shows how his anger has turn into his power that Fadi has been hides for a long time. "a deep, guttural animal sound" depicts the anger and all his true feelings. He has been being deeply hurt by them because they have dominated Fadi for a long time. In the quotation above also depicts Fadi's resistance that is shown in the word "he pulled him down". It shows how Fadi as the Orient who is always being considered as the weak creature show them that he is also a human being that can angry and shows their true feeling. "Flip Ike to the ground and scrambled" shows that Fadi fights them back. Moreover, "on top of the redhead's stomach" depicts that the one who Fadi's fight is the Occident. There is a different culture that lead Fadi into being marginalized. In this stage, Fadi's resistance shows the self-representation of his people.

CONCLUSION

Cultural marginalization in N.H Senzai's *Shooting Kabul* novel is strongly depicted by the characters Fadi. He experiences the marginalization when he enters to school. In there, Fadi feels being alienated because he is different from the Occident. Eventually, it leads Fadi to separate himself from others that makes him alone and does not have friend. Furthermore, he is also being bullied by the Occident that makes him suffer in his school life. Subsequently, Fadi also experiences of being stereotyped because of his cultural background. He and his family struggle in their daily life because they worry that they may get into a trouble because of being marginalized.

However, the character also does some resistances over the marginalization. In this novel, the resistance appears in two forms of resistances, that is silence and fight back. The act of silence appears when Fadi wants to avoid another problem that might harm himself when he is alone. Moreover, he does not want to be labeled as a trouble maker. Thus, the form of resistance through fight back rises when Fadi cannot hold it any longer. Furthermore, when Fadi have friends who are on his side, it makes Fadi confident to fight back. As the result, it shows that the cultural marginalization affects Fadi's behavior.

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