

The Construction of Cultural Identity on “*Tamu dari Jakarta*”

Short Story

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Abstract

Identity is liquid and changeable as time goes by. The change of identity is possible since identity can be formed both from the past and from the future. In the case of cross culture, one's identity may have certain problems especially in determining cultural identity. Problems in cultural identity have become an interesting topic to be discussed. It was also an interesting topic for writer to color their literature work. The focus of this research is the cultural identity in “*Tamu dari Jakarta*” (2002) short story by Jujur Prananto. The form of this research is a textual analysis research using the concept of cultural identity by Stuart Hall. This research shows that the cultural identity of Ratna is constructed through positioned and positioning identity that is shown from the cross-cultural interaction between characters in this story. Furthermore, the proses of being positioned and positioning was based on the stereotype of Jakarta citizen. However this story gave a different view and new insight on the stereotype of Jakarta citizen.

Keywords: *cultural identity, cross-cultural, Jakarta citizen*

Introduction

Identity is an description of a person through many kinds of aspect that show in one's physical look, such as race, character, life style, norm, value, and many more. Identity is needed by individual to make they exist in the society. According to Ashton in Jenkins (2008), identity is a classification or mapping a person as part of the society. Identity classification is a multi-dimension, which includes our own reflection, our viewpoint against other people, and also other people viewpoint against us. In other words, identity is formed through many ways a person positioning themselves and ways a person being positioned by others.

Stuart Hall stated that the concept of identity is not the essence but the strategy and the positioning (Hall, 1996:3). According to Hall, identity transforms continuity over time. Moreover, Hall proposes a concept of cultural identity into two approaches'. The first one, cultural identity is being formed from the community that who has one shared culture or history. The second one, cultural identity can be marked with many similarities and differences that occur. Moreover, cultural identity not only formed from the past but also from the future. In Hall's concepts, it was known by the term 'being' and 'becoming' Cross-culture have a high possibility in creating an issue on one's identity, especially cultural identity. Literature work as a real life reflection, displays many kinds of problems in live including the issue of cross-cultural interaction. Literature work was being made not only from the writer though or idea but also as a description of the real existing social environment. Through literature work as a media, certain emancipatory critic may exist.

This research focuses on the cultural identity that is shown in "Tamu dari Jakarta" (2002) short story by Jujur Prananto. Jujur Prananto is well known as a scriptwriter and he becomes a famous writer when he wrote the scenario of the movie 'ada apa dengan cinta' on 2002. Before entering a role as a writer, Jujur Prananto were active in writing short story for the Kompas newspaper. "Tamu dari Jakarta" was one on his work that is included in the collection of Kompas most wanted short story.

"Tamu dari Jakarta" is a story about a character named Ratna who was from a Village (Klaten) from the viewpoint of her childhood friend from the same village. Ratna moved to Jakarta, and when she comeback to Klaten, the villagers no longer see her as one of them instead the saw her as a visitor or according to the title of this short story, a guest from Jakarta. This situation describe an issue in one's cultural identity to experience a cross regional interaction. Many kinds of interactions was shown in this short story, such as how a person who move from the village to the city position their own cultural identity and how a village does a positioning against a person who move from their region. These two things are being discussed in the following part of this research.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural identity

Stuart Hall in his article entitled *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990) divided two thoughts about cultural identity. First, cultural identity is being formed from the community that who has one shared culture or history. It means that culture is a reflection on one shared experience of history and custom. Second, cultural identity can be marked with many similarities and differences that occur.

Cultural identity can be formed by various differences and similarities.

Cultural identity formed from the things that was already there or *being* and from things that will happen in the future or *becoming*. Identity is also constructed on how we positioning ourselves and also on how we are being positioned by others. Through difference we can think over about our cultural identity positioning and being positioned.

Through the concept of cultural identity by Hall, it can be seen that cultural identity was constructed from differences, similarities, and also from cross-cultural interaction that may constructed a new cultural identity. The term of national cultural identity is a holistic approach that people do to describe, justify and praise an action based on what other people created for themselves and also to make one's maintain his/her existence in live (Fanon, 1963 in Hall, 1990: 237).

