

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

People, as human beings, have stories in their life. They tell the stories, partially or completely, through the media. The media are used to express thoughts that lingered in their mind, moments and experiences that happened in their lives, feelings that have been hidden, and the problems that occurred in their everyday life. The medium could be a personal journal, social media posts, and in advanced level through a book or novel.

Writing about self-discovery, self-actualization, and self-identity has become common in the past few years. Those issues are related to identity. Identity is a self-image of one person that may differ from the others. Erikson (1988) wrote the definition of identity is “the term identity expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others”. One identity can be different with others depending on how one self undergoes his/her life. Sulus (2011) states "an identity is necessary for an individual to grow even as he/she reflects upon changing the societies and the attitudes of the people." Identity is built throughout the life cycle; since we were children and then gradually grow until we are in an old age. Identity is not something that are given automatically since we were born, it can be developed and changed due to the situation and experience that one's own self through.

Gender is one of the identities. The concept of gender identity is a social attribute that is attached to a person. Generally, there are two concepts of gender; feminine and masculine. Newman (2012), states gender identity is when an individual, biologically, psychologically, and socially admits his/her self as male or female. Those who were females were related with the feminine concept and those who were males were related with the masculine concept. At first, the gender identity of oneself is the adult's work to determine and interpret whether the baby is a boy or girl. At the age of three, the individuals may take over the process and learn their own gender work by themselves. A boy and a girl started to play different toys, choose their own activities, dress up, and behave according to their gender. But there are several gender studies theorist who contradict with the idea that gender identity and gender expression is interconnected to biological sex. One of them is Judith Butler, she states (1999) that gender is fluid; it is constructed based on the social condition and through the repetition of acts of one self. It is not something that is fixed. It is a phenomenon that is being produced and reproduced all the time. Therefore, the gender expression of oneself is not always interconnected with their sexual orientation or their biological birth sexes.

One of the examples of gender expression is the appearance of cross-dressing culture. Cross-dressing is an act when an individual wearing the opposite sex clothes. The concept of cross-dressing has been appeared since the Shakespeare's drama stage era. As stated in Hao & Zi (2019), the cross-dresser male who represented the image of women can act and imitate accurately the shape, clothes, voice, and the expression of women in the stage. So, the images of

women were represented although they remained isolated from the stage at that time.

The cross-dressing culture continuously mushrooming in several countries. As it is stated in (Aziziah, 2020), cross-dressing tradition is practiced in Indonesia named *Lengger Lanang*, *Köçek* in Turkey, Native American's *Berdache*, and *Otokonoko* in Japan. The tradition of cross-dressing also practiced in Afghanistan. The tradition named *bacha bazi* for the male-to-female and *bacha posh* for the female-to-male cross-dresser.

Bacha posh is a tradition when a family without a son will transform their daughter to be a son. The *bacha posh* tradition exists due to various reasons. One of them, Nordberg (2014) wrote that the tradition exists in order to escape the social stigma having no boys makes the family look weak, so they can experience having at least one boy in the family from this tradition. Nadia (2016) wrote that the *bacha posh* tradition exists because sons are valued in a way daughters are not. The reason why boys are more valued than girls is because they can do outdoor activities without limitation. Sindhu (2018) states the limitation of women's mobility makes less contribution for the family income. Meanwhile, boys in the family can play a big role for the family's economic productivity.

The daughter was raised, treated, and lived as a boy. Usually the tradition takes place before the female child hits puberty. After years of playing along as a *bacha posh* and the puberty hit the female child, Nordberg (2014) states the *bacha posh* status becomes more difficult to preserve due to the girl body parts growing. Once puberty hits *bacha posh*, they usually have to experience the

conversion back moment. They have to dress up, behave and continue to live as girls. This moment often leads to a dilemma for the girls; they used to have unlimited mobility privilege by being boys, but the conversion makes them have to re-adopt the activity and the identity. The dilemma of being girls again and re-adopt feminine identity, often leads them into an identity crisis.

Identity crisis is a term that describes the phenomenon of a person searching for their true self and what direction that they want to choose. In searching for their identity, people often find difficulties and if they fail in finding their true self it will cause them to suffer an identity crisis while if they succeed, they will find purpose in life. As Erikson (1968) states, the identity crisis is not always seen as a negative thing, it could be a positive thing like a turning point and growth of one's life.

