



FLUID IDENTITY IN *THE ELABORATE ENTRANCE OF CHAD DEITY* PLAY (2011) BY KRISTOFFER DIAZ

Maisya Noviana N¹, Delvi Wahyuni²

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

Universitas Negeri Padang

email: maisyenoviana09@gmail.com

Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of a play written by Kristoffer Diaz entitled *The Elaborate Entrance Of Chad Deity* (2011). It investigates the issue of fluid identity that is experienced by citizen in multicultural society. This analysis is related to the multiculturalism approach and the concept of fluid identity by Andrew Robinson and Leary and Tangney. The analysis focuses on the issue of fluid identity. The aim of this analysis is to what extent the character, conflict (plot), setting and stage direction contribute to reveal the issue of fluid identity. The result of the study shows that identity is fluid and dynamics. It is not biologically. Identity can be changed by time and contexts. Fluid identity is influenced by external factors.

Key words: *identity, fluidity, cultures*

A. INTRODUCTION

Identity is one of important things in social life. It is a function in showing the existence of human being. Identity can facilitate humans in establishing communication and relationships with others. Every human being has a different identity. Identity is a characteristic of human being. It includes all the elements that are owned by someone. Deng (in James, 1999) states that identity refers to the way of how individuals and collectively determine themselves and recognize by society based on race and culture.

Identity of human being can change over time. In other words, identity is not fixed. It is fluid. It is constructed by time and social context. According to Katzenstein (in James, 1999) “the term identity references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other.” Every person is able to choose their own

¹ English ELLSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on March 2021

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



identity. Identity is temporary due to human being is a complex mix of interacting characteristics. Identity is a choice between these characteristic. When individuals are in an environment that dominates their identity, they tend to absorb that identity. The most prominent elements in human identity are race and ethnicity.

The case of fluid identity can be found in The United States of America. It is one of the states who have many different cultural backgrounds. It is known as the most multicultural geographical location. There are many immigrants who travel to America. In America, there are multicultural individual consisting of people born-abroad, non-white people and people who have multiple identities. This cultural diversity in The United State causes fluid identity among the citizen. Huge number of multicultural person can also be found in other countries with large immigrant populations such as Canada, Australia, Western Europe, and Singapore or in places where has colonization history such as Hongkong. These phenomenon affect the identity of individuals that becomes not fixed. It emphasizes that fluid identity is obviously found in multicultural society. The play that was written by Kristoffer Diaz entitled *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (2011) is one of the literary works that exposed the issue about fluid identity.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The analysis of a play *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (2011) by Kristoffer Diaz based on multiculturalism approach and the concept of fluid identity. The analysis of this play is in descriptive way. The data is identified based on the issue about fluid identity that is experienced by citizen in multicultural society. The based on preliminary reading of the play, elements which will be looked closely are character, setting, and stage direction.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the issue about fluid identity in play *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (2011) by Kristoffer Diaz. The analysis is structured based on four characters of the wrestlers which work in United States of America. Each character comes from different nations; Puerto Rican, Caucasian, African American, and Indian American. The analysis also relies on the dramatic elements which narrates how events present in the play.

1. The Causes of Fluid Identity

Identity is one part of human that cannot be separated. However, in this globalization era, human life has changed a lot, including identity. This condition is triggered by the phenomenon of migration and mixed racial or ethical background, thus forming a multicultural environment. Moreover, this condition affects the formation of a person's identity through a process of interaction between multicultural societies. This identity cannot be easily changed because there is an inherent identity. One of the identities attached to humans is DNA. On

the other hand, self and social identity can be changed by humans according to time and context. It depends on individual's decision and insight. People can change their identity based on their own perspective and social demands. This is because the identity is no longer biological but has been constructed by the social environment. Identity is not fixed, but continually in process, as the boundaries between themselves and others and between the different parts of themselves are negotiated. The result of this process is called as fluid identity. It is a strategy of people in order to adapt and be accepted by society in a multicultural environment. Fluid identity also is related to the individual's lifestyle encourage people to change their expected roles according to the characteristics of environmental. It describes that identity shows prestige and social status so that it encourages humans to change their identity. Thus, there are four causes of fluid identity.

1. Conformity of identity.

It can be explained that certain situations where actions are taken based on someone's social status, but they cause some form of discomfort because their personal preferences are not satisfied enough. This means that in some cases, individuals will feel social obligation or pressure to meet his social identity. Thus, people think to negotiate their identities. This also happens because of the identity that has been standardized. In other words, there is a standard identity that must be carried out by someone in their environment. Hence, an individual must seek conformity to his identity based on predetermined standards in order to adapt. This condition can be seen in the quote below:

MACE. In *THE Wrestling*, I'm known as The Mace.

