

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses some theories and related information that support the study. This chapter is aimed at giving information about the theoretical framework and the life of Aborigines so that the readers can comprehend the analysis of this study better.

2.1 Postcolonialism

Post means after, then post colonialism means after colonialism.

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another (Kohn, 2010:1). In other words, Post colonial theory is a theory about legacy of colonialism and the effect of colonial oppression toward the whole aspects of people's life in certain areas.

Those aspects include historical, political, social, economic, and educational. Postcolonial theory emerge from the interdisciplinary area of study, which is concerned with historical, political, philosophical, social, cultural, and aesthetic structures of colonial domination and resistance.

Postcolonial study itself cannot be separated from aspects of colonial:

“colonizer” and “colonized”. The concept of postcolonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies (Ashcroft et al., 1998:186). The impact of cultural colonization that occur in the Aborigines raises a lot of changes on a large scale, consequences of the domination from Whites who are powerful in Australia. Everything is seen

from the Aborigines' way of life, their culture begin to move up from the earlier. Habib (2005, p. 743) has essential point that:

Moreover, every "effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture, the unreality of his 'nation,' and imperfect character of his own biological structure. A culture under colonial domination is a "contested culture," whose destruction is systematically sought. The native culture freezes into a defensive posture: there are no new developments or initiatives, only a rigid adherence to "a hard core of culture" which is identified with resistance to the colonial oppressor."

Resistance by Aborigines against the Whites who colonized them continually raises a lot of negative reactions such as Whites are increasingly strict in dominating the Aborigines. When the little gap open to resist the Whites, the Aborigines are in a difficult position to grow in all aspects.

There is any possibility of a rejection between colonizer and colonized, oppressor and victim, as Habib (2005, cited in Spivak 1999, p. 748) has demonstrated. The position of Aboriginal people and White people are very prominent, the way they socialize everyday can be seen that the Aborigines are at the bottom even though they are indigenous in Australia.

The Aborigines are affected by Whites' oppression so that their culture is partially lost. Although their identity as Aboriginal people can be identified, but the way they live and socialize are disappeared. The Whites domination limits the Aborigines' space almost of the region. Cultural

identity is part of every human being life, therefore the rights they have are not easily captured by others.

Habib (2005, p. 739) found the following:

Postcolonial criticism embrace a number of aims: most fundamentally, to reexamine the history of colonialism from the perspective of the colonized; to determine the economic, political, and cultural impact of colonialism on both the colonized peoples and the colonizing powers; to analyze the process of decolonization; and above all, to participate in the goals of political liberation, which includes equal access to material resources, the contestation of forms of domination, and the articulation of political and cultural identities.

In Australia, the largest population is White so that they are very easy to implement their culture on the Aborigines. Whites' power make the Aborigines remain in the lowest social classes hence, they can not run their culture completely.

Postcolonial theory offers us a framework for examining the similarities among all critical theories that deal with human oppression. In fact, postcolonial criticism defines formerly colonized people as any population that has been subjected to the political domination of another population. Postcolonial criticism analyzed literature produced by cultures that develop in response to colonial domination, from the first point of colonial contact to the present (Tyson, 2006, p. 417-418). In this case, the Aborigines become one of the people who colonized by Whites for years.

Australia illustrates clearly how the Aborigines' culture is dominated by Whites. Besides, the culture that develop in the Aboriginal communities is a heritage from the past that must be kept all time.

2.2 The Life of Aborigines

The setting of time of *Australia* movie is in September 1939. On 7 September 1941, after the bombing of Pearl harbor, the imperial Japanese navy steamed south unleashing their fire to Darwin which is a city in the northern territory of Australia. It is also a place where Aboriginal children were taken by force from their families and trained for service in White society. These children become known as the stolen generations (Baz Luhrmann, 2008).

The Aborigines are the indigenous people in Australia. Since the European invasion of Australia in 1788, the Aboriginal people have been oppressed for thousands of years. It is estimated that over 750,000 Aboriginal people inhabited the island continent (A brief Aboriginal history, 2006, para. 1). The word "aboriginal" means "the first" or "earliest known". The word is first used in Italy and Greece to describe people who live there, natives or old inhabitants, not newcomers, or invaders (Humphrey, 2001, para. 1).

Australia may be the home of the world's first people. Stone tools are discovered in a quarry near Penrith, New South Wales, in 1971 show that humans live in Australia at least twelve thousand years before they appear in Europe. Three early sites discovered in Australia, the Penrith one being dated about forty-seven thousand years old, a Western Australian site forty thousand years old and another in Lake Mungo, New South

Wales, thirty-five thousand years old. There are in excess of 18,500 generations of Aborigines (Humphrey, 2001, para. 2).

