

## A Discourse of Orientalism in Kelly Yang's *Parachutes*

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### ABSTRACT

*This research discusses the construction of orientalism in Parachutes novel. Stereotyping and superiority of the West toward the East were the focuses of the analysis as well as the author's critical ideology. It applied Edward Said's orientalism as the underlying theory and qualitative method as the type of the research. Narrative events, dialogues, settings are the collected data for textual analysis. Meanwhile, contextual analysis used related references to strengthen the argument. The result, it was found that orientalism in the form of cultural stereotyping and oppression by the West was still often experienced by Asians as the East in public or in a formal institution. Those related to as the West's efforts to perpetuated and legitimized their superiority and domination. In addition, internalized orientalism occurs toward Asians society as they always glorified everything about the West.*

**Keywords:** *orientalism, stereotype, hegemony, superiority, inferiority*

### INTRODUCTION

The United States of America or America is known as a state that has many citizens who come from various countries in the world, with diverse races and cultures. For this reason, Americans claim themselves to have multicultural states and have tolerance for all people since America is the host country for immigrants with various backgrounds (Bureau of the Census, 1995). The United States, which is

referred to as a multicultural state in a novel entitled *Parachutes* is told the opposite. *Parachutes* novel published in May 2020 tells about Claire, Dani, and other Asian children who often referred to as the parachutes who came to the United States for education often experience discrimination and racism while living in California because of their background culture. This indicates the existence of bad treatment, stereotypes, racism, and discrimination that actually often occurs and is experienced by people of colour in western countries until now. The story starts when Claire's mother and father think being foreign-educated is something that they should be proud of and it is in fact something that is being glorified in Chinese families. Almost all the parents in China send their children to get a better education to Western countries, especially The United States of America. The other reason to get Claire studying there is getting Claire out of what her father calls a broken system. The story depicts China as a country with a bad educational system for students, making them feel desperate and not have free time.

In this novel, the Western is represented by Americans while Asian students represent the Eastern. How the West perceives, treats, and thinks about the East describes the concept of orientalism. Said (1979) explains that the West always referred themselves as "us" and the occident while the East as "them", the orient, and as "the other". The West describes themselves as civilized, knowledgeable, rational, and logical nations. Then, the West defines the East as uncivilized, knowledge less, irrational, and illogical, so the West who considered themselves as erudite and well-educated, feels they have the right to teach and have the authority over the East. The West's perception towards the East as the other is continuously constructed from the past and unconsciously hegemonizes the way the East perceives themselves (Moosavi, 2020). Orientalism consciously or unconsciously makes the East have the thought that the West is much better; it also occurs because America considers themselves very good at everything they have. Orientalism occurs because the West sees themselves as more powerful and dominant race. Therefore, this research is conducted to analyse the orientalism discourse in *Parachutes* novel.

## THEORY AND METHOD

### **Orientalism in Edward Said's Theory**

Orient according to America is slightly different from the orient according to Britain and France; based on Said's (1979, p. 1-2) explanation America is more likely to Japan, China, Korea, and the Indochinese area as the orient while Britain, France, and other European countries are more inclined to Egypt, India, Arab, and Islamic countries in the Middle East and parts of Asia. Said (1979, p. 4) accounts France and Britain have dominated the orient earlier than America, to be specific since the beginning of the nineteenth century, while America followed France and Britain's footsteps dominated the orient in World War II. Then, they the occident: America, Britain, and France as what Said calls later as orientalist always showed their strength or dominance toward the orient.

Orientalism is propagated by European and British imaginative writers and scholars since eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Said, 1979). Orientalism is also used as basic references to write novels, epics, novels, etc. by political theorists, novelists, poets, philosophers, economists. Because of the writings on orientalism and oriental, every writer on the orient used it as precedent and references. In the end, every work about the orient also associate with the orient itself and with other works, institutions, and with an audience.

