UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FEMALE IDENTITY
THROUGH IDENTITY FLUIDITY AND TRANSCULTURE/ALITY
IN SELECTED NOVELS BY MINFONG HO

SYAMSINA ZAHURIN BINTI SHAMSUDDIN

FBMK 2021 8

**RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FEMALE IDENTITY
THROUGH IDENTITY FLUIDITY AND TRANSCULTURE/ALITY
IN SELECTED NOVELS BY MINFONG HO**

By

SYAMSINA ZAHURIN BINTI SHAMSUDDIN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2021

COPYRIGHT

DEDICATION

To my dearest husband, my beloved parents and my wonderful boys; Hakim and Hatim, who have been my source of inspiration, and for their prayers, affection and endless support.

To my dear, wonderful cat and best friend, Tony. Hope to see you again in Jannah (2017-2020).

RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FEMALE IDENTITY THROUGH IDENTITY FLUIDITY AND TRANSCULTURE/ALITY IN SELECTED NOVELS BY MINFONG HO

By

SYAMSINA ZAHURIN BINTI SHAMSUDDIN

June 2021

Chairman : Ida Baizura binti Bahar, PhD
Faculty   : Modern Languages and Communication

Previous studies on Southeast Asian females have focused mostly on issues pertaining to their identity viewed by the West as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual, which have also affected their personal growth and developments. This study problematises these mainstream notions by the West and investigates whether they are reflected in works of fiction through the portrayals of female protagonists living in Southeast Asia, namely in Thailand and Cambodia, in four novels by the American-Chinese writer, Minfong Ho. In the scope of this study, these female protagonists are portrayed as subjected to the expectations of how they should behave in societies and conform to the patriarchal values ingrained in these cultures. Thus, the three concepts of identity fluidity and the decentring of subject by Stuart Hall, and the concept of transculture/ality by Arianna Dagnino are applied as conceptual frameworks to investigate the Southeast Asian female identity in *Sing to the Dawn*, (1975), *Rice without Rain* (1986), *The Clay Marble* (1991), and *The Stone Goddess* (2003) as the data for this study. The research objectives are to explore how the three concepts of identity fluidity, namely the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, the postmodern subject, and the decentring of the subject through transculture/ality are reflected in the novels through the female protagonists' practice of traditional cultures in the Thai and Cambodian societies; to examine how the identities of the female protagonists, as young women living in traditional patriarchal Thai and Cambodian societies constrained within power imbalance and gender relations, are shaped through the decentring process by transculture/ality; and to discover the female protagonists' various responses to the practice of traditional cultures in Thai and Cambodian societies by applying the tenets of transculture/ality. The methodology of the study is based on a textual analysis of the female protagonists' behaviours, thoughts, and speeches, in relation to identity fluidity and transculture/ality by focusing on how they undergo the three stages of identity fluidity and the decentring process of transculture/ality with regards to their Southeast Asian female identities as Thai and Cambodian women. The findings reveal that the protagonists' identities gradually evolve from being conformed to the practice of their

Thai and Cambodian cultures to young women who exhibit voice, agency and no hypersexual characteristics after being decentred through the intermingling of cultures and demonstrating the three stages of identity fluidity. More specifically, Dawan in *Sing to the Dawn* fulfils her wish to study in Bangkok when she firmly stands by her decision to study there, Jinda in *Rice without Rain* transforms into a reformation activist when she journeys to Bangkok to fight for her father's release from prison, Dara in *The Clay Marble* becomes the head of the family when she resolutely convinces her brother to leave the Cambodian camp and start anew, and Nakri in *The Stone Goddess* breaks her silence as she openly mourns after fleeing from the Khmer Rouge regime. Findings from this study suggest that identity fluidity and transculture/ality can further be studied in light of the third space concept and liminality.

