CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY IN CHRISTINE PIPER'S *AFTER DARKNESS*: A PESRPECTIVE OF MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE BY MINGSHUI CAI

Sari Fitria
Pascasarjana Ilmu Sastra Universitas Gadjah Mada
nansajuak@yahoo.com

Abstract
This study is aimed to reveal the authenticity of After Darkness as multicultural literature. Therefore, the characteristic of multicultural literature in After Darkness is described as a beginning part of this study. Then, the level of authenticity in this novel will be measured. In the last part, it is explained why this novel can show that level of authenticity. The concept of multicultural literature by Mingshui Cai is applied in this study. Cai offers cultural authenticity as a tool to evaluate multicultural literature. This cultural authenticity consists of cultural boundaries, ethnic perspective, and brute facts. Besides, the concept of implied author is used to reveal the author's cultural identity. The result of this study shows that After Darkness can be classified as multicultural literature because it focuses on those who are underrepresented in multicultural society. In addition, it is shown that After Darkness is authentic multicultural literature. The description of Japanese cultural-social condition in this novel is appropriate with ethnic perspective and brute facts. The cultural boundaries portrays that the author (Christine Piper) has brief knowledge about Japanese culture.

Keywords: multicultural literature, cultural authenticity, underrepresented culture

1. INTRODUCTION

> *"While working at a Japanese hospital in the part of Broome, Dr. Ibaraki is arrested as an enemy alien and sent to Loveday internment camp in a remote corner of South Australia. There, he learns to live among a group of men who are divided by culture and allegiance."*
>
> (Christine Piper, *After Darkness*)

A country can be classified as a multicultural land if there are a lot of cultures grown there. Some people argue that this country is a wealthy land due to their numerous cultures. In fact, multicultural condition creates diversity that evokes inequality. Parekh (2008:15) states that the diversity in multicultural land refers to cultural differences. These differences cannot be avoided. It forms majority and minority group in multicultural land. As a result, conflict becomes a part of multicultural society.

In multicultural society, majority group consists of people from dominant culture while minority group is those who come from underrepresented culture. Parekh (2008:29) said that cultural domination is basic desire concealed in mind. Therefore, conflict caused by cultural differences is a predictable matter.

There are some cases expose how cultural differences arouse conflict. For example, some cases that happened in Australia. Australia has had multicultural society since English colonization in 18th century. At that time, many immigrants from Germany, Italia, China, Japan

and Philippines worked and lived in Australia after the end of World War I[25]. However, conflict caused by cultural differences still happened many times in this multicultural country. On December 11th, 2005, for example, there was an attack by White Australian toward Middle East people. In this conflict, 12 people of Middle East got injured. Besides, there were numerous pamphlets and posters showed Moslem as monsters, wild animals, barbarians, found in Sydney around 2000 (Dagistanli via Collins: 22).

In multicultural countries that place western culture as mainstream culture, inequality can be found through prohibition toward some tradition done by those who come from underrepresented culture. For example, the arranged marriage acted by most of Asian in England, the refusal of *Sikh* to wear helmet because they must wear turban for cultural reason, the band of Hindu people to do cremation, etc. (Parekh: 2008).

The cultural and social condition of minority group in multicultural society is also reflected in literary works. The works are written by both insider and outsider authors. Unfortunately, the cultural and social condition of minority group is not described authentically in some works. In fact, authenticity is an important element in multicultural literature. Through the authenticity in multicultural literature, equality in multicultural society can be pursued.

One of literary works that depicts cultural and social condition of multicultural society is *After Darkness,* a novel written by Christine Piper. This novel won *The Australian/Vogel's Literary Award 2014* and nominated for *Readings New Australian Writing Award 2014*. It is about inequality in Australian multicultural society. Through this novel, Piper portrays the interaction among minority groups, also interaction between those minorities with the majorities before and during World War II. Besides, *After Darkness* is written by a bicultural author. Piper is an Australian-Japanese, born in Seoul, Korea Selatan in 1979. Her mother is Japanese and her father is Australian.

Based on the explanation above, it shows that *After Darkness* is a novel written by an insider author and it depicts the cultural social condition of Japanese as a part of Australian multicultural society. Therefore, the authenticity of this novel as multicultural literature needs to be revealed and the level of this authenticity needs to be measured.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

In this study, multicultural literature concept by Mingshui Cai is applied. Cai explains about this concept in his book *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults: Reflections on Critical Issues* (2002). The concept of multicultural literature comes from some questions, such as 'Who can create true multicultural literature?', 'Can insider and outsider author write authentic multicultural literature?', 'How to evaluate multicultural literature?'