Orientalism is described by Said as the way the West as occident dominates the East as the orient. To dominate means to have authority over the East, to teach the East, to define it from the viewpoint of the occident itself. Said combines and adopts Michel Foucault's discourse and Antonio Gramsci's hegemony, in his explanation of orientalism. Thus, the West's judgments, assumptions, and domination over the East continue to be produced throughout various forms of discourse, including literature, works, so forth, to perpetuate and legitimize the West's power and domination (Said, 1979, p. 3).

The hegemony relationship between the occident and orient, according to Said is the same term as in Gramsci's hegemony, where one culture dominates over another and one idea is more influential than another without certain force, instead

through something called consent. Explanations about the orient or the East that they are backward, primitive, sexual, passive reactor, cunning, and others continue to be produced both in the East itself and the West. This is unconsciously or consciously hegemony western nations to perceive the orient negatively. It also affects the orient or the East in the way they perceive themselves.

Hegemony carried out by the West is divided into various forms; one of them is cultural stereotyping. It seems clear that cultural stereotypes have occurred since the colonial era until today. In orientalism, hegemony carried out through cultural stereotypes is a complicated thing. The East is always positioned as sub-ordinated in the viewpoint of the West, who have the thought that they can do anything about the East as their will since they claim to have more knowledge about them. Basically, it is the relationship between knowledge and power that creates “the oriental” (Said, 1979, p. 27). Stereotypes are basically social judgments in the form of negative assumptions to control the way of thinking of those who are inferior from those who are superior.

Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the orient and the oriental (Said, 1979, p. 2). In addition, although orientalism is the way to dominate and support colonialization and imperial ideology, it flourished in various forms. The flourish of orientalism nowadays became new imperialism, where its ruling paradigms do not contest, and even confirm, the continuing imperial design to dominate Asia (Said, 1979, p. 322). Therefore, the discourse of orientalism continues to be produced and constructed into various forms, one of which is literature such as in novels. For this reason, it is important to know about orientalism discourse in literature.

### **The Method**

Analysing the characters in Kelly Yang's *Parachutes* is the initial process of the analysis. In this process to find the Said's discourse of orientalism, I will break down all aspects related to *Parachutes* novel's characters, setting, and narrative events. The desire to get a better education in the United, the bad treatment received by the

characters in the form of racism, stereotype, and the way the characters in the novel perceive themselves as the East will answer the construction of discourse orientalism.

The focus of the following analysis is orientalism in social conditions based on the story in the novel. This process also indirectly and slowly brings out the author's thoughts about the real social condition. Afterward, I will explain the author's critical position and the real social condition among Asians by analysing the characters and the setting.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### The Stereotyping of the East

The Orient, according to America, might be different from the orient according to European, British, and France. America is more likely to Japan, China, Korea, and Indochinese areas (Said, 1979, p. 1-2). Although all countries, including the East countries, have already established their own country and we live in the modern era, orientalism as the West's style of thinking to dominate the East still exists today. The idea of orientalism is rewoven through the products of popular cultures such as films, novels, television shows, and so on. One of the novels that explain the distinction between the West and the East is *Parachutes*, written by Kelly Yang. Orientalism is a binary opposition between the West and the East.

One form of binary opposition drawn by the West is in the form of cultural stereotyping. Cultural stereotyping is a hegemony of the West carried out since then until now, which is negative social judgments of the superior toward the inferior. Those cultural stereotyping demonstrate to perpetuate the East position as the inferior. The construction of the West stereotypes toward the Asian as the East is written almost throughout the story in the *Parachutes* novel. The first form of cultural stereotyping is in the form of class separation between International students and American students. Claire as the new International student there feels shock to know the truth. According to Mrs. Mandalay as the principal, the International student needs to take English proficiency test to get on the same class as American or regular

students. Mrs. Mandalay explains further that English Three, Claire's English class in the future, will discuss *The Great Gatsby*.

"And I have to warn you.

English Three is tough. They're reading F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*."

"I love *The Great Gatsby*!" I tell her.

"The book? Not the movie with Leonardo DiCaprio," she clarifies. The condescension in her voice makes me look down." (Yang, 2020, p. 78).