EKO. That other name is too hard to pronounce.

MACE. For non-Spanish speaking Americans.

EKO. For wrestling fans. Wrestling fans do not speak Spanish." (p. 16)

The quotation above explains that one of the causes of fluid identity is the standard of identity. In this text, being American is the identity's standard. People must be able to use English as a language that use in society. People also have to use the American mark. It means that America understood as a nation that is created to be a powerful race and viewed more establish and dominant. It is the external factor that leads someone's identity liable to change. In this quotation, shows that the characters live and work in United States. The sentence "*in THE Wrestling, I'm known as The Mace*" means that the character has changed his origin identity. The word "Mace" according to Marjorie in "*The House Mace Symbolize Order*" (1982) is meant as weapon to win a war. He comes from Puerto Rico with Macedonio Guerra as his original name. He negotiates his identity into

American name. It occurs because his Spanish name is quite difficult for American to pronounce. This phenomenon proves that an identity tends to change due to its environment.

This quotation also explains that he feels inconvenience when his boss says “*Wrestling fans do not speak Spanish*”. Thus, this condition triggers the character to change his name. He wants to switch his name in order to get an acceptance. This situation relates with Valerian Rodrigueives’ idea that everyone has freedom to choose their own identity based on their perspective. It proves that identity is a social construction.

2. Multiple Identities

Fluid identity also occurs due to multiple identity of individual. Multiple identities is when individual has more than one identity. He/she has different cultural outlook in life. This individual may also have different values and beliefs in family. Multiple identities can bring people together based on factors other than gender, sexual orientation, religion, class or caste, while still recognizing that these factors are an important part of who we are, and how we experience and perceive the workplace and the world an important part of. It can be seen in the following quotation below:

“MACE ... VP wrecked us on the court, they say.

This kid, he can play they say.

Like Billy Hoyle in White Men can’t jump, like he’s hustling us, yo.

Like he comes in, goofy, awkward, Indian man.

Not even Chinese, so you get a little of that Yao Ming warning shot

He’s INDIAN.

And he speaks Spanish.

Fuck that, he could trash talk you in English, Spanish, Hindi, and Urdu And I stay listening cause I didn’t even know my brother knew that Urdu was a word, let alone a language. And I realize that it’s changing the entire way they look at the world to find this Indian, this Indian, I don’t know, this Indian fucking rock star. And then one time, my brother and my brother say; I’d pay to see this kid.”(p.18)

The quotation above depicts that VP is heterogonous person. He is rich of cultures. He is also multi-talent and multi-languages. The word “*Yao Ming*” and “*Indian man*” explains that he has more than one ethnicity. It means that he may have different ancestry in his family. Then, he gets different values and beliefs. In

other words, he is mixed-cultures. This text also shows that he is genius person. The sentence “*I don’t know, this Indian fucking rock star*” proves that he has high potential and intelligence. When he can speaks various foreign languages, it emphasize that he has good education. It is one of the strategies of VP to blend in the society. He has dynamics identity. Thus, he can change his identity based on the situation easily.

3. Cross-Culture

Identity is negotiated, co-created and reinforced in communication with others when we socially interact. In multicultural society, people meet with all kind of people from different regional backgrounds. This condition allows people to experience cross-culture which influence the formation of a person's identity. It can be seen in the quotation below:

“MACE. Smith Street is the hopping new social center of Brooklyn reborn.

VP. BROOKLYN, WHAT!

MACE. Vigneshwar Paduar’s family owns a gas station by the F train at Carroll Street, a pizzeria near Bergen, a Botanica one block in from Atlantic. Avenue, and an apartment building, just of the BQE.

VP. LUXURY LOFTS, WHAT!

MACE. Everything my brother and my brother said about this kid was true and insufficient. His mouth never stops moving. Trash talk in English, Spanish, Hindi, and Urdu, yes, but sprinklings of Polish, Italian – shit, when a Japanese girl strolls past:

VP. (in Japanese) Yaa, yaa, kawaiko-chan. Ocha demo shinai?

(Hey, hey, cutie. Can I take you out for tea?)

