

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided to three sub-chapters. First is background of the study, the next is, problems of the study and objective of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

The presence of postcolonialism has enriched the literary studies. It becomes more complete and does not only discuss in the formal and intrinsic parts. It basically discusses the issues of colonial texts that do not merely describe the relationship between colonizers and colonized as master and slave. However, the resistance to the colonizer can be included by postcolonial studies. It has a role as a critical discourse that can dismantle text, vaguely advocates against the colonized. It deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies.

Postcolonial literature tries to criticize the contemporary post-colonial discourses that have been shaped over recent times. As Abrams states in his book

A Glossary of Terms that,

Postcolonial studies have focused especially on the Third World countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean islands, and South America. It sometimes encompasses also aspects of British literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, viewed through perspective that reveals the extent to which the social and economic life represented in the literature was tacitly underwritten by colonial exploitation. (1999: 236)

It means that postcolonial study relates to literature written by authors whose country once become the European colonized country. The literatures of African

countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean, India, Malaysia, etc, can be included in postcolonial literature. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:2)

Postcolonialism strongly opposes universality in literature. One of the interesting characteristics in postcolonial criticism is about style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident". Then, it is known as orientalism.

Work by Edward Said entitled *Orientalism* in 1978, considered the foundational work on which post-colonial theory developed. *Orientalism* is one of the works of Said which is seen as a milestone in the beginning of postcolonial studies-analysis that contains a description of how "Western" form and maintain the fantasy of "East". *Orientalism* is a work of representation which able to get inside the world of philosophy, politics, religion, and literature. The main issue raised by Orientalism is to constructs knowledge of European colonialism, a "truth", and beliefs regarding the identity of the invaders (colonizer) and colonized (colonized). The term orientalism has been applied to many aspects in society, philosophy and culture.

Oldmeadow says, "The notion of Orientalism has been spread in the nineteenth century and is mystifyingly used to legitimize colonization and imperialism of westerners toward East/Orient" as stated by Maliyana (2004, cited in Maliyana 2103, p.1). Orientalism itself, as Said (1978, p.202) puts it, refers to the Occident's imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases that misleadingly describe and explain the Orients in the form of regularized writings, visions, and studies. The term "The Occident" is used by Said to explain the west or former

colonizer which includes most of Europe and U.S.A. “The Orient”, in contrast, refers to eastern or former colonized people from Africa, Asia and South America (Said, 1978). Therefore, orientalism can be defined as western people’s representations of the eastern people in which the representations often times regard the eastern people as inferiors.

Orientalism can be applied by many people in a literary work such as poetry, novel and film. The motivation behind the Orientalism in film may not be as blatant as Said’s theory of Arab-Islamic oppression, but rather other purposes, such as generating revenue. Yet the concept of Orientalism remains the same. The filmmakers inaccurately portray people, country, customs, and/or beliefs for their own benefit. Orientalism is not restricted to a single genre. The inaccurate depiction of societies can be found in a light-hearted comedy just as easily as it could in a suspense-filled drama.

“*American Sniper*” movie, an adaptation of Chris Kyle’s biographical book is a literary work that has Orientalism issue. Directed by Clint Eastwood and written by Jason Hall in 2014, the movie tells about the story of a young man named Chris Kyle, who joined the unit of SEAL American soldiers. After the incident of 9/11 in New York, he decided to join the military training and then assigned to the Iraq war and later became an American sniper.

Said, (1978, p.133) explains that “Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the orient”. The West is notorious creating false ‘scholarly’ reports, fabricating documents about super weapons, making sure that Westerners are well aware of how badly people are treated

nearly everywhere else, fueling a sense of fascism, nationalism, and a permanent state of fear, a rally cry for war. That is not to say that the Western perspective of the East is completely fabricated. The Orientalist media likes to display human rights abuses as if they are not the outlier.

The movie *American Sniper* tells something about American. The Iraqis in *American Sniper* are referred to as “savages” in Chris Kyle’s book. The writer did have an issue with the way Iraqis were portrayed in the film. It seemed as though most of the Iraqi men were anti-American and in cahoots with someone from al-Qaeda. If they were not, then the language barrier between them and the Navy Seals seemed significant enough to categorize them as “other” which is the basis for the idea of Edward Said’s Orientalism and creates issues when trying to find common ground. Maybe, though, that is just the way that American military men view the natives of the countries in which they fight. This movie carries forward the tradition of the wartime film genre but within the context of considerable anti-Arab and anti-Muslim and this movie was certainly from the viewpoint of an American. This is the power of Orientalism. It is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having power over the orient.

Based on the issue, this presents study attempts to analyze the representation of East through the West’s eyes in a movie entitled *American Sniper* which is directed by western director, Clint Eastwood, within the theoretical framework of Orientalism proposed by Edward Said (1978). The results of the study are expected to give some positive impact both on English Literature’s students and

the larger society. Since movie is representative of real life, the analysis of the study also expected to give positive impact as it can give lessons to the readers.

1.2 Problem of study

According to the background of the study above, the writer decides to analyze the problem of the study; How are the representation of Iraq culture in the movie *American Sniper*?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the problem of the study, the objective of the study is to find out how Iraq culture represented in the movie *American Sniper*?

