

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing the social conflicts in the novel *The Barbarians Are Coming* in the previous chapter, I would like to draw some conclusion. In my opinion, this book shares the view of cultural clash and the issue of identity crisis experienced by a second generation immigrant. As the protagonist, Sterling Lung, lives between two cultures, Chinese and American, and thus some social conflicts occur due to those different cultures.

In my analysis there are two kinds of conflicts experienced by Sterling. The first kind is the conflicts with his parents and his bride-to-be. The first conflict happens because Sterling refuses to marry the chosen Chinese bride prepared by his mother, Zsa Zsa, but chooses to marry his American girlfriend and another one happens when Zsa Zsa asks Sterling to be a good son by brewing medicinal tea for his father Genius, while Sterling chooses to think in an American way by leaving Genius to the doctor. The conflict between Sterling and Genius happens when Sterling is already halfway in culinary school; instead of finishing his medical school as his father wishes, Sterling enters culinary school to become a Chef. Besides his parents, Sterling also has a conflict with Yuk, the

chosen bride, because of their having different perceptions of meaning of 'moving bed'. These conflicts show that Sterling is experiencing cultural clash. His parents and Yuk represent the Chinese society which emphasizes more on family matters, traditions and beliefs, while Sterling represents the American society which focuses on him as an individual and has a realistic and modern thinking. Sterling's American way of thinking is due to the fact that he was born and raised in America even though he is of Chinese descent.

The second kind of conflicts is those between Sterling and his American manager and his American wife. The conflict between Sterling and his American manager, Libby Drake, happens when Libby chooses to hire another Chinese cook to cook Chinese food for her. The conflict with his American wife, Bliss Sass, occurs when Bliss challenges him to act as a Chinese, because Sterling does not act as one, even though he is aware of his being Chinese. These conflicts happen because from the beginning Sterling always claims himself as American, but when the Americans deny his being Chinese, he tries to prove as one. Thus, when Sterling says he is Chinese, the other party challenges him to act as one; however, Sterling does not do as expected by Libby and Bliss. Sterling's reactions in the conflicts above are interesting because they confirm that he experiences identity crisis.

Sterling becomes more confused with himself because when he thinks that he has already embraced his Chinese part by feeding Moses and by acting as a Chinese father towards him, he is rejected by Moses as he does not want to eat anything. Moses's refusal makes Sterling think more. He remembers that Genius once gives him a mixture of crackers when he was a child. Thus, Sterling chooses

to make the similar mixture of crackers with Moses and eat it with him. Sterling also confirms Moses that what they have made is Chinese food and Moses accepts it.

From analyzing the social conflicts, I conclude that one who is facing a culture different from their own, must first accept, learn and understand their own original culture before attempting to fit in into another society which has a completely different culture. If one does not do so, one will have to experience cultural clash, between one's original culture and the culture one is trying to fit in. This cultural clash will lead to one's being confused of identifying oneself, which results in one having an identity crisis. If one manages to learn and understand their own culture, it will be easier for one to fit in into another culture different from one's own.

After reading and analyzing the novel *The Barbarians Are Coming*, I can learn some things from it. I can see that a second generation immigrant will experience cultural clash which leads to his having an identity crisis. The cultural clash will affect him more if the person does not have enough knowledge of his own culture, as experienced by Sterling. In my opinion, parents showed an important role in making their children understand who they are and help them to accept themselves as they are, so that if the children live in a different culture, they can differentiate between things which are acceptable and not acceptable for themselves and other people.