MACE. And he gets the number. And he wins the game. And I end up amazed. And I end up talking to him (to VP)” (p.19)

The quotation above shows the life of people in multicultural society. “*Sam Smith*” and “*new social center of Brooklyn reborn*” means that it is a meeting place for people from different backgrounds. They can be carrying out interaction and communication in that place. In this text, there is Mace, VP, and Japanese girl. They are immigrants in America. This condition allows them to share some information and customs from different background. In other words, they experiences to cross culture with each other. It can be seen when VP talks to Japanese girl. “*...can I take you out for tea?*” shows the custom of Japanese which is known for its tea. Thus, knowing and mastering other cultures makes it easier

for people to socialize. It means, identity is not only fixed but also has properties that easily blend, one of which is due to cross culture.

4. Job Demands

Career success is a person's life goal so that job has a strong connection with individual's identity. High achievement, intense competitiveness, and job demands are the driving factors for someone to change their identity. In other words, these three items create a pressure and demands that must be done by the workers. Accordingly, these factors force workers to become synonymous with their work. In this analysis, job demand that should be owned by the wrestlers is to perform with other racial stereotypes. In addition, the wrestlers are not known as their origin by the audiences. The wrestlers have to follow the regulation. It also is kind of strategy in order to be accepted in their workplace. It can be seen in the following quotation below:

“(VP. enters as the Fundamentalist. VP prays
Mace change to his Che Chavez Castro costume.
He speaks with an exaggerated Mexican accent and delivers a bad. Over-the-top wrestling promo)” (p. 28)

The quotation above shows that the character VP and Mace do not present their own race while performing as the wrestler. They use a race that conforms to the American stereotype. It has been provided by the workplace. This is a condition of the work environment in order to get an appreciation. In the first sentence, character VP negotiates his racial to be fundamentalist. His origin race is Indian. But in the wrestling, he changes his race to be fundamentalist. In America itself, fundamentalist is no longer considered something positive but negative. Fundamentalists are considered dangerous and despised by America. Hence, this stereotype is used as a tool to attract the audience of wrestling because most Americans are attracted to social conflicts. This situation also happens to character Mace. He is required to be Mexican guy. Mexican also has a negative image in America. Mexican is considered a race that can threaten America. Mexican is described as a rough and dangerous race. This fact makes mace have to act as Mexican man. In addition, Mace has changed his identity twice. First, he changes his identity into American. He changes from his Spanish man, Macedonio Guerra into Mace, an American name. Then, when he becomes a wrestler he changes his identity into a Mexican man, called *Che Chaves Castro*.

2. The Forms of Fluid Identity

Form of fluid identity is an identity attribute that is changed by a person as a strategy to adjust to his/her environment. It includes language, personality and appearance.

1. Language

Language is one of identity attribute that has flexibility to change. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Vp. That’s cool – the Brooklyn things don’t take advantage of the fact that me and my people are the new superpower anyway. You know we’re the new superpower, right? Brazil and Russian and India and China—that’s the BRIC. And yo. I speak all kinds of Indian and some kinds of Chinese and the Brazilian’s just like Spanish and give me a week in Brighton beach, I’ll pick up the Russian. I’ll pick up a bunch of Russian.” (p.24)

The quotation above shows that the character has the ability to speak in different foreign languages such as all kinds of Indian, some kind of Chinese, Brazilian, and Russian. This explains that the character has learnt and explores new cultures. It is part of process fluid identity. It also is character’s strategy to adapt to his environment in order to interact with people who come from different cultural backgrounds easily. In addition, in the sentence “I’ll pick up the Russian. I’ll pick up a bunch of Russian” shows his strategy aims to show his social status, one of which is from language. This condition emphasize that he has experienced a fluid of identity by assigning himself to the characteristics of distinct cultures. In other words, he has changed his identity attribute through language.

Another quotation to support this statement can be seen in the following quotation:

“EKO. The kid is supposed to be this militant cave-dwelling fuck-Fundamentalist, right? And he’s in here rapping and sounding like your Average street hood from cell block C.
MACE. Everett L. Olson wants someone to talk for Vigneshwar Paduar.
EKO. We need someone... someone to manage him. Someone to come out and Speak Arabic and rant and rave and really give the suckers in the cheap Seats something to get riled up over.” (p.25)

In this question prove that language is an attribute identity that is vulnerable to change. In the sentence “*someone to come out and speak Arabic and rant and rave and really give sucker...*” shows obviously that the character must be able to have language skills that are different from his origin language in multicultural society. The character is explained from Indian but he have to speak Arabic.