The debate centered insiders versus outsiders is not only a verbal battle over the question of who can portray cultural authenticity in literary creation, but it also involves power struggle over whose books get published. Furthermore, it is not only about the relationship of author's ethnicity and his/her literary work, but it is more about the relationship between imagination and the author's experience (Cai, 2002:38). In her/his multicultural literature, the author should present realistic culture. Therefore, it needs a tool, called cultural authenticity, to evaluate multicultural literature. If it is found that there is an unrealistic multicultural literature, the work should be disregarded no matter how imaginative and how great it is.

a. Cultural Boundaries

It is important to do any kinds of efforts to get a brief understanding about another culture, but is more important to understand how strong and how authentic the relationship between the author and the culture so that she/he can write multicultural literature. Cai (2002:40) agrees with Bank who proposes a four-level hierarchy of cross cultural competency to measure authors' authentic connection with another culture. They are:

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[25] Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

a. Level I: The individual experiences superficial and brief cross-cultural interactions.
b. Level II: The individual begins to assimilate some of the symbols and characteristics of the "outside" ethnic group.
c. Level III: The individual is thoroughly bicultural.
d. Level IV: The individual is completely assimilated into the new ethnic culture.

An author is in level I if she/he, for instance, has visited Chinatown, eaten some Chinese food and read a few books of Chinese. In this level, it can be concluded that the author has no enough qualification to write a story about Chinese culture. On the other hand, if an author has reached the highest level, she must have a great understanding about the culture she wants to tell. Indirectly, racial problems can be solved slowly because the author is able to explain about another culture in a right perspective.

b. Ethnic Perspective

A difficult task confronting writers who try to truthfully reflect the reality of an ethnic culture, whether or not they are from that culture is to grasp the perspective of that culture in order to provide culturally authentic literature for the readers. This perspective is reflected in culturally specific ways of living, believing, and behaving. The key is to take on the group's perspective "like actors who take on a role so thoroughly that they come to be identified with it".

Basically, it is difficult and challenging to introduce another culture. Therefore, an author must act as a cultural messenger in her/his multicultural literature. Unfortunately, the author may unconsciously impose her/his cultural beliefs and values on the culture she/he tries to recreate. Nodelman (via Cai:2002) called this as 'cultural arrogance'.

Actually, ethnic perspective has nothing to do with gene but experiences. In this case, there is no guarantee that an insider author is more compatible in describing a culture in her multicultural literature. Some authors fail in writing good multicultural literature. It is not because they are lack of imagination but they do not have any accurate ethnic perspective.

c. Brute Facts

Imagination is creative power but it is not master of reality. In fact, imagination can be limited by reality. Unfortunately, cultural barriers take a role in developing authors' imagination. As the effect, they are not able to present an accurate social condition in their works. Cai called this brute facts. It imposes great constraints and limitations on the author's imagination, especially in historical fiction. Cultural differences are brute facts that limit the author's imagination and put constraints on his or her literary choices. To overcome this problem, the authors need to do many efforts. If a member of an ethnic group has to make great efforts to develop the group's special sense of reality, a non- member who is unfamiliar with the ethnic culture has to make double efforts to get that sense.

d. Reader Response Theory

In multicultural literature, reader response theory is needed to identify the role of the author. Reader response theory is applied to reveal the author cultural identity and to look out how far the identity influences her/his literary works. Booth (via Cai, 2002: 58) states that there is a presence of the author in the text. It is called implied author. The implied author is different from the author. The author's presence is implied in his or her artistic creation. It is different from the real author who writes the book. The implied author is the real author's "second self."

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
a. After Darkness as Multicultural Literature
Those who are underrepresented in After Darkness

In *After Darkness,* Piper represents 'those who are underrepresented' through Japanese society who lives in Australia. This Japanese society consists of full-blood Japanese and half-blood Japanese. These immigrants began to come to Australia in 1920s. At that time, the

government of Australia let immigrant to work and stay in their country[26]. Thus, Australia grows as a multicultural land.

The Japanese society in this novel is underrepresented by people from dominant culture. In this case, full-blood Japanese are dominated by white Australian. Meanwhile, half-blood Japanese are discriminated by both white Australian and full-blood Japanese. Piper describes full-blood Japanese as Japanese community who live in Australia. Some of them have lived there for couple of years so that they can speak English fluently, while others communicate with gesture because they are not able to speak in English. In fact, no matter how long they have stayed in Australian, they keep get discrimination from white Australian.

