

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the general description of the paper. It consists of research of background, research questions, research objectives, research significances, previous study, and definition of key terms.

1.1. Research Background

Literature is medium for conveying ideas, feelings, and experiences through beautiful word play that is poured into literary works. According to Rees (1973, p. 9), “literature is the permanent expression in words of some thoughts or feelings, or ideas about life and the world.”

Literature has many types, including poetry, novels, drama, and films. Film and literature are two related things. This is as explained by Bluestone and McCann (in Eneste, 1991, p. 18), “the film is a combination of various arts: music, fine arts, drama, literature, and elements of photography.” Klarer (2005, p. 56-57) also adds that “films or movies can be treated the same as other forms of literature such as novels, or plays.” This is because both have features and meanings of the act of visualizing. However, films and dramas have significant differences, dramas can only be played once and cannot be repeated, while films can be played back because they are recorded. Another reason that confirms that film is related to literature is that film as a literary work has language, so that the language of film is called a shot and a series of shots can be read as a narrative (Damono 2016, p. 133).

Film is a form of entertainment that has a big impact on society. Film is a new art form as well as a medium for facilitating the dissemination of culture and information. And in a film there is audio-visual media so that moving images are created on a white screen that form a series of events.

In its development, films emerged and were made not only to convey messages and entertainment but also for other purposes attached to certain motives such as political, racist or stereotypes. As Adi (2011) stated in his statement about films

that “films are not only imaginative and personal works, but are more a manifestation of the author's thoughts on social changes that occur.”

This statement is related to Klarer (2005) that “film is one of the audio-visual communication media that convey messages made by filmmakers to the audiences. In a film there are also social reflections that reflect good and bad.” Campbell et al (2005, p. 8) stated that “film is a subset of media that is likely to produce products that are appropriate or reflect societal concerns, desires, prejudices, and stereotypes.”

Film is also one of the easiest media to spread Orientalist stereotypes towards the East. Hollywood movies, for example, give bad stereotypes to Asians. In the 1920s Asian characters in American films were stereotyped as villains. Asian character in American films present Asians as exotic foreigners and different from Caucasian by using yellow make up, weird costume, and performance. Ironically, this Asian main character is played by a white actor. “For decades, leading roles in Hollywood have been dominated by white actors while the criminals or villains in movies are often played by people of color (Umeda, 2018, p. 145).”

In 1960-1970 Hollywood almost always featured white stars. Where, they will dress the actors and actresses with "yellow face" make-up (Umeda, 2018, p. 152). The United States film industry has received a lot of criticism for casting actor racial. This is not only caused by the domination of white actors, but also by stereotyping non-white characters with Asian Americans. As stated by Nagaraj & Wen (2020) that “the major concern is the inclusion of racial diversity cast had caused a way that people of colour are persistently being misrepresentation and stereotyped on screen, and this had become a topic that always discussed by the public.”

The existence of this stereotype produces an ideology to provide certain validation to people from racial minorities or racism. Marchetti (1991) stated that “Hollywood has the power to define difference, to reinforce boundaries, to reproduce an ideology which maintains a certain status *quo*.” Wong (1978) also added that “film has the power to socialize and define social norms to the American public, such as racist stereotypes against Asians.”

A stereotype was introduced into social science in 1922. When Lippman used it to describe the typical picture that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group (Marcae et al, 1996). This statement related to Dovidio et al (2010) that Lippmann (1922) introduced the term ‘stereotype’ to refer to the typical picture that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group.

Whereas early research conceptualized stereotyping as a rather inflexible and faulty thought process, more recent research emphasizes the functional and dynamic aspects of stereotypes as simplifying a complex environment. “Stereotypes are cognitive schemas used by social perceivers to process information about others (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996).”

Stereotype is arising from humans that are concerned with making sense of their social environment which comprises of making sense of other people (Krieglmeyer & Sherman, 2012). Stereotype can also define as thoughts, beliefs, or prejudices about race, nationality, and sexual orientation that permeated groups of people and several people are labeled by stereotypes (Nittle in Umeda, 2018, p. 147). This stereotype is often given to minority races, such as Asian races. Therefore, Asian stereotypes are fixed images or ideas of all Asian ethnic groups (Dong et al., 2022, p. 257).

During its development, stereotypes are often embodied in pop culture works, such as films. The embodiment of these stereotypes began in the 20th century through several Hollywood films which presented stereotypes against Asian people, such as Dr. Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan. These two characters were the visual portrayal of East-Asian and it was constructed by Orientalist stereotypes of American (Nagaraj & Wen, 2020).

One of the most well-known stereotypes in Hollywood film is *Dr. Fu Manchu*. *Dr. Fu Manchu* film directed by Rowland V. Lee was released in 1929. This film tells about a Chinese man named Fu Manchu, he can use hypnosis and wants to conquer the Western world. The character Fu Manchu became the personification of the yellow peril and he represented the tension between the morally pure and superior West and the mysterious seductively evil East (Hoppenstand, 1992).