Methodology

The method that used in this research is by qualitative approach. The data in this research is not in the form of numbers but the object being analyzed will be described in the form of narration or language. This is in line with the statement of Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009: 7) that in qualitative research a researcher will produce a narrative or textual description of the phenomenon based on the researcher study focus. The author performs several stages to conduct a comparative literature research on this short story. First, the researchers read the short story comprehensively by close reading techniques to gain an in-depth understanding. Secondly, the researchers make coding and record words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or paragraphs that relate to the research objective.

Third, the researchers do interpretation through the data that has been collected. Finally, the researchers analyzed the data and write the interpretation results.

Findings and discussion

Positioning cultural identity by one's self on "tamudari jakarta"

Entering a new cultural environment will directly affect changes in one's identity. Interaction with the surrounding community will make a person attempts to identify themselves by representing themselves in front of others. Self-representation helps a person to recognize him or herself and to recognize the others (Sherman, 1994: 163).

In a book called *Makna Budaya dalam Komunikasi Antar Budaya* (2007), Alo liliweri shows various factors that may change one's cultural identity. Liliweri explained that a new cultural identity could be formed either deliberately or accidentally. One of the factors that constructed new cultural identity is cross culture. In the case of cross regional a person will be affected by the display of the dominant culture, so that they feels that the cultural identity they have can no longer accommodate them. In *Tamu dari Jakarta* short story, can be seen how Ratna positioning herself as a Jakarta citizen. Difference culture between the village and the city used as a rationale that differentiates herself (as a citizen) with her friend, Atik (as a villager).

"Ah kamu pikir aku tidur selalu pakai AC? AC di rumah saya nyalakan paling siang hari saja. Dari dulu sebenarnya saya ingin punya rumah seperti rumahmu ini. Maksud saya rumah di lingkungan yang alamiah. Tidak perlu AC, hemat listrik.."

"Ah, you think I always sleep with air conditioner? The air conditioner in my house was turned on only by noon. I have always wanted a house like yours. I mean a house in a natural environment. No need air conditioner, saving electricity"

The statement above shows difference between cultures in the village with culture in the city, which is Jakarta is well known as a city that is no longer natural and it makes the Jakarta citizen have a custom in using air conditioner. In this case, Ratna compare her house in modern city with Atik house in natural village. Ratna shows her identity not as villagers of Klaten by stressing that she

come to Klaten to visit as visitor and not to come home, in that she mention her house now is in Jakarta.

“Omong-omong kalian punya tidak kenalan arsitek yang bisa diajak kerja cepat? Untuk merombak desain rumah saya itu. Kepinginnya sih tahun depan saya sudah bisa bongkar dan membangun yang sama sekali baru. Jatuhnya lebih murah kok, daripada kerja tambal-sulam.”

“By the way do you guys know an architect who can work fast? To remarkably change the design of my house. I was hoping by next year I can be able to torn down and build up an entire new house for me. It will be cheaper rather than renovate by *patchwork*.”

Once again, Ratna states the differences between herself and Atik. Atik renovated her house as a preparation to welcome Ratna. The renovation that Atik done have a purpose to show Ratna that she doesn't have any financial difficulties, which was a stereotype on citizen's perspective toward villagers. However, the renovation that Atik hardly do was only by changing old furniture. This was viewed by Ratna as a *patchwork* act. Therefore, Ratna positioning herself as a Jakarta citizen by stated on the differences on how the citizen and villager renovated their house. Ratna stressed out that she adopted the fancy modern culture in using architect to renovate her house, not like Atik who renovate her house by herself without help from the expert.

In positioning herself as Jakarta citizen, Ratna follow the custom and the attitude of Jakarta citizen. Ratna's modern behaviors style like Jakarta citizen was shown in this story through Atik viewpoint. Atik shares her story about Ratna when Ratna want to leave and go back home to Jakarta.

“Sebetulnya dia ada duit, tapi karena buru-buru harus balik ke Jakarta dia bilang perlu persediaan *cash* saya lalu diberi *cek*”

“Actually she has the money, but since she was in a hurry to go back home to Jakarta, she said she need cash, and she gave me checkbook”

Through the quotation above, it can clearly see how Ratna show her identity as a busy person who lives in a big city. Ratna must go back home to Jakarta immediately due to her business affairs. Ratna lend some money from

Atik because she said she did not have hard cash at the moment. Ratna literally used the word *cash* in the middle of bahasa language she was using, as a way to show her modern identity. She also showed that the thing she was doing (giving check instead of cash) was a common thing to do when she was in Jakarta.