Aboriginal people have a lifestyle that is very unique and different from other ethnic. Everything is traditional and utilize the nature in their daily life. Plants and animals are eaten, insect foods include certain ants, grubs and beetles, while streams provide fish and eels. Many birds are eaten, including waterfowl and scrub fowl. They also eat kangaroo for dinner. The kangaroo is one of Australia's most iconic animals and most species are endemic to Australia. (Morril, 2006, para. 1). Food they consume are usually obtained from hunting in the woods. And it is not just for foodstuffs, all of the tools for hunting and cooking from the jungle. The men carry only a spear, and the weapon is needed to get the animals to his territory. The women carry the rest - babies, household utensils - to leave the men free to use the weapon. As Aborigine, they use natural materials available in their area, shelter are often made from bark and branches, sometimes flimsy and sometimes more substantial, depend on the climate, the time of year, and the length of time that the group are forced to remain in one camp (Humprey, 2001, para. 17-23). For Aboriginal people everything that related to nature can be used for daily needs.

Traditionally, indigenous people do not wear clothes. The different seasons and climates across the country are determined the need for clothes. Indigenous groups in colder areas often use animal skins, fur side

in, for warmth, especially during cold nights. A special oil is often placed on children's bodies to protect them from the cold (William, 2012, para. 10). The changing seasons make them have an initiative to make clothing that is also derived from the natural surrounding. When the Aborigine dresses like a modern human, it looks strange because the clothes is made from a thin fabric that covered the body. While, the traditional clothing that they have are much better in the quality, although it is not organized like a proper clothing.

In addition, the Aborigines rely on nature not only as a center of food or clothing, but also as a residence. Aboriginal people utilize the vacant land for their home. They live in a nomadic for years. Australia having a mild climate so that people often sleep in the open area, warmth and comfort. They are provided by the campfire and kept warm by sleeping between two small fires. The dingo, as a camp dog, also sleep beside people providing warmth (Spencer, 2008, para. 1). Aboriginal people do not only stay with their family or relatives but bring pets to sleep together, because they consider pets like dogs can help them in looking for foods or items are hidden in the ground.

In Aboriginal life everything has a story. They are very dependent on the surrounding of nature by painting on the rocks or soil to indicate that they live in those area. Later on, art is believed as an integral part of life, not simply something that is decorative. Bodies are painted for

ceremonies; the markings and designs have totemic significance and are taught to the young. Rocks are engraved and become one of the few art forms to survive. Designs are painted on the walls of rock shelters; these are perishable, and relied upon regular re-touching for preservation. The paintings tell stories; in fact they are the forms by which preliterate people keep a record of their daily life and religious beliefs. They are also reflected what happen around them - draw the animals of the area, and later tell stories of contact with other peoples (Humprey, 2001, para. 30-32). The nature produces a story for Aborigines. It is an extraordinary works of art because everything they do can be seen from the pictures or signs that are made with nature.

Regardless of Aborigines life who always depend on nature, they also have a faith like other human beings. They believe in the existence of God who will help if they have trouble. For Aborigines, having a religion does not mean that they forget the traditions, the result of ancestral heritage. Besides believing in God, they believe in the existence of supernatural powers that can cure all diseases and help them in trouble too.

The belief comes from the nature. In Aboriginal society, like every other society, there are problems: droughts, shortages of food, people become sick or injured, and they die. Supernatural forces are blamed for almost every event, and magic and ritual used to correct the situation. The "medicine man" or "doctor" is a powerful man, and try to cure many physical ills, sometimes by massage or sucking, to remove the "evil"

causing the pain, or by the application of natural medicines made from plants or roots. The emphasis on healing is on the spirit, rather than the body. It is the belief that the spirit as the primary resource of illness - evil thoughts act first on the spirit, and the physical symptoms come later - that led to "evil thinking" someone, as in the well-known custom of "bone pointing". The person who is a victim of a spell would usually sick and die, because he believes that this would happen (para. 34).

Old people in Aboriginal society are cared for, and respect for their wisdom and knowledge. When a person die the mourning custom and burial rights are complex and various from region to region. The mourners freely express their sorrow and distress, sometimes covering themselves in ochre and clay. The dead are buried, cremated, placed on platforms in trees, or left in caves or rock shelters. Sometimes the bones are recovered and part, such as the bone of the forearm, kept as relics for long periods (para. 35). They have a power that can not be stolen by others because since birth, especially Aborigine men role as the protector of the family and the surrounding communities.