Fu Manchu is described as a Chinese man who has a long mustache, dark skin, slanted eyebrows, thick eyeliner, and long fingernails. Ironically, this character had never been played by an Asian actor, but by a Swedish actor, Warner Oland. “He also wore yellow face make up and a mustache and spoke in broken English (Umeda, 2018, p. 153).”

Another stereotypical character is Charlie Chan which was created by an American Author. This film was directed by Earl Derr Biggers. Charlie Chan was based on a real Chinese policeman, Chang Apana (Yunte Huang in Umeda, 2018, p. 154). Charlie Chan was as popular as Fu Manchu, he was described as Chinese-American detective who has a kind and intelligent character. Even though, he was described as a hero, he still got negative stereotype as an Asian minority such as not fluent in English, too conventional, and submissive existence. Charlie Chan character was also played by a Swedish Actor, Warner Oland and Sidney Toley who had never been played by an Asian actor.

Another Hollywood film that contains stereotypes is *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. This film is an action-comedy science fiction adventure film directed by Danie Kwan and Daniel Scheinert. The film entitled *Everything Everywhere All at Once* was released in the United States on March 25, 2022.

Everything Everywhere All at Once tells the story of Evelyn Wang, a Chinese immigrant who lives in the United States with her family. She has a husband named Waymond Wang and a daughter named Joy. Evelyn is described as short-tempered, hardworking and overly protective of her daughter.

In this film, Evelyn opens a Laundromat with her husband in America. She and her family are facing various problems, such as her father who has just arrived from China for a festival celebration, Waymond who wants to provide divorce papers, Joy who asks her mother to introduce her girlfriend to her grandfather, and their unstable financial problems. Moreover, the problem of very high taxes in the United States made Evelyn almost stressed. This is because the tax officers there always make it difficult for Chinese immigrants to open a business.

Arriving at the Internal Revenue Service Evelyn had to deal directly with tax officer who were dealing with complex documents and bureaucracy and large taxes. Deirdre as a tax officer tried to explain about the document. However, Evelyn did not understand what Deirdre was saying, Deirdre looked frustrated and said that Evelyn should have brought her daughter to translate every word Deirdre said.

Evelyn's focus is disturbed by a piece of paper given to her by Alpha Waymond while in the elevator which sends her flying into a parallel or multiverse world. In this multiverse, Evelyn reunites with Alpha Waymond. Alpha Waymond enlists the help of Evelyn to save the world from a villain who wants to devastate the multiverse.

From the explanation above, the film entitled *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) attracted the attention of researcher to be used as an object of research because this film contains American negative stereotypes towards Asian. These stereotypes can also have an impact to the characters in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022).

1.2. Statement of Problem

The researcher found irregularities in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022), these irregularities are the stereotypes on the portrayal of Asian characters. These stereotypes can have an impact to the Asian characters like the writer mention above. Its impact can also be felt on the Asian characters in the story. To find out how those stereotypes impacted on the Asian characters in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, the writer needs to find out the types of stereotypes that depicted on Asian characters in the film. So, the question of the research will be simplified into several question below;

1. What stereotypes are there in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*?
2. How is the impact of stereotypes on the Asian characters in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*?

1.3. Research Objective

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researcher is intended:

1. To analyze stereotypes in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.
2. To analyze the impact of stereotypes on the Asian characters in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

1.4. Research Significance

1.4.1. Theoretically

This research is expected to contribute a new study of Orientalism theory by Edward W. Said from his book *Orientalism* (1978) that discuss how the Western interprets Asian and Asian culture with their Own knowledge, experience, and encounters with the Orient and the culture. This concept of Orientalism used knowledge and stereotypes of opposing cultures in order to control them. Racism, sexism, eurocentrism and ethnocentrism were at the core of the Imperialist values of the XIXth century. It is also discuss how those stereotypes create an impact on Asian characters. The researcher hopes that this research can help other researchers who uses Edward W. Said theory.

1.4.2. Practically

a. Academic Readers

This research is expected to provide new features or contributions. This research is expected to provide a lot of knowledge and information about the stereotypes of Americans toward Asian and the impact of these stereotypes on the characters in Hollywood films. Therefore, readers will find several combinations of theories needed to analyze the film, especially regarding the stereotypes of Americans towards Asians and their impacts.

b. Public Readers

This research is also expected to provide a source of information and knowledge to the public readers regarding the stereotypes of American towards Asian that are still perpetuated in Hollywood films and their effects. This research proves that in a film, stereotypes of American towards Asian are still preserved today and can be analyzed in detail and depth by using Edward W. Said's Orientalism theory.

1.5. Previous Studies

To facilitate the research process in this study, the researcher has also presented several previous studies from several sources. This previous research is

used to help researchers understand what will be studied because there are many theories related to this research. These previous studies have different problems and research questions to compare and adjust which research is related to this research. Sources include theses and journal articles. Previous research referred to by researchers is research with topics similar to this research.

