

**SETTLING IN NEW LAND IN HA-JIN'S SHORT STORIES
COLLECTION A *GOOD FALL* (2009)**

Thesis

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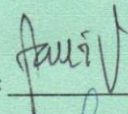
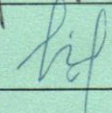
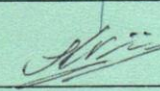
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ABSTRAK

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Skripsi ini merupakan analisa kumpulan cerita pendek *A Good Fall (2009)* karya Ha-Jin. Analisa ini bertujuan untuk memperlihatkan sejauh mana kontribusi elemen fiksi (karakter, seting, dan plot/konflik) memberi gambaran bagaimana para imigran China bisa beradaptasi dan hidup di tempat yang baru. Hal tersebut bisa dilihat bagaimana para imigran beradaptasi dan bekerja keras di negara yang baru demi mencapai tujuan hidup mereka untuk mendapatkan hidup yang lebih baik. Analisa ini juga didasarkan dengan konsep mengenai *adaptation* oleh William Butler Yeats. Hasil dari analisa ini menunjukkan bahwa para imigran China bisa beradaptasi dan hidup di tempat yang baru.

Kata Kunci: Adaptasi, Imigran.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCUTION

1.1 Background of the Study

United States is the biggest land of immigrant. There are million people with their own purposes come to United States. It is ranging from tourist visiting for a couple weeks to workers coming for a job to refugees escaping persecution. The biggest reason why people migrate to United States is looking for a better life. They have American Dream that they believed it can change their life to be better. The number of immigrants in United States is drastically increasing every year. China is the second country that makes the most widely number of immigrants in United States. China have several reasons why Chinese people decided to migrate to United States. Their reasons are for pursuing the economic opportunities, escaping the political unrest, seeking the higher and better education and living in better environment.

Being immigrant is not easy. People who migrate must adapt with new aspects in their life. This is called as settling in new land. According to Meriam-Webster dictionary (2018) the word of settling means to move a place and make it your home. In the process of settling in new land, the immigrants will certainly experience the unpleasant struggles with themselves and the society. They have to survive while facing the challenges between pursuing their dreams of better life and their old life they have been left behind.

They had to experience the disillusionment toward the society and themselves. It is simply just because the environment, culture, and another life aspects in United States are different from their homeland. They feel displacement, lonely, and emotionally disfigured. They also being inequality treated by society. They were discriminated, oppressed, exploited, underpaid.

Because all of the disillusionment toward the expectation they had experienced, the immigrants surely do anything to be accepted in the new society. They do not easily give up to the struggles because they have many considerations to think of. They do it by their ways' of settling in new land. There are several ways of settling in new land that is done by the immigrants. The first thing must do as an immigrant is assimilating the new culture. To start a new life in new land means the immigrants have to adapt the new culture as their part of life. They also should behave like an indigeneous. They have to speak and communicate with the new language. They will eat the local food that is different with their food in hometown. They have to follow the indigeneous' mindset and way of thinking. They also have to adjust themselves with the new environment such as the places and streets of the city.

In order to survive in new land they have to make money as much as they can do. They have to make sure that the income is bigger than outcome. They oftenly overwork by spending their time mostly for working or even having the double job. They take any kind of job even that job is not their passion but as long it can make money they will take that job. They upgrade their skill as a way to make more money. They also reduce their living expenses even they know that living in

new land is costly. They save more money. Especially for Chinese immigrants they have obligations to send money back home while trying to create a decent life in new land.

The immigrants' life, struggle and the effort are also exposed in many literary works such as poem, novel, prose and drama. This analysis focuses on two short stories entitled *A Pension Plan* and *Choice* in *Ha-Jin's* short stories collection *A Good Fall* (2009). The short stories expose how immigrants bear their life in new land, survive and pursue their dream with all the problems they have. That is why the short stories collection are interesting to be discussed.