Abstrak thesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

RENEGOSIASI IDENTITI WANITA ASIA TENGGARA MELALUI KEFLEKSIBELAN IDENTITI DAN TRANSKULTUR/ALITI DALAM NOVEL TERPILIH OLEH MINFONG HO

Oleh

SYAMSINA ZAHURIN BINTI SHAMSUDDIN

Jun 2021

Pengerusi : Ida Baizura binti Bahar, PhD
Fakulti : Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Kajian terdahulu mengenai wanita Asia Tenggara lebih menjurus kepada isu-isu berkaitan identiti mereka yang dilihat oleh Barat sebagai tidak bersuara, submisif dan hiperseksual yang mempengaruhi pertumbuhan dan perkembangan peribadi mereka. Kajian ini menyorot konsep arus perdana tersebut tentang wanita Asia Tenggara yang diketengahkan oleh Barat dan menyiasat sama ada ia tercermin dalam karya fiksyen menerusi tingkah laku empat protagonis wanita yang menetap di Asia Tenggara iaitu di Thailand dan Kemboja dalam empat novel oleh penulis Amerika berketurunan Cina iaitu Minfong Ho. Dalam skop kajian ini, empat protagonis wanita ini digambarkan sebagai tunduk pada jangkaan masyarakat yang mementingkan nilai-nilai patriarki yang terdapat dalam budaya mereka. Oleh itu, tiga konsep kefleksibelan identiti dan konsep subjek terubah oleh Stuart Hall beserta transkultur/aliti oleh Arianna Dagnino diterapkan sebagai kerangka konsep untuk menyiasat identiti wanita Asia Tenggara dalam novel-novel berikut; *Sing to the Dawn* (1975), *Rice without Rain* (1986), *The Clay Marble* (1991), dan *The Stone Goddess* (2003) sebagai data untuk kajian ini. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka bagaimana tiga konsep kefleksibelan identiti iaitu subjek pencerahan, subjek sosiologi dan subjek pascamoden telah menjadikan empat protagonis wanita ini sebagai subjek terubah melalui proses transkultur/aliti dicerminkan dalam novel menerusi tingkah laku empat protagonis wanita tersebut dalam konteks tradisi budaya masyarakat Thailand dan Kemboja; untuk mengkaji bagaimana identiti empat protagonis wanita, sebagai wanita muda yang menetap dalam kalangan masyarakat patriakal tradisional Thailand dan Kemboja yang mengalami ketidakseimbangan kuasa antara gender dan hubungan antara gender, dibentuk melalui proses transkultur/aliti; dan untuk mengetahui pelbagai tindak balas empat protagonis wanita tersebut terhadap budaya tradisional yang dipraktiskan oleh masyarakat Thailand dan Kemboja melalui prinsip-prinsip transkultur/aliti. Metodologi kajian ini adalah berlandaskan kepada analisis teks mengenai tingkah laku, pemikiran dan ucapan empat protagonis wanita tersebut serta kaitannya dengan kefleksibelan identiti dan transkultur/aliti selain memfokus kepada bagaimana mereka menjalani tiga tahap

iii

kefleksibelan identiti dan melalui proses transkultur/aliti sebagai wanita Asia Tenggara yang tinggal di Thailand dan Kemboja. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa identiti keempat-empat protagonis wanita secara beransur-ansur berkembang dari menerima budaya Thailand dan Kemboja yang telah diterapkan kepada mereka kepada wanita muda yang menunjukkan ciri-ciri yang berani bersuara, tidak submisif dan bukan hiperseksual setelah melalui proses percampuran budaya dan mempamerkan tiga tahap kefleksibelan identiti. Secara khusus, Dawan dalam *Sing to the Dawn* memenuhi hasratnya untuk belajar di kota Bangkok apabila dia bertegas dengan bapanya untuk terus belajar di kota tersebut; Jinda dalam *Rice without Rain* menjadi aktivis reformasi di Bangkok ketika dia memperjuangkan pembebasan ayahnya dari penjara; Dara dalam *The Clay Marble* mengambil alih posisi sebagai ketua keluarga ketika dia berjaya meyakinkan abangnya untuk meninggalkan kem pelarian di sempadan Kemboja dan kembali ke kampung halaman mereka untuk memulakan kehidupan baru; serta Nakri dalam *The Stone Goddess* yang telah memecah tradisi sebagai wanita muda Kemboja yang berkabung secara terbuka apabila beliau berhijrah ke Amerika Syarikat dan melarikan diri dari rejim Khmer Rouge. Penemuan dari kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa ke kefleksibelan identiti dan transkultur/aliti dapat dikaji dengan lebih lanjut berdasarkan konsep ruang ketiga dan konsep keterbatasan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin.