The first previous study is the film *My Name Is Khan* which was analyzed by Maisarah Rahmi. S (2019) from UIN Alauddin Makassar with a thesis title, “Westerners View Toward Islam in “My Name is Khan Movie” An: Edward Said’s Orientalism Study”.

This thesis has the same topic, Western stereotypes towards Asia, but with a different object. The theory used is Edward Said's Orientalism theory. This study discusses how the West views Islam. Film *My Name Is Khan* directed by Karan Johar in 2010 was inspired by the events of 9/11. Where, a group of terrorists named al-Qaeda attacked the World Trade Center Building on September 11, 2001 and claimed 2,977 lives.

This attack caused many problems for the people of Asia and the Middle East, especially Muslims. Because this terrorist group is suspected of being Muslims. The majority of Americans experience Islamophobia. For example, they will get angry and punish anyone who wears a head covering that resembles the turban worn by Osaman bin Laden (Prashad, 2005, p. 584).

The emergence of a statement stating that the turban is a terrorist symbol has made Indians living in the United States even more anxious. Because after the attack, not a few Indians received stereotypes and discrimination from residents of the United States. Any Sikh male who wears their turban will be accused of being Arab and swear that they will all die.

Therefore, the film entitled *My Name is Khan* tells the story of an Indian man named Rizwan Khan. He has Asperger syndrome which makes him unlike most other normal people. Short story, He married a widow named Mandira. Mandira has one son named Sam. They live happily in the United States. However, when the 9/11 incident occurred, various problems emerged that befell the Khan family, such as racial stereotyping, interracial discrimination, racial harassment, draconian

homeland security laws against Asians and Easterners, and chaotic US jurisprudence. Khan and his family were accused of being terrorists, even Sam, his adopted son, had to lose his own life. As a result, accusations and violence were carried out by his friends at school.

The second previous study is the *Avatar* film was the result of research by Eulis Setiawati (2019) from Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung State Islamic University with the title, “The Western Domination of The East as Represented in James Cameron’s *Avatar*”. This thesis has a different topic and object. The theory used is Edward Said’s Orientalism theory. This thesis aims to show how the relationship between Orientalism and the issue of colonialism as represented in the *Avatar* film script. The results show that Orientalism was linked to colonialism as represented in the *Avatar* movie script. Sky people are represented as Occident while Navi people are represented as Orient. This thesis discusses about exploitation, especially mining companies that want to control Pandora’s natural resources. Sky people are described as superiors who want to rule the land of Pandora. Because the land of Pandora is described as having exotic soil containing the mineral unobtainium and growing with a variety of unique fauna and flora. Meanwhile, a native of Pandora named Na’vi is described as an inferior being who has a physical appearance that is different from humans in general. The Na’vi are blue-skinned and has a height about 3 m tall and live in nature with the beliefs and culture shared by their ancient ancestors.

The third previous study is the film *Crash* which was researched by Agus Yunifahmi Desianto (2021) from the Sultan Agung Islamic University with the title, “The Portrayal of Racial Discrimination, Racial Prejudice, and Racial Stereotype in Paul Haggis’ *Crash* Movie”. This thesis has similarities with the topic chosen, namely racial stereotypes against Asians. But with a different object and theory. The theory used is Adam Kuper’s theory of racism. This research discusses racial discrimination between Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latino races that occurred in the United States in the film *Crash*. The results of this study indicate that there is racial discrimination experienced by Peter, Anthony, Dixon, and Shaniqua due to differences in skin color and their racial background.

The similarity of this research with previous studies is in the selection of topics related to stereotypes of Westerners towards Asians. Another similarity also lies in the theory they use, Edward Said's orientalism theory. While the difference between this research and previous studies lies in the object, none of the studies above chose *Everything Everywhere All at Once* as the object of research because *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is a new film.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

- a. Postcolonialism: Postcolonialism was first introduced as a field of literary study in the 1970s. The term refers to representations of race, culture, ethnicity, social or human identity in modern history. When a number of geographic entities gain their independence from colonialism. Postcolonialism is a significant field of literary studies that refers to the study of the literary, social and cultural heritage of colonial and imperial powers and focused on the impact of hegemonic control and exploitation of the people who were colonized.
- b. Orientalism: Orientalism is a theory popularized by Edward W. Said in 1978. Said is known as a literary and cultural theorist. He studied extensively about the "construction" of the West from the East. The concept of Orientalism was born to validate the West's view of the East and the West want to dominate the East. Orientalism refers to how the Western interprets Asian and Asian culture with their Own knowledge, experience, and encounters with the Orient and the culture. Said also said that orientalism is an understanding of superiority and imperialism which is divided into theory and practice.
- c. Stereotype: Stereotypes are thoughts, beliefs, or prejudices about race, nationality, and sexual orientation that permeated groups of people and several people are labeled by stereotypes. This stereotype is often given to minority races, such as Asian races. Therefore, Asian stereotypes are fixed images or ideas of all Asian ethnic group