1.1.1 American Dream

United States is a tempting country for people all over the world to start a new and prosperous life. United States is described as the land of opportunity. For those who want to work hard and having a good skill. There is a possibility for them to gain their dream whatever kind of racial or ethnic group they came from. One of the familiar quote about American Dream is according to *James Truslow Adam* (1939):

“American dream is that dream of land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.”

The quotation above obviously shows the most important reason why people migrate to United States. They have desire to create a decent and prosperous life. Hence America offers a goal for everyone to have a better life for those who willing to work hard and have skill. They will be treated equal by society. They have the same chances to have more money and a stable life financially and spiritually.

American dream is not about searching for the material. *William A.V. Clark* in his article entitled *Immigrants and American Dream: Remaking the Middle-Class (2003)* states:

“Attempts to define the American Dream have struggled with just how much the dream is spiritual and how much material. On the one hand, the dream emphasized a life which had the noble ends of freedom and self fulfillment—a life that was better, richer, and fuller. On the other hand, the American Dream included specific defining symbols: a house, a car, and abundant consumer goods.”

(p.4)

The quotation above shows that American dream also offers both spiritual and material. The spiritual here is indicated through the values of American dream which are freedom and self-fulfillment. The freedom includes equality, opportunity and liberty. The freedom that people search for is freedom as human in society, politics, and economics. While the equality is about how people are treated equal

in society and not discriminated by their skin colour, ethnic and gender. The opportunity is about how people can have the same chances to have a decent life. While the self-fulfillment here is indicated through the chances for immigrants to discover themselves as an individual. For the material side can be seen through the symbols of a house, a car, and abundant consumer goods. These symbols mean as sign of successful, prestige and financially stable that immigrants achieve through their sacrifice, risk-taking and hard work. These spiritual and material things that immigrants can't get in their homeland.

Another reasons why people migrated to United States in hundred years ago were America was a huge country with few population. They saw it as a good place to start a new and prosperous life. The number of immigrants in United States is drastically increasing every year. According to the data from *Office of the New York State Comptroller (Nov 2016,p.2)* the population of immigrants today represent about 22 percent of United States' population. The top five of countries immigrant to United States are Dominican Republic, China, Mexico, Jamaica and Guyana. This means that United States is still a best and tempting place for people to start a new life and pursue their dreams.

Xiaochu Hu states in her article entitled *Chinese Immigrants in the United States: New Issues and Challenges (2016, p.2)* that U.S is home for quarter of Chinese oversea. This means that Chinese immigrants dominate the U.S population. Most people migrate because of economic reason. It also happens for Chinese immigrants. China is a country that has the highest population in the world but with uneven economic growth. This automatically will affect the low number of

job opportunities and lead to the little economic mobility. Another reasons are social problems and education. The social problems are social policy and social security. China uses the communism system. Only government has right to make policy. It will lead to inequality for they can't maximize their potential. As high number of poverty in China automatically will create a high number of crime. Bad social security in China is still a serious issue. The education reason for Chinese to migrate because they want a better and higher education. It is such as pride for Chinese to study abroad and they believe it will enlight their future.

1.2 Settling in New Land

There are three words in this study. They are settling, new and land. the first word is settling. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2018) the meaning of settling is to move a place and make it your home. The second word is new. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2018) new is being other than former or old. The third word is land. Acoording to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2017) the land means a country or nation.

The settling in new land in this analysis refers to the efforts of Chinese immigrant who are forced to survive in new country that is extremely different from their homeland. It is represented by two characters with different ages and background. In this analysis, the efforts of settling in new land can be seen through their way in assimilating the American culture and their hard work.

1.3 A Brief Description of the Author's Biography

Ha-Jin or Xuefei Jin is a Chinese American poet and novelist. He was born in February 21, 1956 in Liaoning province, China. He was the son of military officer. He was ten years old when Cultural Revolution that was purposed to remove the capitalism and replaced it with communism happened in China. During that time the schools and colleges were closed for ten years. Then he joined the People's Liberation Army during at thirteen years old and spent his time there for about five years. In 1975 he left the army. A year later the colleges reopened In China and Ha-Jin entered Heilongjiang University and earned bachelor's degree in English studies. This was followed by a master degree in Anglo-American literature at Shandong University. Then he won a scholarship in 1993 to study American literature at Brandeis University.

