

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Identity plays a significant role in a person's life in order that one can recognize as well as identify himself or herself. Identity deals with the question 'who am I?'. Thus, being able to identify oneself means being able to recognize and say who or what they are. It also means to be able to say to which group he or she belongs because, basically, identity is 'marked by similarity, that is of the people like us, and by difference, of those who are not' (Woodward, 2000: 7). Consequently, identity has 'a sense of recognition and of belonging' (Woodward, 2000: 7).

Unavoidably, one's identity is shaped by his or her society; nevertheless, a person also participates in forming his or her identity (Woodward, 2000: 1). Therefore, identity also talks about choices that a man has. The issue of identity becomes more crucial for those who live in colonized places as they happen to live in a colonial society which experiences two different cultures, namely the culture of their motherland, in which one is born and reared, and the culture of the conqueror, who happens

to dominate not only one's physical land but also one's hegemony or ideology.

Hegemony is '...the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power... .' (Ashcroft, Bill, 2000: 116). Normally, those who happen to have lived under the conqueror's colonial domination suffer uncertainty which afflicts the colonized in identifying themselves. They live in the two cultures; nevertheless, after going through a certain period of time in mingling with both cultures, it is difficult for them to choose one of the two, to which they truly belong and which suits them better. Although the conquered have choices in determining their own identity, it sometimes happens that the conquered face bewilderment in identifying themselves with one of the cultures.

Through Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea and Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy, I see how colonization affects the colonized. Set in 1830s, Wide Sargasso Sea delineates how Britain's colonial domination over her motherland, Jamaica, has brought Antoinette Cosway, the woman protagonist, to suffer the effect of colonization, which leads her to be trapped in the two clashing cultures in which she lives. Unlike Wide Sargasso Sea, Lucy is set in the late twentieth century, precisely 1960s, when the woman protagonist's homeland, West Indies Island, has attained its independence from Britain.

Yet, whether or not one's country or island has gained its independence, I notice that it makes no difference to those who have

experienced colonization, namely the so-called the conquered. Through Lucy, I notice that the woman protagonist, namely Lucy Josephine Potter, also suffers the effect of colonization although Britain's domination over her homeland has already ended.

Thus, due to noticing not only that the two protagonists feel entrapped between the two cultures, but also that the cultures endanger them in searching for their identity, I would like to lift the woman protagonist's search for identity as the topic to analyse. Having chosen Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea and Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy, I decide to use postcolonialism criticism as the best tool to analyse the two novels.

'Postcolonialism or post-colonialism...can be defined as an approach to literary analysis that concerns itself particularly with literature written in English in formerly colonized countries...concentrates on writings from colonized countries in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, South America, and other places and societies that were once dominated...'  
(Bressler, 1999: 265)

Although nowadays postcolonialism more specifically refers to 'literature of cultures colonized by the British Empire' (Bressler, 1999: 266), it covers many theories related to colonization, as suggested by Charles E. Bressler. According to him, the adherents of postcolonialism categorize postcolonialism theory into two:

'...those who view postcolonialism as a set of diverse methodologies that possess no unitary quality...and those who see postcolonialism as a set of cultural strategies centered in history. Even this latter group however, can be subdivided into two branches: those who believe postcolonialism refers to the period after the colonized societies or countries have become independent and those who regard postcolonialism as referring to all the

characteristics of a society or culture from the time of colonization to the present.’  
(Bressler, 1999: 266)

Knowing that there are many theories about postcolonialism, I would like to apply Bressler’s latter-mentioned theory, namely postcolonialism theory, which highlights the characteristics of the conquered society from the time of colonial domination to the present day in order to show that effects of colonization are still felt in post-colonial or post-independence era by the so-called the colonized.

In realizing that each authoress of the novels has inserted some part of their personal experiences, I believe that they want to convey something to the readers. Consequently, they reflect what troubles them inside by creating their protagonists in such a way. Charles E. Bressler in Literary Criticism, an Introduction to Theory and Practice once wrote that those writers who are living and writing in a colonized culture mostly insert three questions in their works, those are ‘Who am I? How did I develop into the person that I am? To what country or countries or to what cultures am I forever linked?’ (Bressler, 1999: 267). By referring to what Bressler has written, I strongly believe that both authoresses want to bring to light what troubles the conquered by inserting their own experiences as examples. It is their experiences that inspired both authoresses to write the novel. ‘Only after colonization occurs...the colonized people have had time to think and then to write about their oppression and loss of cultural identity...’ (Bressler, 1999: 266). As a result, they lift uncommon woman protagonists

in their story; Antoinette happens to be a totally obedient wife who is regarded as crazy by her husband whereas Lucy is strikingly paranoid.

## **1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Having mentioned the background of the study, I am going to discuss the following problems:

1. How is the identity of the woman protagonists in Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea and Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy delineated?
2. What is the purpose of each authoress in creating their woman protagonist in such a way?

## **1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Based on the statement of the problem, the purposes of my study are as follows:

1. To show how the identity of the woman protagonists in Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea and Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy is delineated.
2. To show the purpose of each authoress in creating their woman protagonist in such a way.

## **1.4. METHOD OF RESEARCH**

In writing this major thesis, I use library research. Having read the two novels, namely Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea and Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy, I determine to use extrinsic approach, namely postcolonialism as I consider the approach the best tool to get a better understanding in analysing

the two novels. To reach a deeper understanding of both novels, I read articles about the two novelists chosen. I also search related articles about the two novels, which are going to be analysed; in addition, I read literary criticisms from some references and the internet. I finally do the analysis on both novels and arrive at a conclusion of the analysis.

#### **1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

I organize the thesis in four chapters, Chapter One deals with the Introduction about the thesis. It includes the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two provides the analysis of identity of the woman protagonist in Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea, namely Antoinette Cosway, continued with Chapter Three, which contains the analysis of identity of the woman protagonist in Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy, namely Lucy Josephine Potter. The last chapter provides the conclusion of the analyses that have been done in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consists of the Synopses of both novels and the Biographies of the authoresses.