Various quotations above show the effort of Ratna in positioning herself as a Jakarta citizen and no longer as a Klaten villagers by distinguishing herself (the new Ratna, modern luxury citizen) and her childhood friend Atik (traditional simple villagers). This shows that identity is liquid and does not have any root, that makes one's identity changeable over time.

Positioned cultural identity by others on “*tamu dari jakarta*”

Ratna's identity as Jakarta citizen was being strengthened by Klaten villagers, they viewed Ratna as a guest who came to Klaten and not as a person who comes home to Klaten. Previously Ratna was still viewed by the main character as insider by saying that Ratna “not other people (but our own people / insider)”. However, the main character and his wife, Atik, welcome Ratna as no longer their long lost best friend but as a guest from Jakarta. This is seen by many preparations that they did to welcome a guest from a big city.

Selama ini kami memang jarang kedatangan tamu dari jauh. Bagi orang Jakarta – begitu menurut Atik – rumah bukan sekedar ‘asal bisa ditempati’, melainkan sudah menyerupai pakaian yang bisa menunjukkan watak serta martabat pemakainya. Maka menyambut tamu dari Jakarta berarti harus menyesuaikan pula dengan cara berpikir mereka.

So far we rarely have visitors from far away. For Jakarta citizens – according to Atik's viewpoint – a house is not something that ‘as long as it can be occupied’, but it resembles clothes that show the character and the dignity of a person who owns and wears it. So, welcoming a guest from Jakarta also means we need to adjust with their way of thinking.

Atik stated her viewpoint toward Jakarta citizen identity. Atik unconsciously positioned Ratna's identity as Jakarta citizen. Atik wants to welcome Ratna appropriately according to the culture and the viewpoint of Jakarta citizens about a house. According to Atik, Jakarta citizens measure one's dignity based on one's

house. Therefore, Atik makes an adjustment by changing many kinds of furniture that she has with the new one that seems more appropriate.

Ratna positioned as Jakarta citizen also shown on how Atik gave an explanation about people's habit in Solo. Atik feels that she needs to enlighten Ratna about the custom of people in Solo, even though Ratna was raised in Klaten until she was a teenager. This condition shows that Atik is no longer see Ratna as Klaten villagers, and the Klaten identity is no longer attached in Ratna's identity.

Solo bukan Jakarta, Ratna. Jam delapan, sembilan yang penting kan pagi. Tenang-tenang saja di sini, kecuali kalau kamu memang tidak bisa tidur di kamar tanpa AC.

Solo is unlike Jakarta, Ratna. 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock as long as it's in the morning. Make yourself comfortable here, unless if you really could not sleep in a room without air conditioner.

Implicitly, Atik explain the culture of Solo, which tends to be more easy-going than the culture of big city citizen. There are different assumptions on morning time for villagers and citizens. Furthermore, Atik also stated the habit difference between villager and citizen in the way they used air conditioner. Atik assumed that all citizen must have been sleeping with the air conditioner, it made Atik worried if Ratna could not sleep in her house that does not have air conditioner in it.

Imaging and being imaged based on cultural identity stereotype.

From the previous sub chapter, it can be seen how Atik and Ratna compare their living style in showing that they do not share same cultural identity. In the process of positioning and being positioned, both Atik and Ratna make judgments based on the stereotype that exist in the society.

Stereotype of Jakarta citizen in this short story can be seen from Atik viewpoint that judge Ratna as a success Jakarta citizen. Jakarta often seen as a big city where people have the chance to change their finance and their status (economic, social, politic, etc.).

These stereotypes was confirmed by Ratna who stated many things such as she own many business in Jakarta, she has an appointment to meet The princess of Klaten, she renovated her house using expert services and architect, she stayed at a hotel, and also she bought an expensive bag. Ratna lend Atik money when she buys a bag in Klaten since she said that she left her money at the hotel she was staying. Atik's husband was shock when he know the sum of money that Ratna lend just to buy a bag, this is because that amount of money in Klaten is more than enough to fix the house door, change car's tire, etc. Atik without any hesitation gave her saving to Ratna, even though they hardly meet again. Atik trust Ratna because Ratna said that she own a successful business in addition since Ratna's identity as a Jakarta citizen. The main character (Atik husband) also does not suspicious toward Ratna behavior.