2. Personality and appearance

The second form of fluid identity can be seen in the quote below:

“VP. Call my character the Son of Shiva, Hindu God of Death and Destruction. I’ll break my opponents bodies, shatter their souls- and then tell them it’s all for their higher consciousness, some hippie bullshit.” (p. 23)

Personality is part of individual’s identity. In this quotation, the character has three different personalities. He can be anyone he wants to be in certain condition. However, he does not forget his origin as Indian man. The sentence “*call my character the son of Shiva, Hindu God of Death, and Destruction*” depicts that the character can change his personality at the same time. These three items is the symbol of dissimilar natures. Sometimes, he becomes a wise, rational, and cruel person. *The son of Shiva* known as the lord of war and the lord of wisdom. It means that the character can be a great leader and a wise man at the same time. *Hindu God of Death* means powerful. It shows that the character can change his personality into authoritative person. He might control and manage people around him. Then, Destruction means that the character can be cruel. He can destroy people who threaten him easily. This condition reveals that the personality of the character is fluid. The character has no consistency of his personality. Thus, it emphasizes that personality has a big role in shaping a person's identity.

D. CONCLUSION

Identity is one of the crucial aspects in human life. Identity is a unique characteristic that differentiates an individual from another. The existence of identity makes it easier for a person to interact and adapt to society. Identity has two categories; identity that is attached to the human mind and identity that can be changed. The inherent identity is in the form of DNA. Meanwhile Self characteristics and social identity are developing at the time. Moreover, fluid identity is strongly influenced by the Multicultural society. In other words, multicultural identity has a major contribution in the process of forming human identity. In multicultural, the society consists of various kinds of different cultural

backgrounds so that it allows humans to share and learn about new cultures. This is what triggers a fluid identity. Identity is not fixed but dynamic. Human identity is not obtained biologically. It is the result of social construction that causes humans to change their identity according to context and conditions. It is one of a strategy for people to collaborate and accepted by society. Fluid identity is experienced by immigrants and countries that have a colonial history. The issue of fluid identity is one of the themes that can be discussed in the play *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (2011) by Kristoffer Diaz.

In this analysis, fluid identity is formed by external factors. It occurs due to personal needs and phenomena in multicultural society. Personal needs become a motivation for people in experiencing the fluid identity. The causes of fluid identity are conformity of identity, multiple identity, cross-cultures and Job demands. In this analysis, the forms of fluid identity can be seen through two attribute identity; language, personality and appearance. On the other hand, fluid identity has positive and negative impact. The positive impact, an individual who experiences he will be confident because he feels his identity shows a high social status. Fluid identity can also make people interact and be accepted easily in a certain circle. Meanwhile, the negative impact of fluid identity is that people will lose the meaning of their true identity. Although, identities are always shifting in this globalization era, there are values that must be considered when deciding to change an identity.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Derek, Z. 2019. *New Dramatist Dedicated to the Playwright*. New York.
- Diaz, K. 2009. *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. Chichago.
- Dolen, C. 2018. The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity,” *Wrestling an Extreme Satirical Take Down*. Arts &business council Miami.
- Endaswara, S. (2011). *Metode Pembelajaran Drama (Apresiasi, Ekspresi, dan Pengkajian)*. Yogyakarta: Caps.
- Fearon, J. D. (1999). What is identity (as we now use the word). *Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.*
- Hong, Y. Y., & Benet-Martínez, V. (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity*. New York.
- Hong, Y. Y., Zhan, S., Morris, M. W., & Benet-Martínez, V. (2016). Multicultural identity processes. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 8, 49-53. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-45597-012>
- Hongladarom, S. (2019). *Fluid Identity, Freedom and Responsibility*. Chulalongkorn University.
- Leary, M. R., & Tangney, J. P. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of self and identity*. Guilford Press.
- Nguyen, A. M. D., & Benet-Martínez, V. (2010). Multicultural identity: What it is and why it matters. *The psychology of social and cultural diversity*, 87-114.
- Parekh, B. (2000). *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. London.
- Ramirez, K. 2013. Let’s Get Ready to Rumba: Wrestling with Stereotypes in Kristoffer Díaz’s *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*.
- Ravichandran, T. (1997). *Fluidity of identity in John Barth and Thomas Pynchon*. Pondicherry University.
- Robinson, A. M. (2011). *Multiculturalism and the foundations of meaningful life: reconciling autonomy, identity, and community*. UBCPress.
- Rodrigues, V. (2002). *Is There a Case for Multiculturalism?. Mapping Multiculturalism*, 106-131.