*The Great Gatsby* is F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel published in 1925. This novel tells about Jay Gatsby, who becomes a millionaire because of his hard work, and also tells about his journey to chase Daisy Buchanan, which ends tragically. Through a conversation between Mrs. Mandalay and Claire, who want to switch English classes, *The Great Gatsby* is positioned as a difficult novel by Mrs. Mandalay to be read by parachutes students who recently moved to the United States. Also, they just live in a new environment full of English native speakers. So, it is feared that Claire, who has just come from China, could not understand this. The conversation shows Mrs. Mandalay's stereotype toward Claire as the East subject. From the dialogue, it can be seen that there is a stereotype that the East cannot think critically and comprehensively about heavy classic novels like American students.

Although it is not stated directly that Asians as the East are not smart, throughout the story's narration, it could be seen that the school, which is the West wants to show that the East is indeed uneducated. As Asian students as the East are perceived as not smart, they cannot be in the same class as American students who consider themselves as educated. It could also show that it is the West who can determine the fate of the East and show which is the best thing for the East. As in Said's (1979) explanation that only the West is able to understand the East more than the East itself.

The racial judgments and cultural stereotyping are not only done by the principal but also by the students. As Claire tries to prove that she is equal to the other American students, she takes the English proficiency test so that she can switch classes from her previous class. Once she gets an excellent score, she moves to the other class. Claire describes the class has American, Hispanic, and ABC or American

Born Chinese students. Even though she is not the only student of people of colour, Claire still experiences racial judgments and racism in that class.

But let's be honest, who are these new-money people in *Gatsby*?" Emma asks. "They're people who come and drink his wine, eat his food. They don't even bother with an invitation; they just show up. And when he dies, no one even comes to the funeral. That's why they're not worthy of respect, they're fundamentally self-absorbed, hollow people whose only care in the world is consuming material goods." Emma turns to me and adds, "Just like the crazy-rich Asians at our school." (Yang, 2020, p. 129).

The East becomes the terror and threat of the West as they will dominate the West as explained by Emma Lau that they, the crazy-rich Asian, will take what the West has. Asians have become the fastest-growing immigrant in the United States, as their number grows each year as they immigrate more to the western countries and dominate them (Pew Research Center, 2021). Claire as the East representation is considered as a threat. Although Emma Lau is also Chinese, being Asian-American, she feels that she is an American. Claire as the East is analogized to the new-money people in *The Great Gatsby*. Emma implicitly describes the new-money people or the East as people who are deprived, fallen, and a threat to people like Gatsby or the West. Those fears about the domination of the East, especially Asians known as the term Yellow Peril. Yellow peril term is divided into two words, yellow and peril. According to Tchen and Yeats (2014), yellow is western racial imagination, and peril means danger, injury, or death. Thus, yellow peril became the term to describe the West's stereotypical fears of the East, as the East is a danger that could cause injury and death. Asia as the East was always perceived as the land of monsters, barbarians, the danger since the 1400s through T-O maps. Furthermore, Tchen and Yeats explain that those portrayals about Asia became things that kept being told over and over again until World War II, when Japan became one of the imperialists.

Emma's statement will make sense with yellow peril fears if we draw a line to the historical context. Several historical events support the growth of the yellow peril fears. Such as the success of the three big empires from Mongolia; Attila, Genghis Khans, and Tamerlane (Tchen and Yeats, 2014, p. 167). Then, a massive migration



was carried out by Asians to western countries. Those migrations cause fear in white people's life, fear that their land will be taken and their jobs are taken, and the economic competition. Those great numbers of immigrants led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to prevent Chinese people, especially women, from entering the United States (Matsubara, 2003). The yellow peril fears increased when Japan as the East or Orient became one of the imperialists in World War II, as well as the incident in Pearl Harbour, which caused Asians to be increasingly cornered in western countries. The West's fear of the East being superior and dominating the world caused the West to start constructing various negative stereotypes; the barbarian, savages, uneducated, and the malevolent imperialist, while the West comes as the benevolent imperialist (Tchen and Yeats, 2014).