All praises to Allah and His blessings for the completion of this thesis. I thank Him for all the opportunities, trials and strengths that have been showered on me to finish writing the thesis. My humblest gratitude to the holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) whose way of life has been a continuous guidance for me.

First of all, I would like to express my heartiest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ida Baizura Bahar, for her expertise, experience, dedication, guidance and inspiration that have motivated me to keep working on my thesis. Working with Dr. Ida has made it possible for me to gain knowledge, experience and, most of all, meaningful friendship.

I would also like to thank the two other members of the Supervisory Committee, Dr. Manimangai Mani and Dr. Mohammad Ewan Awang, for their co-supervision of this thesis, for their valuable time, and guidance. I am privileged to have had the pleasure of being supervised by all three supervisors, who are so knowledgeable, professional and experienced.

I am also very grateful to the staff of the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, especially Associate Professor Dr. Rosli Talif for his insightful comments in the Research Methods for English Studies class in 2018 and Dr. Hardev Kaur for her suggestions during the Thesis Writing class in 2017.

Furthermore, this thesis would never be made possible without the funding from Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia and Universiti Putra Malaysia, and I am really grateful for the generous financial support from these bodies.

Special thanks to my loving, supportive and patient husband, Norhisam Kamar. Without his support, encouragement and understanding, it would have been impossible for me to complete this thesis.

My special gratitude goes to my parents, Haji Shamsuddin and Hajah Zaiyah; my brothers, Boy, Ajib, and Baby; my sisters-in-law, Fifi, Ulyn, Leia, my children; Akim, Atim, Afiq, Harith, Shafie and family for their strength, love, understanding, support and prayers which provided the basis for my success.

My relatives, colleagues, study buddies, teachers, students, and friends also deserve special thanks for their unwavering support and love. Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of the wonderful people who have led and assisted me in the completion of this thesis, whether directly or indirectly. Thank you very much to all of you.

vi

This thesis has been submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Ida Baizura binti Bahar, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Manimangai a/p Mani, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Mohammad Ewan bin Awang, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

ZALILAH MOHD SHARIFF, PhD
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 09 September 2021

Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:
- this thesis is my original work;
- quotations, illustrations and citations have been duly referenced;
- this thesis has not been submitted previously or concurrently for any other degree at any institutions;
- intellectual property from the thesis and copyright of thesis are fully-owned by Universiti Putra Malaysia, as according to the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Research) Rules 2012;
- written permission must be obtained from supervisor and the office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and innovation) before thesis is published (in the form of written, printed or in electronic form) including books, journals, modules, proceedings, popular writings, seminar papers, manuscripts, posters, reports, lecture notes, learning modules or any other materials as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Research) Rules 2012;
- there is no plagiarism or data falsification/fabrication in the thesis, and scholarly integrity is upheld as according the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) and the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Research) Rules 2012. The thesis has undergone plagiarism detection software

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name and Matric No: Syamsina Zahurin binti Shamsuddin, GS50129

ix

Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) were adhered to.