Ha-Jin learned the English autodidactic. He learned through listening the radio that broadcasted an English language program six days a week. He spent his time to listen to the radio for about a half-hour a day. Ha-Jin got interested with literature since he was a teenager when he was in Army. He read the Tolstoy's novel and Whitman's poetry by utilizing his knowledge about English to the book he read.

Ha-Jin's works are many. His literary career began with writing poetry. The poetry that he wrote are *Between Silences* (1990), *Facing Shadows* (1996), *Ways of Talking* (1996), *Wreckage* (2001), *Missed Time, The Past, A Distant Center*(2018). He soon turned to short fiction. The short stories that he wrote are *Ocean of Words* (1996), *Under the Red Flag* (1997), *The Bridge Room* (2000), *A Good Fall* (2009).

He also published eight novels. They are *In the Pond* (1998), *Waiting* (1999), *The Crazy* (2002), *War Trash* (2004), *A Free Life* (2007), *Nanjing Requiem* (2011), *A Map of Betrayal* (2014), *The Boat Rocker* (2016). He has an essay entitled *The Writer as Migrant* (2008).

Ha-Jin is the first American-Chinese writer that won the National Book Award through his novel *Waiting* (1999). He also won another award for his works. The awards that he won were *Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction* (1996), *Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award* (2000), *Guggenheim Fellowship* (1999), *National Book Award* (1999), *PEN/Faulkner Award* (2000), *Asian Fellowship* (2000-2002), *Townsend Prize for Fiction* (2002), *PEN/Faulkner Award* (2005), *Fellow of American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (2006), *Dayton Literary Peace Prize, Runner-up, Nanjing Requiem* (2012).

Ha-Jin's works deal mostly with the Chinese experience in China and the United States. This is what he said in an interview with *New York Times* (2000):

"I may not understand America very deeply in that way, but perhaps I can make sense of it from a different angle, from an immigrant's perspective."

The quotation above explains how he wants to expose the issue about immigrants through his works. He wants the readers to know how immigrants' life, struggles, and efforts to survive in America are not easy things. Living in America forces people to do more sacrifice, risk-taking and hardwork. While the immigration system in

America is complex and oftenly make it difficult for immigrants to be accepted in new society.

1.4 A Good Fall

The short stories collection entitles *A Good Fall* (2009) by Ha-Jin shows the issue about the efforts of settling in new land. the settling in this analysis refers to Chinese immigrants' efforts who are forced to survive in new country that is extremely different from their homeland. It is represented by two characters Jufen (48) and Mr.Hong (28). They both are Chinese immigrants who migrate to United States because they believe that America is land of prosperity, opportunity, equality and happiness. In fact, they have to face the different experiences from what they had been thought before. They live in Flushing, a Chinatown in New York. First character is a middle-age woman who works as a servant for a Chinese old man. She has lack of skill and meet language barrier to communicate. These things make her has an unskilled job with underpaid. Unlike the first characters, the second character is an educated man. He is 28 years old. He is obsessed with American history. Both of them have problem with the economy stability, emotionally disfigured, lonely, inequality treated by society. To overcome those problems they maximize their efforts in order to create a prosperous life. In this anlaysis both characters have different ways of settling in new land.

First character's ways of settling in new land can be seen through her way in assimilating the American culture. She learns English through watching the American soap operas. She adjusts with the new environment. She is a hard worker

even she is struggling with her job. She accepts to have a lower job that requires her to be patient. Even she is sexually harassed and being exploited with underpaid.

Unlike first character, the second character's ways of settling in new land can be seen through his self-adaptation by utilizing his knowledge. He applies to the American top University and becomes a PhD student program. He changes his lifestyle. He minimizes the outcome to reduce his living expenses and saves money. He also changes his name into more sounded American name. His Hard work can be proved by having the double job. He teaches the student privately and does his professor research.