As Claire is fuming because she is equalized with the new-money people and she thinks that her teacher Mrs. Wallace will defend her. Unfortunately, Mrs. Wallace as the West teacher, only quietly sits there in her place. Mrs. Wallace's attitude as the West shows that she silently agrees with Emma's description of the Asian or the East. The stereotyping that Claire got in Mrs. Wallace's class does not stop there. The English class continues to discuss *The Great Gatsby*. As they discuss Tom and Myrtle, one of the white kids says something offending toward Claire:

One of the white kids raises his hand and draws a parallel to colonialism. "Kind of like Britain and India. Or . . ." He tries to think up another pair. "The European powers and China in the 1800s." "China was Europe's mistress?" the other kids ask. The whole class looks at me, and I slide down in my seat. "They were called concessions," I say. "The French and the British forced China to open up after the Opium War." "Open up how?" "I'll force you to open up!" a boy cackles from the back." (Yang, 2020, p. 143).

In this narrative event, one of the American kids draws a parallel between the story of Tom, who only uses Myrtle's powerlessness with China's powerlessness in the 1800s as the result of China's loss in the Opium War. The Opium War, according to Fairbank and Goldman (2006, p. 98) occurred in 1834-1842. Opium War is the result of the uncontrollably the opium trade and the outflow of silver to pay for the imports of opium in China at that time. In 1834, British official demanded to have



diplomatic equality with Qing official instead of brokers, although in the end, the offer was rejected. A lot of problems arose after that; the negative effects of opium on society, foreigners importing opium into China, and corruption by Chinese distributors and smugglers. Those events led to the outbreak of war between the British and China, which led to the defeat of China. The historical event resulted in a trade agreement called the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. The Treaty of Nanjing, which resulted in 5 points on trade, was not entirely accepted by the Chinese, and it also only benefited the western side. China's condition changed afterward, as it was having touch with westerners. The following historical events made China more open to westerners and made conditions seem as if they were colonized (Fairbank and Goldman, 2006, p. 199-201).

As the result of that historical event, the West constructed and produced a certain discourse that China was defeated and weak, while the West was undefeated and the one who had power. After that, several historical events made China lose even more. Thus, this correlates with the parallels made by the American student about the term "powerlessness" between Myrtle and China, as Myrtle is considered Tom's mistress, as well as China is considered European mistress. Intending to perpetuate their position (the West) as superior and dominant, they positioned China as the East as inferior and defeated. Those constructions of stereotypes about China as the East continue to be produced and trusted. Gandhi (2019, p. 15) explains that colonialism is not just a source of 'raw' political practices and experiences that must be theorized, but a place where there is a lot of conceptual and discursive activity, characterized by many writings and thoughts on the identity and politics of the colonized subjects.

Discursive activity and thoughts about colonized subjects also spread to colonized women as subjects. As in World War II, Asia became the base where the GIs or American soldiers were and since then, Asian women have served as servants. As Said explained (1979, p. 41) that the West occupied 85 percent of the earth's surface, including Africa and Asia, from 1815 to 1914. Those negative portraits of the colonized women eventually continue to attach to Asian women and other colonized

countries. As the American student said that "China was Europe's mistress" and his words to Claire show that Claire as a Chinese woman, is the same as her country in the past, the mistress. The image of Asian women as sensual, mistress is not easy to get rid of. Another historical event that contributes to that stereotyping is Chinatown in the United States as a place of prostitution in the past. Chinatown in San Francisco, California precisely was the centre of Chinese women's prostitution at that time. In the 1880s, many immigrants from China came to America due to conflicts, wars, and poverty in mainland China (Matsubara, 2003). Plus, in 1848, there was a historical event called Gold Rush in San Francisco. The immigration of Chinese people was followed by an increase in Chinese women's prostitution. Poverty is one of the causes of the opening of that prostitution. Those Chinese women were either sent directly by their families or kidnapped and lured by something to become prostitute women. Prostitution eventually grew and increased, which later became a source of livelihood. In addition, these women also experienced violence, such as being tortured by the customers and the brothel owners, but they could not resist. As the Chinese Exclusion Act was established, prostitution was decreasing. The laws made to prevent Asian women, especially Chinese, in fact, affect the image of Asian women. It is assumed that Chinese or Asian women that came to America certainly will engage in that shameful business, namely prostitution (Uchida, 1998). In addition, Chinese women are also seen as obedient, helpless, and submissive women.