Signature:
Name of Chairman
of Supervisory
Committee: Dr. Ida Baizura binti Bahar

Signature:
Name of Member
of Supervisory
Committee: Dr. Manimangai a/p Mani

Signature:
Name of Member
of Supervisory
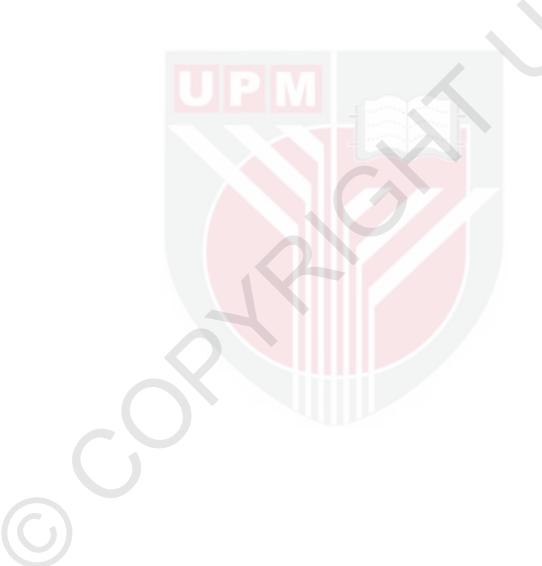Committee: Dr. Mohammad Ewan bin Awang

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

In the course of the Gold Rush Era in 1849, the Chinese American literature began to flourish as immigrants from various parts of China started writing about their experiences and lives as immigrants living in America. Most of these immigrants, comprising workers, scholars, students and diplomats, wrote autobiographies, stories, poems and novels in Mandarin and English; mostly about their lives in America which were different from their Chinese culture and backgrounds (Marchetti 3, Liu 1-3). Most of the time, they highlighted issues pertaining to identity and race as well as challenging the 'Yellow Peril' stereotypes, namely "physically and intellectually inferior, morally suspect, heathen, licentious, disease ridden, feral, violent, uncivilised, infantile, and in need of the guidance of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants" (Marchetti 3).

The 1870s represented the period when America's perception of Southeast Asian people was heavily impacted by its media, which regularly depicted Southeast Asian images that were both derogatory and evil, and set the stage for the Western view of Southeast Asia since then (Woo 66). Consequently, many prominent writers appeared during this era; for instance, the biracial Eaton sisters, namely Edith Maude Eaton (1865-1914) and Winnifred Eaton (1875-1954).

Later on, in 1970s, the generation of Chinese American writers in this era wanted to establish an Asian American cultural tradition, especially in developing the Chinese American Literature, in order to represent and recognise the struggle of the Chinese to be accepted as citizens of America. A group of Chinese writers, namely Frank Chin (b. 1940), Jeffrey Paul Chan (b.1942) and Shawn Wong (b.1949) with their Japanese American counterpart, poet Lawson Fusao Inada (b.1938), published an anthology titled *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers* (1974). With the publication of the noteworthy anthology, the editors successfully initiated one of the first formations of a Chinese American literary identity and help to establish the Asian American Literature in America (Cheung 6).

The Chinese American Literature, then, progresses with the emergence of many contemporary prominent female writers, such as Jade Snow Wong (1922-2006), Adeline Yen Mah (b. 1937), Bette Bao Lord (b.1938), Ruthanne Lum McCunn (b. 1946), Amy Tan (1952), Fae Myene Ng (b. 1956), Lan Samantha Chang (b. 1965), and the more internationally notable writer, Minfong Ho (b. 1951), who authored *Sing to the Dawn* (1975*), Rice without Rain* (1986), *The Clay Marble* (1991) and *The Stone Goddess* (2003).

1

Most of these Chinese American writers; for instance, Jade Snow Wong, Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan, Gish Jen, and Fae Myene Ng, focus more on the experiences of living in America as Chinese immigrants but Ho, unlike her peers, writes about young female protagonists living in Southeast Asia who are determined to overcome life's difficulties as she describes about real young women from Southeast Asia, namely from Thailand and Cambodia, who counter real-life experiences (Wiggins 52). A successful author, the novels by Ho are notable, well-known internationally, and have won many awards.