1.5 Problem of the Study

Settling in new land is the most essential issue in Ha-Jin's short stories collection entitled *A Good Fall* (2009). There are two research questions used to analyze the settling in new land which are formulated as follow:

1. How far do the characters in *Ha-Jin's* short stories collection entitled *A Good Fall* (2009) expose the issue of settling in new land ?
2. To what extent do the character, plot, and settling in short stories collection give contribution in revealing the issue of settling in new land ?

1.6 Purposes of the Study

This study is going to find out two main points. The first is to find out howh characters in those two short stories collection expose the issue of settling in new land. the second is to know to what extent do the characters, plot and setting in short stories collection give contribution in revealing the settling in new land.

1.7 Previous Study

There are two articles that have given contribution and inspiration in analyzing this short stories collection. First, the work entitled *Falling into America: The Downside of Transnational Identities in Ha-Jin's A Good Fall* by Holly E. Martin (2011) and *Language, Otherness, and Acculturation among Chinese Immigrants in the Short Stories of Ha-Jin* by Louis J and Rajul Punjabi (2017).

The Downside of Transnational Identities in Ha-Jin's A Good Fall by Holly E. Martin (2011) shows the immigrants' problem with themselves. In analyzing this study, he uses the text-based interpretation which are the characters traits and the conflict to exhibit the immigrants' self problem in America. The study focuses on how all of the characters in short stories experience the struggles with themselves such as displacement and dissilusionment. They feel displacement because they still tie and can't escape from everything related to their homeland. It is proved through their familiarity and convenience with their neighborhood in Flushing, a Chinatown in New York. They dissilusion with the good promises of America and the bad reality they experience. The result of this study shows that the characters find the difficulties to be a fully American and accepted in new society.

Another study that gives contribution to this analysis is *Language, Otherness, and Acculturation among Chinese Immigrants in the Short Stories of Ha-Jin* by Louis J and Rajul Punjabi (2017). In analyzing this study, they use the text-based interpretation which are characters traits and conflict to expose the immigrants' language problem and how it affects their life entirely. This study focuses on how the characters in three short stories entitled *An English Professor*, *A*

Pension Plan, and Temporary Love in short stories collection *A Good Fall* have the language barrier and how it affects their life. The characters find the difficulties to use the English as their second language properly. It is proved through the characters often fail to express what they mean in proper English. This language barrier happens to uneducated and an educated immigrants. It is caused by the different background of all the characters in skill and knowledge side. It is ranging from a servant until an English professor. This problem certainly affects the immigrants' life in socializing and their perspective toward themselves. It is difficult for them to communicate and blend with the new society. They also feel being emotionally disfigured and see themselves as an inadequate individual. Their inability of using English properly makes them feel as an outsider. The result of this study portrays that the characters fail of acculturation process in new society because of their language barrier.

Both of the studies above give contribution and inspiration in analyzing the issue of the efforts of settling in new land. Unlike the studies above, this analysis focuses on the efforts done by Chinese immigrants in settling in the new country. Their ways of settling in new country could be seen through their self-adaptation and hard work.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study reveals the issue about the efforts of settling in new land. The analysis of this short stories collection is supported by text and context based interpretation. In text based interpretation, the fictional devices are used such as character, plot, and setting. The character is the most essential thing in revealing the

topic. Because it deals with the whole story and how character traits to the problem.

Patrick Martin in his book entitled *Characterisation in the Novel: An Aesthetic of the Uncanny* (2004) states :

“A character is narrative techniques for representation of human features, actions, intentions, desires, and traits in the novel form and how these interacts with reader’s cognitive strategies for recognising and developing knowledge (or the feeling of knowledge) about other people.” (p.10)

The quotation above explains that the character is a representative of human. The character is a person that has its own life in literary works. The character has its own conflict and problem solving that will give the reader an idea for understanding the whole story. In this short stories collection *A Good Fall* (2009) by *Ha-Jin*, the characters reflect the Chinese immigrants with different background that influenced their different ways of adapting the American culture.