As the brothels of prostitution slowly lessened, those women who initially worked as prostitutes could not find other work because they did not have other special skills. Hirata (1979) explains that the white Victorian women who at that time had just immigrated to San Francisco, California, saw those helpless, victimized, depraved Chinese women made them have an obligation to help, which was known as the "white woman's burden". Thus, they help them maintain the life of Chinese women. Those white Victorians give themselves a sense of "Superiority" by helping the helpless Chinese women. That is one of the reasons why Chinese or Asian women are seen as the helpless and cannot help themselves. In addition, those Victorian women with their Puritan morality always viewed prostitution as a sinful

thing, not something created because of poverty. As such, they always view the Chinese women as having done something very sinful (Hirata, 1979). Historical events such as colonialism, the opium war, and Chinatown make the construction of Asian women as the sensual, hypersexual, the helpless, and obedient continue to survive and be believed. Those lead to the fetishization of Asian women by the West man. Fetishizing Asian women is experienced by Claire when she goes to a bar with her friends. Three white boys approach them:

"I'm Eric," he yells over the music.

"Claire," I say.

He compliments me on my dress, eyes lingering at my plunging neckline as he whispers, "You're just my type, Claire."

"What type is that?"

"Asian."

"That's not a type," I inform him." (Yang, 2020, p. 87).

Making Asian women a type is categorized as a fetishization of Asian women because, as Claire said, Asia is not a preference or a type to choose a partner. The fetishization of Asian women is known as Yellow Fever. Yellow fever is a term that describes a racial fetish that refers to a "preference" for Asian women or men (Zheng, 2016). Yellow fever is indeed the racial stereotype of Asian women where the stereotype makes the perpetrators portray and imagine Asian women as sensual, seductive, submissive, and hypersexual women. This racial stereotype will make Asian women the target of sexual violence and harassment, like what happened to Claire at the bar.

Yellow fever also makes Asian women feel that they are praised or liked not because of themselves but because they are Asian. For instance, when Claire met Zach, her American friend in Prep School. She thought that maybe Zach was the same as other white men she had met before, namely sexualized her body as Asian. People with racial fetishes are racist. Yellow fever is not a mere preference for choosing a partner rather, it is a way sexualized Asian women. The "fever" implies as if it is a fever or illness that needs to be cured by having an Asian partner. Being sexualized and imagined as hypersexual, seductive, and submissive women will certainly bring harm and burden to Asian women. It will also make them experience

harassment, objectification, domestic violence, and even rape. They are only perceived as valuable for their sexual capacities and desire objects to be raped, not as women and individuals.

### The superiority of The West

The West's negative portrayals or stereotypes toward the East demonstrate the West's superiority and put the East in an inferior position. Thus, to legitimize and perpetuate the West position as the dominant and superior, they construct certain hegemony toward the East through discourse. Those hegemonic discourses are presented through works of literature and writings from the colonial era up to this day. Consequently, the hegemony is etched on the East themselves in the form of the way they perceive themselves and the West. The way the East perceives themselves is the way the West perceives the East, the inferior. On top of that, the East perceives the West as superior, the great, and glorifies everything about the West. Align with Said's (1979, p. 325) explanation, the modern orient gives a kind of permission (or Said referred to it as "oriental consent") in their own Orientalizing. Thus, the East contributes to legitimizing and perpetuating the construction of the West's superiority. The East indeed continuously carries out the perpetuation and legitimation of the West's superiority in the novel. The glorification of the West and the way the East perceives themselves as inferior is also described in Kelly Yang's *Parachutes* in the form of the way Claire's family encourage her to study in the United States.

"You know, I've been thinking . . .," my dad says, walking over and taking a seat next to us on the couch. "What about going to America for school? (Yang, 2020, p. 26)

"I'm talking about getting out of this broken system," my dad says.

....

"There are so many of them!" He takes out his hands and starts listing UCs.

"And besides, even if you don't, at least you'll still be foreign-educated."

