

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the introduction of the research paper. It presents the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, limitation of the study, methodology, definition of key terms, and organization of the paper.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Identity, in simple understanding, is defined as “how individuals articulate who they are in relation to their immediate environment such as family, to the larger communities such as society and nation, and to more abstract notions such as history and tradition” (Chen, 2006, p. 12). Thus, according to Eagleton (as cited in Chen, 2006), to talk about identity always means to talk about cultural identity whereby “culture accounts for the totality of all elements that shape our sense of the self” (p. 12). However, since “identity is hotly debated when it is in crisis” (Mercer, as cited in Barker, 2000, p. 200), the term “hybridity” then enacts as this process of “mixing together of different cultural elements to create new meanings and identities” (Barker, 2000, p. 385) provokes a complex identification to one’s identity.

The notion of hybridity itself, particularly in the twentieth century, has been considered as either “cross-linguistic” or “cross-cultural phenomenon” (Chen, 2006, p. 11) that is mostly triggered by the movements of individuals or groups from their original countries to other foreign countries that the cultures are different from their own cultures. This cross cultural exchange (through migrancy

or exile), according to Barry (2002), will bring the immigrants to “the situation whereby individuals and groups belong simultaneously to more than one culture” (p. 199); i.e. possessing hybrid or double identities.

In considering the issue of hybridity, the writer takes account of the studies titled *The Dinamic Construction of Hybridity in the Indonesian Version of Ghada Karmi's Novel "In Search of Fatima"* (2008) by Ria Anggraeni, and *The Construction of Hybridity in Kuegler's Novel Child of The Jungle: Based On A Postcolonial Perspective* (2009) by Ruli Ambarwati. Both studies analyzed the construction of hybrid identity within the novels respectively and then identified the factors that trigger the construction.

The two studies found out that the main characters of the novel respectively share the same pattern of hybrid identity construction. The studies also state that the main characters' hybrid identities are identified into three phases. The first is the phase when the main characters orient themselves to belong to their home cultures. The second is the phase when the main characters orient themselves as a part of their host cultures. And the third is the phase when the main characters “shift” themselves between home and host culture. In this third phase, the main characters act ambivalently as if they are trapped between two different cultures.

Nevertheless, the studies merely focused on the identification of hybrid identity in terms of cultural and national identity, rather than on the hybridity itself. In other words, the studies only described about the result, instead of the process of hybridity. Thus, it encouraged the writer to conduct a further study by

focusing only on analyzing the construction of hybridity, not the construction of hybrid identity.

The writer then chose to investigate the concept in Jean Kwok's novel titled *Girl in Translation* (2010). The novel that was written by a Chinese American author narrates a poor young immigrant in America, a smart girl who lives a double life between home and school, and realizes that her family's future is in her hands. The novel itself was chosen since it talked about immigrants that the term 'hybridity' is issued to them.

In the study, the writer read the novel in the context of postcolonial theory by addressing Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Through the term "Third Space", Bhabha (1994) argues that "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space" - the in-betweenness - that it becomes untenable for a culture to claim for the 'purity' of its cultural identity (p. 37). Therefore, as Bhabha emphasizes, that "there is no return to the performance of identity as iteration, the re-creation of the self in the world of travel, the resettlement of the borderline community of migration" (Bhabha, p. 9). It means that the immigrants' lives construct their identities to be hybrid that they negotiate their identities between two different cultures; home and host culture.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This study is conducted to answer these following questions:

1. How is hybridity constructed in the novel?
2. What are the factors affecting the construction of hybridity occupied by the main character in the novel?

### 1.3 Aims of the Study

This study is aimed as follows:

1. To identify the construction of hybridity in the novel.
2. To analyze the factors affecting the construction of hybridity occupied by the main character in the novel.

### 1.4 Scope of the Study

In the examination of the construction of hybridity in Jean Kwok's *Girl in Translation*, the writer does not focus on the gender role that is, indeed, overwhelmed within the novel. Furthermore, the writer only focused the study on the concept of hybridity addressed by Homi K. Bhabha.

### 1.5 Methodology

This study is a postcolonial criticism towards Jean Kwok's *Girl in Translation* (2010) using Bhabha's concept of hybridity. In answering the research questions, the writer applied qualitative method in the form of textual analysis. In doing so, the writer conducted close reading in gaining understandings towards the literary text and in collecting the textual data that are used in answering the research questions. The textual data were derived from the utterances, expressions, attitudes, and thoughts of the main character within the novel.

### 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

These are the key terms that are used in this paper:

Hybridity : mixing together of different cultural elements to create new meanings and identities. (Barker, 2000, p. 385)

Third Space : the space of in-betweenness, that is a space where the binaries constructing cultural identities break down, constructing a hybrid identity and transforming meaning-making. (Nyman, as cited in Kuortti and Nyman, 2007, p. 197)

### **1.7 Organization of the Paper**

This research paper is organized in five chapters as follows:

1. Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, limitation of study, methodology, definition of key terms, and organization of the paper.

2. Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

This chapter presents the review of related literature that provides the background and context for the research problem.

3. Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This Chapter presents the method in answering the research questions.

4. Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study in answering the research questions. To ease the explanation towards the findings, the writer then categorizes this chapter into two sections: results and discussion.

5. Chapter Five: Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter presents the conclusions of the findings of the study. It also presents the writer's suggestions for further analysis on the same issue.