The second fictional device is plot. Plot is sequence event that make up a story. There is a conflict in plot. *Emily Pia* and *Thomas Diez* in the book entitled *Conflict and Human Right: A Theoretical Framework* (2007, p.3) defines that conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. It can be said that conflict is problem that make the characters difficult to achieve their aims. Conflict is the central issue and makes the story moves and can be divided into two. They are internal and external conflict. Internal conflict is the conflict that exists inside the character. While the external conflict deals with the problems of the world. In this analysis, the internal conflict happens when the characters deal with self-problem such as feeling lonely, emotionally

disfigured, displacement, disillusionment and have lack of skill and knowledge. However the external conflict occurs when the characters are treated unequal and marginalized by the society. In the beginning, they fail to do the acculturation process because of the high oppression in the new society but they keep struggling to face the life.

The last element is setting. *Mario Klarer* says in his book *entitled An Introduction to Literary Studies* (2004, p.25) that The term “setting” denotes the location, historical period, and social surroundings in which the action of a text develops. This means that setting consists of environment, situation, atmosphere, time and place in which the story happens. The social surroundings in this short stories are portrayed as a hard circumstances and inconvenience atmosphere for the immigrants. They live in high oppression from several aspects such as struggling of getting job, being discriminated, and covering their living expenses while cost living in United States is quite high. The location is in Flushing, a Chinatown in New York. The time represents the 2000s era where the globalization happens radically and mix culture had been as a common thing. People from all over the world may come and migrate to United States.

In context based interpretation, the analysis of the settling in new land is related to the concept of adaptation by *William Butler Yeats* in postcolonial approach. According to *Yeats* in *Peter Barry's* book *entitled Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (2002) there are three phases of adaptation in postcolonial literature. They are adopt, adapt, and adept. *Yeats* in *Peter*

Barry's book entitled *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (2002) states:

“Adopt phase of colonial literature, since the writer is to adapt the form as it stands. The second stage is adapt phase, since it aims to adapt the European form to African subject matter, thus assuming partial rights of intervention in the genre. In the final phase there is, so to speak, a declaration of cultural independence whereby African writers remake the form to their own specification, without reference to European norms. This might be called the ‘Adept’ phase.” (p.130)

Based on the quotation above, the Adopt phase is imitative phase because it use the form as it stands. It means the adopt is absorbing the idea as its own authenticity without filter it. The consciousness doesn't exist in this phase. While the adapt phase can be defined as the modification phase. Adapt phase modifies the original one to make it more suitable for new purpose. The consciousness and filter process exist in this phase. While the adept phase can be assumed as the discovery of free voice. This phase is independent phase when the reference to certain norms and rules are demolished. In adept process, people need skill knowledge, awareness and consciousness. It is because they need the self-confident to make a right choice and decision.

In this analysis, the characters has different ways of adaptation. It is proved through their ways of assimilating the American culture. First character uses the adapt process to survive. She modifies the assimilation process of American culture. She still uses several Chinese culture that fits to herself such as food, the television show that she watches. While the second character uses the adept process to be existed. It is proved through his ability to choose which American culture that

makes him safe such as the lifestyle, mindset he wants to live in, he changes his name into more sounded American name, enters the American top University to get a higher education, the major that he chooses as PhD student. He does not depends on his parents' choices about the major he should take based on Chinese standard to get a better future.

1.9 Methodology

The analysis of this short stories collection is done through text and context based interpretation. It is done by analyzing some part of fictional devices such as character, plot and setting. Character and conflicts are used to reveal about the efforts of settling in new land by analyzing the reaction of the characters toward conflicts. Then, setting deals with the circumtanses and the atmosphere. They give contribution in process of analysis by giving help in revealing the meaning. These devices are connected to context-based interpretation. It deals with the concept of adaptation by William Butler Yeats in postcolonial approach.