My mom mouths the words. The gears are turning in her head. Foreign educated. I can work with that." (Yang, 2020, p. 27).

Claire's father strengthens the other character's explanation about how bad the education system is in China. The construction of orientalism can be seen throughout the dialogues that Claire's family, as the East characters, no longer trust the East's educational system. The Asian characters seem to agree with the concept of the West teaching the East since the West has more knowledge than the East. Thus, the East always considers the West as the "have" and the educated. They have everything the East does not have. The uneducated East should learn from the "educated" West, which is considered the "have". The narration of Claire's father shows that he and his family may suffer from "internalized orientalism", as described by Moosavi (2020). To put it into words, the East who have these thoughts may suffer from an "inferiority complex" and have a "captive mind" as they are always being stereotyped as inferior, uneducated, and uncivilized to the extent they promote the orientalist stereotype of their own race. In addition, the East characters really look up toward the West.

"Ming bows and walks over to the mic with her violin. Slowly, she begins her speech, one that I've heard many times before, describing how she was a poor girl in a Chinese village with love for violin, an instrument her parents neither understood nor knew how to support when Mrs. Mandalay offered her the opportunity to come to America." (Yang, 2020, p. 34).

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"She lets out a long, labored sigh. "China's not like here. My family will never understand." (Yang, 2020, p. 50).

Ming's narrations imply that Ming always looks up to Mrs. Mandalay. As Ming explained that she is gay and of course her family in China there will never accept her sexual orientation. Since Chinese society is still stuck with their values and gay people tend to be less accepted in Asia. Thus, she is so grateful that Mrs. Mandalay takes her to study in the states. It implies that the United States could be a place where people like Ming look for a place to be accepted and given the freedom they seek. In addition, a lot of the East immigrated to western countries in droves, such as the United States to fulfill their dream. To boot, those immigrants usually tend to believe in American Dream, and so does this novel. American Dream is a

term that everything is possible in the United States if someone badly wants it. American Dream has become a lingua franca that unites people from different countries to pursue their dreams in educational attainment, freedom, political reform, and so on Cullen (2003, p. 6). Thus, to pursue the freedom to express herself and gain her own success in education and music, Ming decided to follow Mrs. Mandalay to achieve it in California. Not only Ming, Claire as the Main character also went to California to pursue her own freedom and achieve her education, since she could not express her own thinking in Shanghai. The Asian characters throughout the narration want to free themselves from the Asian restricted rules and life, while the United States offers a “New World” and freedom for them to express themselves.

From the narrative event above, it can be seen that Mrs. Mandalay plays the role of Ming's savior. In this novel, it is also told that Mrs. Mandalay often travels to Asian countries looking for talented kids like Ming that cannot pursue their dreams because of economic limitations. Aligning with Said's thoughts that the West sees the East as a nation that needs attention, reconstruction, and redemption of the West (1979, p. 206). Mrs. Mandalay as the West in this novel is like a pilgrim in Said's explanation, except the pilgrim spreads Christianity values while Mrs. Mandalay spreads the idea of the West's generosity. Thus, the West plays an angel role who helps the East. She travels to save the orient / the East from their uncivilized life, it is because Mrs. Mandalay has “the white woman burden” to help the helpless East. Thus, it has become some kind of obligation of the West to bring the civilization missions to which construct the idea of the West's generosity and increase the quality of life of the East's backwardness. The white woman burden is a term to describe the white woman as an active agent and partner with strategies to develop and civilize the uncivilized non-white people who are interested in making careers in politics and even academics (Syed and Ali, 2011). Mrs. Mandalay as the white woman has the sense of a white-woman burden; therefore, she travels to Asian countries to civilize the East's kids through the West's education. By asserting her savior agenda, she demonstrates the West's superiority and power. Also, by emerging as the savior, this also perpetuates in hegemony the way the East views the West as the great nations.