The full-blood Japanese is underrepresented by those from dominant culture. Piper illustrates a group of white Australian who take a part in a formal ceremony held by Japanese society. However, they refuse to join in informal events.

> I was surprised at the food. I'd eaten at the Kanemoris' several times before and had always enjoyed Mrs Kanemori's traditional cooking—she prepared dishes such as glazed eel on rice and cold noodles with pork, egg and cucumber; meals I sorely missed from home. I was surprised Kanemori had catered to the Western palate on this occasion. Yet none of the white men at the ceremony had come to the party. Indeed, the guests on the verandah were almost entirely Japanese or at least half-Japanese, save for the Chinese wives of a few of the men. (p.126).

The quotation above implies that white Australian respects Japanese community as a formality only. In fact, they do not think that this minority community is a part of them. This dominant culture rejects to have a personal relationship with Japanese communit even though some of them have become Australian citizen. They do not make friends with them and they implicitly warn minority culture not to enter the border between them. In the quotation above, Piper depicts how Kanemori family prepares western food in their party so that the White Australian can enjoy the party. It reveals some efforts done by minority group to build a good relationship with majority. However, the majority ignores these efforts. They reject the Japanese community by ignoring the party.

Moreover, racism is also a kind of discrimination faced by minority group. Fortier (2008:27) says that racism occurs because an ethnic assumes that they are better and more powerful than other ethnics. To maintain their position, they ignore other.

> We were at the station less than a minute when the whistle blew. As the train lurched forward, the woman grabbed her daughter's hand and dragged her towards our carriage. She came so close so I could see a mole above her lip. She spat. A glob landed on the window in front of my face.
> 'Bloody Japs!' she said, shaking her fist. (p.3)

Piper portrays that racism is faced by Japanese society in multicultural lands may happen in public area.it indicates that racism is a common thing in this land. Everyone from dominant culture can discriminate minority no matter they are men or women, young or old, educated or uneducated. The quotation also depicts that racism has been introduced to kids. It can be revealed from the action of the adult White Australian who intimates minority in front of her child. She humiliates the minority with her words without considering kid's presence. As the effect of this careless action, discrimination toward minority grows rapidly in multicultural land. Those who come from underrepresented culture will not only get verbal humiliation but also physical one.

Meanwhile, half-blood Japanese also get discrimination even though they are a part of Japanese community. They got double oppression from dominant groups (White Australian and full-blood Japanese). Piper describes how the half-blood Japanese is described as those who are

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[26] http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics3/federation/timeline1.pdf

underrepresented because they are regarded as half-caste, the one who does not belong to any community. They regarded as aliens.

Generally, the full-blood Japanese discriminate the half-blood Japanese because there are some differences in their physical appearance. As the effect, the full-blood Japanese do not want to admit half-blood Japanese as a part of them. The full-blood Japanese think that they are able to distinguish whether a person is full-blood or half-blood Japanese based on their physical characteristics, such as nose, eyes, and height. It indicates the rejection of full-blood Japanese toward the half-blood Japanese.

> I sensed a movement to my left and saw a figure come to stillness about thirty feet away. As I stared at him, I know he was half-caste. The eyes were too round and the nose was too broad for a Japanese. (p.15)

The quotation shows that the differences in physical condition become a reason why full-blood Japanese ignore half-blood Japanese. This ignorance also leads into discrimination and intimidation. In perspective of full-blood Japanese, half-blood Japanese is not appropriate to be a member of any group because they come from nowhere. If they are Japanese-Australian, they do not belong to Japanese or Australian. It is because they only 'half' of them. For the full-blood Japanese, this 'half' means not complete to be a part of an ethnic.

Power struggle in After Darkness

In multicultural society, the minority group should face inequality. This leads into oppression and discrimination. Therefore, the minority needs to have power struggle to protect themselves. If the minority has power struggle, there is possibility for them to be accepted and respected by dominant group (Cai, 2012:7). In *After Darkness,* powers struggle is done by Japanese community that becomes a part of Australian multicultural society. This Japanese community, actually, is a reflection of minority culture in multicultural land.

Power struggle can be done through some protests toward rules stated by majority group. Usually, these rules are arranged for the dominant's importance, so the minority group needs to fight as their power struggle to get equality. In *After Darkness,* Piper depicts that the minority group in multicultural land need to have power struggle toward the rules which humiliates them.