Orang macam Ratna kan pasti punya rekening di banyak bank. Saya rasa dia lupa, memilih rekening yang tidak *on-line* dengan cabang di luar Jakarta.

A person like Ratna must have many bank accounts. I think she forget, and choose the account that is no on-line with the bank branches outside Jakarta.

When Atik could not cash the check from Ratna, Atik and her husband think that Ratna forgot about location barrier. Through the quotation above, the term 'A person like Ratna' represent a Jakarta businesswoman who must have many bank account to support her businesses. It also has shown a stereotype of Jakarta citizen who used to save their money in more than one bank account.

Stereotype is a perception that generalizes a person included in certain group of identity based on their characteristic, social behavior, habit, and also physical appearance. These kinds of characteristics may have positive and negative value. Through the concept of Orientalism by Edward Said, Said stressed how the west viewed the east, which has become the cultural stereotype of the east (Hall, 1990: 225). Stereotype is a viewpoint form one community against other community that becomes the basic that distinguish between those two communities. However, stereotype is not always accurate, and even it is tend not accurate at all. In this story, can be seen how is the perception of villagers against citizen that is not accurate.

Sulit bagi Atik – bagi saya juga – untuk menerima kenyataan bahwa Ratna telah melakukan perbuatan yang tercela. Ratna menghilang meninggalkan utang.

It was hard for Atik – also for me – to accept the fact that Ratna had done a bad thing. Ratna gone and leave her debt behind.

The act of Ratna as a Jakarta citizen who gone and leave her debt that she borrows from a villagers breaks down the stereotype that Jakarta citizen in more successful in financial than villagers of Klaten. Ratna used a checkbook to pay her debt to convinced Atik that Ratna is a successful businesswoman and come from at least the middle class society.

At the end part of this story there is a change is story setting from Klaten to Jakarta. The main character goes to Jakarta for work and got Ratna's address from their school friend. When the main character reaches Ratna's rented house, the stereotype of modern and luxury Jakarta is once again collapse.

Begitu supir bajaj berhenti di ujung sebuah gang dan meminta saya turun karena kendaraannya tidak bisa masuk lagi ke dalam. Saya langsung teringat ucapan Ratna tentang 'rumah di Serpong desainnya kurang manis' berikut omong kosong lainnya.

Once the bajaj driver stop at the end of the road and ask me to get out form the bajaj, I got out because the vehicle could not fit in the small road. It suddenly remind me of Ratna word about her house 'The design of house in Serpong is not cute enough' and her other nonsense.

The quotation above describe Ratna live in Jakarta that is not suited to what she said. Ratna positioning her identity as a successful businesswoman just to get some money from Atik. People who survive living in Jakarta for a long time tend to be viewed by the villagers as successful person. However, this story shows on how literature work describes another real perspective of life that is different from the existing stereotype.

5. Conclusion

Identity is liquid and may change as time goes by. Stuart hall stated that identity is formed based on the past (*being*) and the future (*becoming*). In the

short story of Tamu dari Jakarta can be seen the change of identity from Ratna character who move from Klaten village to the big city of Jakarta. The concept of *being* on Ratna character is that she is a villager who shares culture and history with the other Klaten villagers. The concept of *becoming* is when Ratna moved to Jakarta but when she come to Klaten, Ratna identity is no longer as Klaten insiders but as a guest from Jakarta.

Ratna's cultural identity as Jakarta citizen is being constructed through positioning and being positioned from the cross-cultural interaction. Through cross-cultural interaction that happen between Ratna (citizen) and Atik (villager) can be seen how these two characters contrast their own identity in showing differences among them. Based on the difference between them, Ratna is being positioned and she was also positioning herself as Jakarta Citizen.

Positioning and being positioned identity in this story was done base on the stereotype of Jakarta citizen. However, this story display things that are different than the well-known existing stereotype. Jakarta which is well known as a developed city, a place where villagers may have a chance to change their fate (especially financial) was shown as a city that is not fully develop and luxury. Villagers who was able to survive and lived in Jakarta for a long time is viewed as a successful person, however in this story, Ratna who had lived in Jakarta for so long is not a successful person instead she is a person with many debt.

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