2.3 The Stolen Generation

In the 1930s to 1950s it was common practice for Australian government agencies to encourage Aboriginal women to give up their children for adoption or fostering if they find the difficulties to support them. There are many white Australians who willing to provide foster

homes for Aboriginal children. At the time this policy is seen as a way of improving the lives of children whose parents are poor (Pearson, 1996, para. 9-10). Aboriginal children are separated from their parents because they will be educated to live with White people in the future. This is done on the initiative the government who want to remove the Aboriginal culture gradually. The Whites want to conquer the whole of Australia, so that the Aborigines will be destroyed little by little. The process of destruction of Aborigines culture makes Aboriginal children whose their identity are stolen called as a “lost”. Aboriginal children may not have a story about their origins. Thus, they do not enjoy childhood like the other White kids. Their lives are taken away by the White power. This was part of the Australian government’s policies on assimilation and integration of the Aborigines to Australian life. Arthur (n.d, p. 2) found the following:

The policy of assimilation from the government in Australia on native welfare conference, Canberra, January 26th and 27th 1961. The policy means that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines are expected to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Astralian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes, and loyalties as other Australians.

Australian law reform commission, Aboriginal societies: the experience of contact (2010, para 6) states that

The term ‘integration’ is used by the critics of the assimilation policy to denote a policy that recognised the value of Aboriginal culture and the right of Aboriginals to retain their languages and customs and maintain their own distinctive communities.

In practice the policies from government did not work well. In this case, the Aboriginal children forget their origin because they are taught by White people only to serve. They do manual labor for White who does not want to do it themselves. Although they are trained well but the nutrition they receive are very bad for their health. In terms of education, they do not get an adequate education. All they get are really limited by the Whites. In conclusion, the Aborigines were not treated equally with the Whites.

Aboriginal life have an important role to direct how the truth of Aborigines' cultural identity. Long time ago, the Aborigines had been colonized so that the culture they have slightly shifted and mixed with the White culture that has fully authority in Australia. The Whites want to rob Aborigines' culture from their hands irreverently. For Aborigines many obstacles in preserving the culture, but they never give up to guard it. Their will are very strong so that the Aborigines' identity still exist.

Aborigines culture is used as a support to discover which parts are dominated by White people and what the most important thing for White to focus on the Aborigines. In *Australia* movie, the writer uses the life of Aborigines to identify how much the cultural domination of White owned by the Aborigines and how the role of culture itself in the White and Aboriginal communities. Based on the problem to be solved by the writer, that is how the Aborigines struggle for preserving their culture by White

domination. Aborigines' life is very helpful for the writer to know the identity of the indigenous culture.

2.4 Synopsis

This movie is written and directed by Baz Luhrmann. The genres are war, action, drama and romance. Released on November 26, 2008. The characters are Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman, David Wenham, Jack Thompson and Bryan Brown. The movie sets in northern Australia before World War II. An English aristocrat who inherits a huge farm does not want to make an agreement with a stock-man in order to protect her new property. The 2,000 cattle is driven over the land in Australia. They also experience the bombing of Darwin, Australia, by Japanese forces firsthand.

Kidman stars as Lady Sarah Ashley, a woman who travels from the United Kingdom to meet her husband and help him with his financial investment, a cattle farm in northern Australia called Far Away Downs. When she arrives, however, helped by Drover (Jackman), she discovers that her husband is murdered with a spear by the Aboriginal King George (David Gulpilil); however, a young, named Nullah (Brandon Walters) has a different story, and it involves Fletcher (David Wenham), one of her husband's employees. Fletcher is dismissed by Lady Ashley therefore it is up to her and Drover to drive their cattle to the city of Darwin, where the army is waiting for new stock. However, their rival, King Carney, who

monopolizes the cattle trade in Australia, will see nothing more than their failure to deliver, no matter what the costs. At the same time, Lady Ashley should protect Nullah from the government, as they take all children to insert into re-education courses.

2.5 Previous Studies

The writer reviews a previous study to enrich the study of Aborigine cultural preservation. There are three previous studies which are used by the writer. The first is Slyvia Aryani Poedjianto (2004), in her research "*The main character's searching for cultural identity in Garrett Omata's S.A.M I Am*". Her research focuses on the cultural identity of the main character using postcolonialism theory with discussions on the culture, orientalism, ambivalence, mimicry and historical background. The significant differences between her thesis and this study is the object of the analysis. In this thesis, the writer aims to find out how the Aborigines preserve their culture in a movie.

Second study is conducted by Chika Kurnia Madatikta (2003) entitled *Flor Moreno and her Preservation of Identity in American Multiculture in James L Brooks' Spanglish a Movie*. In this study, she tries to explain about preservation of identity in *Spanglish* movie. In her analysis, she shows the struggle of woman character as a Mexican in America. Although, her thesis uses multiculturalism, it is absolutely different from this study because she focuses more on how the main

character tries to make contact with other cultures. Nevertheless, in this study the focus is on how the Aborigines try to preserve the culture.

The last previous study entitled *Racial Discrimination in Baz Luhrmann's Australia* movie (2008) by Lies Ambarwati. In this study, she focuses on striving against racial discrimination of Aborigine child, Nullah, as the main character by using Marxist eye. She raises problem on how Sarah and Drover, as the main characters, strive against racial discrimination in Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*. The writer has the same object with her study. But the writer focuses on the Aborigines while her study focuses on the White's.