Relating with the topic about identity crisis and gender expression, there is Nadia Hashimi, an American women's writer who wrote most of her books using the Afghanistan culture as the background story. One of her books is entitled *One Half from The East* that contains a story about a young age girl named Obayda who lived in a suburban area in Afghanistan with her family after the tragic event that happened to her father. Her father was attacked by a bomb and it caused him to lose his one leg. After Obayda's father immobilized and cannot go to work, Obayda's mother came up with the idea to "change" Obayda into the *bacha posh* to recover the situation after that tragic event. The changing of Obayda led her to an identity crisis.

The novel *One Half from the East* tells us the story related to the identity crisis that can be analyzed using the psychosocial development theory by Erik Erikson and identity status theory by James Marcia. Psychosocial development theory is Erik Erikson theory that concerns the development of individuals influenced by their social surroundings. The development is divided into eight stages. One of the stages is Identity vs. Role Confusion stages. Based on the concept of Identity vs. Role Confusion stage, James Marcia proposed a theory of identity status which focused on identity formation in late adolescents that usually are faced with the identity crisis.

Talking about identity crisis, there are several researches that have been conducted with this topic. There is Larasati (2017) who conducted research with the identity crisis topic using the novel *Secret Daughter*. She aims to find the identifier of identity statuses which marks the identity crisis of the main character named Asha and the impact of the identity crisis toward the sixth stage of psychosocial development. The findings of the research are Asha experiences all four identity statuses which mark identity crises. The outcome of the identity crisis is positive because she establishes intimacy and obtains the virtue of love at the sixth stage.

The other research under the topic of identity crisis was conducted by Yuan Shen from University of Jinan in 2019. She analyzed how Lydia's social life, campus life environment and her family impacted the crisis of her identity. The findings of the research are Lydia's identity crisis caused by her social condition, her own family, and her campus life. Lydia failed to overcome the

crisis and chose to end her life. Then, there is Nurlianingsih (2014) who wrote a research about psychosocial development of the main character in *The Bell Jar*. The researcher found the main character has been through the identity vs. Role Confusion stage in the novel. The main character experiences major problems; identity diffusion and negative identity. The character failed to overcome the problem and the character had to suffer an intimacy crisis and isolation.

There is research that has been conducted using the *One Half from the East*. There is Ananda Nur Aziziah (2020) who conducted the research using the gender performativity theory to analyze the cultural tradition named *bacha posh* in *One Half from the East* novel. The writer wants to find the gender performativity that was shown in the novel. After did the comprehensive reading, the writer did some research and found two findings; the major themes of the novel are cross-dressing and masculinity and the representation of male preference that drove young girls to change themselves.

The writer would use the same corpus but the focus of this research is the identity crisis that Obayda's been through in the novel. The writer will use Erik Erikson and James Marcia theories to unfold how the identity crisis depicted in the novel and how is the impact of the crisis towards the sixth stage of psychosocial development of Obayda's character.

Under the topic of identity crisis, *One Half from The East* can be a powerful source to acknowledge the identity crisis that the main character has been through. It is important to acknowledge the identity crisis because every

human being will eventually go through this stage at least once in their life. Therefore, the issue of the identity crisis that Obayda experienced in *One Half from The East* is worth analyzing.

1.2. Research Questions

- a) What kinds of identity statuses which mark Obayda's identity crisis are depicted in Hashimi's *One Half from the East* Novel?
- b) How is the impact of identity crisis towards the sixth stage of psychosocial development?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the identity crisis which marked by the identity statuses of the main character depicted in the novel and to unfold the impact of the identity crisis toward the sixth stage of psychosocial development of the main character.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This analysis is important for better understanding about the identity crisis. This research aims to broaden the readers' point of view about the idea of identity confusion. In addition, this research is emphasized to give the readers more knowledge about human development. Furthermore, this research also attempts to make a contribution to the study of literature particularly for students in the English Literature Department in State University of Jakarta. It can be used as the references of another researcher who has relation with their research.