Ho's effort on writing about Asia is due to the fact that she wants to record her own recollections of Asia and not just rely on the Western point of view as she explains,

> "I had never enjoyed reading stories of Asia in my own childhood… Children's books about Thailand, China, Burma, etc. were invariably about princes and emperors and/or their elephants, peacocks and tigers. The few about village life portrayed it as idyllic and easy-going, full of kites and candles and festivals at the temples. This was not the Asia I knew, and I had resented the writers--usually white--who out of condescension and ignorance misrepresented these countries." ("Minfong Ho")

Linked to the themes and issues in literary works raised and explored by the Chinese-American authors as discussed earlier is the more problematic issue of the misconceptions of Asia from the Western view narrowing on the Southeast Asian female stereotypes. As recalled, the Southeast Asian immigrants were labelled as thieves who stole from the Whites, and are perceived as hostile, violent and menacing. Worryingly, these notions from the West continue when their female counterparts were also labelled in demeaning and stereotypical ways. Throughout history, Southeast Asian females have been pigeon-holed with derogatory perceptions of "deviant sexuality, erotic sensibilities, and exotic sexual practices" (Duncan 174).

These reiterations of the Southeast Asian Female identity further escalated when, after the Opium Wars, the two wars between the British and the Chinese in mid-19th century, the Western men became fascinated with the sexualised images of the Southeast Asian female (Wang, 2013; Park, 2014; J. Lee, 2018). Significantly, this perception was further cemented with the advent of the American military in Asia beginning from World War II (1939-145) right up to the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnam War (1955-1975) as many "juicy bars" and brothels sprouted, and generated a local industry to serve the American troops. Initially regarded as a trade between American soldiers and local Southeast Asian women, it actually went beyond that, where Southeast Asian female sex workers were perceived as the more aggressive "dragon lady" who profited from the sex industry (Park, 2014; J. Lee, 2018).

More significantly in the field of literature, the stereotyping of Southeast Asian women as voiceless and submissive originated first when Pierre Lotti or Louis Marie-Julien Viaud (1850-1923) published his novel *Madame Chrysantheme* in 1887. Based on Lotti's travel to Japan, *Madame Chrysantheme* is set in Nagasaki and reveals an account of a naval officer who found a Japanese girl to be his temporary wife as he becomes obsessed in finding a Japanese wife who is pretty, dainty, delicate, fragile, and not bigger than a porcelain doll (Prasso, 2006; Park, 2014).

The publication of the novel was viewed as the major factor in the Western understanding of the Southeast Asian women as voiceless and submissive as the novel became a sensational hit and inspired many other writers to create their own versions of *Madame Chrysantheme*. While Lotti's account of the Japanese women was viewed as racist, demeaning and dehumanising of the Japanese women (Prasso, 2006; Reed, 2010; Bamford, 2016; Fukuzawa, 2018); and attempts were made by the novel's illustrator Felix Regamey (1844-1907) (Reed 2, Bamford 2) and the Irish writer who settled in Japan Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) to refute Lotti's writing (Reed 6), the popularity of *Madame Chrysantheme* continued to flourish with many artists creating adaptations of the story.

Interestingly enough, the impact of Lotti's *Madame Chrysantheme* was magnified when an American lawyer and writer, John Luther Long (1861-1927) wrote a short story, "Madame Butterfly" (1898), which was based on the recollections of his sister's visit to Japan and heavily influenced by Lotti's *Madame Chrysantheme*. "Madame Butterfly" was later made into a play in 1900 and published as a book in 1901 (Prasso, 2006; Park, 2014). Here, the literary impression of the Southeast Asian female identity was broadened as Cho-Cho-San, the protagonist in the short story, is not only portrayed as naïve, weak, demure, her voice and movements irresistibly caressing, but she is voiceless and submissive too (Prasso, 2006; Park, 2014; Bamford, 2016; Sariarslan, 2016).

