# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

People's judgment of another group of people is sometimes unfair. Their judgment is often based only on physical traits, such as age, sex, race, and nationality. This kind of judgment is known as stereotype. 'Stereotype is an oversimplified and usually value laden view of the attitudes, behavior and expectations of a group or individual' (Edgar and Sedgwick, ed: 1994, 380). For example, in Popular Culture: An Introductory Text by Nachbar and Lause(http://www.serve.com/shea/stereodf.htm), it says that '…we often find people stereotyped around characteristics of age ("all teenagers love rock and roll and have no respect for their elders."), sex ("men want just one thing from a woman."), race ("all Japanese look and think alike")…and nationality ("all Germans are Nazi warmongers")'.

These stereotypes make people treat another group unfairly. People see the characteristics of some people only based on their own assumption.

(http://www.serve.com/shea/stereodf.htm).  People accept the stereotypes which are believed as a fix image from the society while stereotypes are actually untrue images as further suggested by Nachbar and Lause (http://www.serve.com/shea/stereodf.htm), 'the characteristic of stereotype is erroneous: all stereotypes are false.' So this false image is created by others.

During the colonization era, European countries such as Britain, France and German created stereotypes of the people of colonized countries, including the Easterners (the Orient) for the European's benefit. Edward Said in his book Orientalism says that 'The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.'(Said: 1978, 1). Negative stereotypes of the East are created by the West to make contrasting image of the West. Said says 'The discourse of orientalism circulated narratives about cruelty, sensuality, despotism, laziness and so on which constitute the negative 'other' against which a positive identity could be constructed' (Webster: 1996 , 120). These stereotypes give a contrasting image that West is better than East, and that the West is superior to the East. As Said says 'Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient'. (Said: 1978, 3). For example, there are stereotypes that Asians are helpless and pathetic (Kim: 1982, 14) and that 'Mode of Oriental woman, she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history.' (Said: 1994, 6). These stereotypes give the effects to show that Asian people are obedient and submissive people; as a result, their position are below the Westerners.

One of the forms of superiority and Western power are shown from canonical literary works. 'canonical works do represent the ideals of Western civilization'. (Guillory: 1993, 21). Canonical literary works represent dominant social group as Western country and one work will become canonical work if they are seen to support dominant country. '…works cannot become canonical unless they are seen to endorse the hegemonic or ideological values of dominant social groups'. (Guillory: 1993, 19).

This case shows there is an unfair portrayal of the other groups outside the Westerners because they are seen from Western's perspective. So in 1970s, the post-colonialism begins to bring post-colonial writers expressed their voice. 'Post-colonialism deals with many issues for societies that undergone colonialism…attempt to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers'. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-colonialism).

I find that David Henry Hwang as an American playwright of Asian descendant is one of the post-colonial writers who has a big awareness about Asian life which is connected with Western and Asian values. It is seen from his works as FOB in 1978 which focuses on a Chinese immigrant lives in Los Angeles. The life of Chinese American is also shown in his two works in 1981 The Dance and The Railroad and Family Devotion. (Meyer, 2001: 1295). From his work I find that he usually expresses the cultural identity of Asian.

Later I choose his play M. Butterfly which was produced in 1988, because in this play Hwang reveals the issue of stereotypes and wants to clarify about the Western stereotypes negatively toward Asian. He wants to erode the Asian

stereotypes through the portrayal of the major characters. The characters are portrayed differently with the stereotypes and is reversed the old the stereotypes of the Asian and Westerner.

I have decided to analyze the portrayal of the major characters in M. Butterfly because through the character, the reader can understand the author's purposes. Furthermore, the readers can understand the characters from the author's description. According to Roberts, 'Character is a verbal representation of a human being as presented to us by authors through the depiction of actions, conversations, descriptions, reactions...' (Roberts, 2003: 32). Through character, the readers can see the representation of human being daily life.

M. Butterfly conveys the issues of racial and cultural prejudice which make many critics regard Hwang as the most talented young playwright in The United States. 'when M. Butterfly was produced on Broadway, that he achieved astonishing commercial success as well as widespread acclaim. His awards for this play include the Outer Critic's Circle Award for the best Broadway play.'(Meyer, 2001: 1295). Since the end of 1988, M. Butterfly has been shown in theaters around the world.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**
1. How does the author remind the readers of the Westerner's stereotypes toward Asian in M. Butterfly?
2. How does the author portray the major Asian and Western characters in the play?
3. How does the author reverse the Western's binary opposition through the portrayal of the two major characters?

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

1. To analyze how the author reminds the readers of the Westerner's stereotypes toward Asian in M. Butterfly

2. To analyze the portrayal of the major Asian and Western characters in the play.

3. To show the way of how the author reverses the Western's binary opposition through the portrayal of the two major characters

**METHODS OF RESEARCH**

I use library research as the method of research. First, I read the primary text, M. Butterfly, written by David Henry Hwang; afterwards, I read several references from the Internet that are relevant to the topic of the research. I also read the biography of the playwright. Finally, I analyze the primary text itself and draw some conclusions.

**THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

I divide my thesis into three chapters. Chapter One contains the Introduction, which contains the Background of the study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two I analyses the non-stereotypical portrayal of major characters in M. Butterfly. In Chapter Three, I state my Conclusion. The Bibliography contains the list of reference books which are used in writing the thesis. At the end of the thesis, I insert the Appendices, which contain the Synopsis of M. Butterfly and the Biography of David Henry Hwang.