### The Author Critical Ideology

Kelly Yang is an Asian-American author who was born in Hong Kong. She was raised in California since her parents moved to California when she was six years old. At the age of 13, Kelly Yang attended the University of California, Berkeley, with political science as her major, then continued her study at Harvard Law School. At the age of 20, she graduated. She came to China afterward to teach in her hometown, although she graduated from law school. According to Kelly Yang herself, her family was the first generation of Chinese immigrants in the United States. They moved to the United States with the hope of a better life condition. Yang stated that she and her parents lived and worked in several motels at the time (Ho, 2018).

*Parachutes* is a novel based on her story of when she got sexual harassment at Harvard Law School. Kelly Yang adds that *Parachutes* is a novel telling about immigrants, power, identity, privilege, and family. Being a people of colour and a woman, her loud-voiced still could not help her to gain the justice she deserves after her sexual harassment issue at Harvard. Yang as an Asian-American, realized the power that the West held was so strong, and she could not do much at the time. Yang explains she resembles herself with Claire as she also experienced sexual harassment, but she also identifies herself with Dani, as she struggled to work when she was young. Further, she often mocked for her small eyes and how she looked when she was a kid in her school (Yung, 2020).

The way Yang portrays the West in her novel, although some of the characters are depicted with bad characterization, at the same time, they have power that the East lacks. This shows that Kelly Yang sees the West as the most powerful and privileged one. In contrast, although the East is described well in the novel, they have no power; they are inferior. The East characters are constructed as the ones whom the West oppresses. Those show the construction of orientalism that is constructed through *Parachutes*. Even though Yang herself constructs that discourse of orientalism, she does not intend to be agreed to that concept. To conclude, even if Yang as the author, does not intend to construct stereotypes and orientalism



discourse in *Parachutes*. In this case, she presents the discourse of orientalism to criticize the oppression toward Asians and people of colour.

*Parachutes* is form of Yang's criticism toward both nations. She presents the discourse of orientalism to criticizes the oppression of the West toward Asians and people of colour. To sum up, the criticism shows Yang's in betweenness as diasporic subject. The betweenness is shown through the narrative about East and West in her novel. As a diasporic subject Yang appropriates West's education, perspective, life style as she has stayed there since she was a child. But, through the end of the story it can be concluded that it is Yang's way to criticize West oppression toward the East. At the same time, Yang cannot leave her East side, as she sides with the East characters. Although, at the beginning of the story Yang also shows her criticism toward the East through the narration of China's bad educational system.

## CONCLUSION

The discourse of orientalism in *Parachutes* is constructed through stereotypes and superiority of the West toward Asian students, known as parachutes kids. Kelly Yang presents the construction of the West and the East through the novel's characters, setting, narrative events, and dialogues. The story revolves around Claire, Dani, and their friend. Claire's family decided to send Claire to California, United States so that she could get a better education there. She lives with Dani and Dani's mother who are Philipppines. Claire and Dani go to the same school, the American Prep School, where there are a lot of parachutes students like Claire.

The construction of orientalism is shown by the author through the desire of Claire's family to send her to the United States to become foreign-educated. As it shows the way the East always glorifies western things. The construction also narrates through Claire's life in the West environment; once she arrives in California, then Dani and their friends struggle for being Asians. On Claire's first day of school, Claire finds out that Asian students' Classes are separated from American students. She needs to take English proficiency to take the same class as American students. Not to mention, Claire is surprised when one of her teachers forbade Asian students

to use their mother language. The West's superiorities do not stop there, Dani experienced sexual harassment by her teacher, but the school still defended their teacher. Claire, who also reported the sexual harassment she experienced, also ended up finding injustice. In the end, they both decided to report the case to the authorities. Claire and Dani as the main characters who are the East show their resistance of the West, in this case the school. But the school sees their action as an act of defamation of the school. The stereotyping of Asian images is also constructed in this novel. The perpetuation of the negative image of Asian women as the seducer, yellow fever, and submissive is demonstrated by the treatment of American men toward Claire and Dani.

The narration written by the author shows the stereotype of the West toward the East. The narration presented by the author shows the West perceives the East as inferior. Kelly Yang's experience as a diasporic subject influenced her writing. Being a minority in the white environment gave her a view of how the West perceives the East. Yang makes her writing a criticism of the two nations. Moreover, it is a way to show the existence of orientalism in nowadays life.

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