> 'He reckons I took more than my fair share because I took two pieces big. As if counting how many pieces I take isn't enough, they've also got an eye on the size of the meat we take. Next they'll be counting how many pieces f toilet paper we use.' (p.17)

'Playing' with the rules is a kind of power struggle done by minority group. When the minority group keeps agree with rules stated by majority group but they follow the rules on their own way, it implies that the minority has had power struggle. It indicates how this minority group do not let themselves harmed by the rules. On the other hand, they can get some advantageous from the rules. In the quotation above, Piper portrays how the minority group 'play' with the rules about how much food they can take. Moreover, Piper reveals that power struggle can be applied by voicing their argument. The character in the quotation above frankly shows his protests towards other rules that make them underrepresented.

b. Cultural Authenticity in *After Darkness*
Ethnic Perspective

Ethnic perspective relates to a perspective of an ethnic that must be understood by authors. Thus, Piper's understanding toward Japanese culture will be revealed in this part. This Japanese culture lies in the way of living, behaving and believing.

One of culture for Japanese is *ojigi* (bowing). Basically, Japanese greets each other by doing *ojigi.* Besides, *ojigi* is done to apologize, to send thanks, and to introduce self. In *After Darkness,* Piper illustrates that Japanese in Australia keeps doing *ojigi* in their daily activity,

(1) 'Sensei, it's an honour to have you join our team,' the young man said, bowing deeply. (p.29)

(2) …, but I recognised him as the kind 'uncle' who used to piggyback me when I visited their house. Mrs. Sasaki appeared beside him and bowed deeply. (p.58)

In the quotation above, Piper describes Japanese doing deep bow to another. The description portrays the way of Japanese giving high respect toward other. Unfortunately, Piper does not give a brief explanation about how this *ojigi* is done. In fact, Cai (2002:41) states a culture should be described in detail to avoid misrepresentation. In the first quotation above, Piper portrays *ojigi* done in working condition. It is shown that a lower employee does *saikeirei* to upper one. In Japanese culture, it is common for employee to give respect by doing *saikeirei* (Inouye: 2008:62). However, in the second quotation, Piper portrays how an old woman (Mrs. Sasaki) does *saikeirei* to a younger person (Ibaraki) as a symbol of respect. It is not appropriate with De Mente's opinion in his book Etiquette Guide to Japan. De Mente explains that *saikeirei* is deep bow done to give an honor to the emperor of Japan in feudal era. However, after World War II, the emperor rejects *saikeirei* as a tradition to honor him only. Therefore, *saikeirei* nowadays is done as a symbol to give honor toward certain people (2006:18). In this case, Piper has minor inaccuracy when she depicts an old woman does *seikeirei* to the younger one.

Another ethnic perspective framed by Piper relates to Japanese belief, Shinto and Buddha. In his book, *Nihojin wa naze mushukyo na no ka'* (1996), sold more than 100.000 exemplar in Japan, Ama Toshimaru states that Japanese life is influenced much by Shinto and Buddha (Bestor dan Yamagata, 2011:66). It is shown in numerous festivals, annual events, traditional ceremonies and rituals done by Japanese. In *After Darkness,* Piper also portrays this belief. However, she illustrates about Buddha only.

(1) I looked up the heavens and silently said a prayer of thanks. (p.1)

(2) Trying to calm my mind, I continued walking along the fence. I was surprised to discover a Buddhist altar in the space between the last row of tents and the outside fence. It was a simple structure, no more than shoulder high. It was made from unpainted timber; the roof was cracked and faded from the elements. Two rough-hewn doors splayed open, revealing a miniature scroll with the words 'Eternal Happiness'. In Japan, I would have lit a stick of incense at such a time. (p.14)

In the quotations above, it is shown that Japanese is a community who has religion. The word 'pray' in the first quotation shows that they believe in God. In Japane, God is called Kami. The belief toward Kami is also strengthened in the second quotation, which is shown by Buddhist altar in Japanese camp. Sugimoto (2010:263) explains that almost all Japanese always have Shinto Shrine and Buddhist Altar in their house. It is related to *mana,* Japanese belief about mystical power in living and nonliving things. It makes them not to believe in one God only. Japanese tend to combine Buddha and Shinto in their life. However, in *After Darkness,* Piper does not depict this belief. She ignores Shinto and only talks about Buddha. In fact, Shinto has been a part Japanese since Meiji kingdom. Japanese is regarded themselves as special creature because they are the only one owning Shinto from generation to generation. Japanese will not ignore Shinto even though they also believe in Buddha (Sugimoto, 2010:264).

Brute Facts

Inaccuracy in describing social condition of minority group in multicultural society can be done by both insider and outsider authors. However, in order to create authentic multicultural literature, a minor inaccuracy should be avoided (Cai, 2002:43). In this part, the authenticity of Japanese social condition in *After Darkness* will be evaluated.

Tikonov (2013:1) states a marriage between Japanese and non-Japanese has begun when Japan colonized Korean in 1910-1945. At that time, the citizens of Korea are forced to work for Japan and to help them in bigger invention. As a result, many Japanese and Korean got

married. In *After Darkness,* Piper also talks about this marriage. She shows how Japanese and Chinese immigrant in Australia got married.

> His father was a Chinese immigrant who'd found a modest fortune on the goldfields and moved to Broome to start a restaurant, eventually marrying the Japanese daughter of a laundry owner. (p.17)

The quotation exposes the background of Johnny Chang who was bicultural. His father is Chinese and his mother is Japanese. Piper describes that Johnny Chang is 27 years old in 1942. It reveals that intermarriage has occurred to his parents in 1915s. The description of this social condition is appropriate with the history found in article mentioned before. It is stated that Japanese has been immigrant to Australia since 1880. This immigration condition also takes a part in intermarriage between Japanese and non-Japanese.

Another fact is relating to half-blood Japanese, commonly called *haafu.* Nowadays, Japanese assumes that it is incredible to be born as *haafu.* Japanese think that h*aafu* has more perfect physical appearance than full-blood Japanese. *Haafu* also have international brief knowledge and they have more chance in getting classy job (Yoshida, 2004: iv). On the other hand, in 1940s, *haafu* is described as half-caste. Full-blood Japanese does not only ignore but also reject them.

> (1) 'You haafu fools don't deserve the Japanese blood in you!' said an old man at the mayor's table, speaking in Japanese. (p.8)

> (2) These four men. I was sitting in the mess hall after lunch, trying to write a letter, and they came and told me to leave. They spoke in Japanese, so I didn't know what they were saying at first, so I didn't move, and they just started yelling at me and grabbed me. One of them hit me with a tent pole. That's how I got this.
> 'He nodded at the wound on his arm. I'm sorry, I do not know your name.
> 'Stanley Suzuki,' he said. But you can call me Stan'. (p. 74-75)

The quotation implies the condition of *haafu* who got verbal and physical violence. Yoshida (2004:5-6) identified that before and during World War II, Japanese society discriminates *haafu.* It happened until 1960s. *Haafu* was regarded as community that did not have any understanding about Japanese culture. In her work, Piper reflects *haafu* condition in 1942s. They are rejected and discriminated.

Cultural Boundaries

Piper is an author who has a good understanding about Japanese culture. It is not only because she is a bicultural, but also because he has studied many things about Japanese culture. She has visited and stayed in Japan for several times. She also has a closed interaction with Japanese community because she is half-Japanese. In addition, she does some Japanese traditions and customs in her life. Piper also did some researches that relates to Japanese life. Based on this fact, Piper is in Level III in cross cultural competency. In order to write a multicultural literature, this level is quite good because the author has had experiences about the culture she wants to write. However, Piper is still not able to reach the highest level (Level IV) in cross cultural competency. In this level, an author must be a part of that ethnic group so that she can assimilate totally with the culture.

Implied Author

In *After Darkness,* the implied author tends to give voice to minority group. The implied author sees that there in inequality between majority and minority group in Australian multicultural society. In implied author's perspective, the minority is underrepresented in this situation. They got discrimination and oppression by majority group because they have difference culture. The implied author also portrays how this minority group got verbal and

physical violence from the dominant. In short, it can be stated that the implied author supports the minority group.

4.   CONCLUSION

The result of this study shows that Piper, as an insider author, is able to write multicultural literature that has a high-level authenticity through his novel, *After Darkness.* It is caused by Piper's good understanding about Japanese culture. *After Darkness* can be classified as multicultural literature because it tells about multicultural society in Australia. Moreover, it focuses on 'they who are underrepresented' and their power struggle.

Meanwhile, the authenticity of *After Darkness* can be explored through the appropriateness of cultural-social condition in this novel with ethnic perspective and brute facts. The research shows that Piper just does some minor inaccuracy when she describes about Japanese culture and Japanese social condition in Australia before and during the World War II. Finally, it can be concluded that Piper is able to write multicultural literature because she has closeness with Japanese ethnic.

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