Accordingly, stereotypes on Southeast Asian females being hypersexual first came about when a British oriental scholar, sinologist and linguist, Sir Edmund Trelawny Backhouse (1873-1944) wrote in his memoirs, *Decadence Mandchoue* (1943), that he had conducted a six-year affair with the then Empress Dowager Cixi or Lady Yehenara (1835-1908) of China. His shocking account of his sexual encounters with the empress was alleged to be unfounded and his deceit was exposed in 1974 by a Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford, Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper (1914-2003) (Seagrave, qtd. in Prasso 30-31). Even though many women scholars, such as the American painter and author Katherine Carl (1865-1938) in *With the Empress Dowager* (1906), missionary and wife of American ambassador to China, Sarah Pike Conger (1843-1932) wrote in *Letters from China* (1909) with reference to the Empress Dowager Cixi, and British author Lady Susan Townley (1868-1953) in *My Chinese Note Book* (1904), recorded many positive insights about the empress, thus rejecting the notion that the empress was cruel and hypersexual, these women writers' views were largely ignored. This was simply due to the more fascinating idea that caught the Western interest on how the emperor of China was fooled by many acts of illicit fornications and there must be a woman involved who was responsible for his downfall when, in actuality

the emperor had himself to be blamed. Because of this distorted history made popular by Blackhouse, the notion of the dowager and Southeast Asian females at large being hypersexual became prevalent until today (Prasso 33).

Concurrently, these stereotypes of Southeast Asian females as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual are popularised and propagated in popular media every day and not only affected the Southeast Asian female growth and development but the notions also created alarming rates of violence against Southeast Asian females. Further impacted by the popularised and recurring images of the Southeast Asian females as submissive and hypersexual in mainstream media, Southeast Asian females face the danger of being objectified (Dewey, 2016; Wang, 2013; J. Lee, 2018; Paner, 2018). They are also at risk of becoming victims of violence as there are reports that Southeast Asian females were abused sexually and physically by their partners in their lives (Dewey, 2016).

More importantly, this perceived view of the Southeast Asian female identity appears to be controlled by the Western male as the female does not have any agency over it, signifying the domination of the West and the subordination of the Southeast (Wang, 2013; Park, 2014; J. Lee, 2018; Paner 2018). More disturbing is the fact that this stereotyping of Southeast Asian females "dehumanises" the Southeast Asian females to the point that they are portrayed and viewed as extreme human beings with extreme characters, that they are not given the opportunity to develop their potentials and, most of the time, they are confronted with unrealistic expectations (J. Lee 5). In essence, the pervasive and recurrent representation of Southeast Asian women in the Western media has cemented such representations of stereotypical Southeast Asian women and continues to thrive and prosper, adding to the West's current understanding of Southeast Asian female identity as culturally voiceless, submissive, and hypersexual.

Traditionally, Southeast Asian females are deemed as unassertive, docile and relying too much on their men (Guofang and Beckett 2-3). They are also paradoxically stereotyped as dangerous, sensual and exotic (Jiwani 161). Even though Southeast Asia is separated from China by a highland system diverging from the Yunnan plateau, many powerful Chinese dynasties have succeeded in projecting the Chinese power as they tried to assert control over their neighbours in Southeast Asia (Andaya, 2006; Tsai, 2011; Rush, 2018; Hucker, 2020). Here, Southeast Asia refers to countries that are geographically situated at the south of China, focusing on the region consisting of countries, namely Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Southeast Timor and Philippine (Rush, 2018).

In their effort to expand their dominance over the countries of Southeast Asia, these Chinese dynasties have also established their influence in these countries, which include advocating the ideals of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 B.C. - 479 B.C.). Confucius, in his teachings, had emphasised on reverence and the righteousness or virtue focussing on women as the ideal family relationship is perceived as a solid foundation of the social and political orders (Andaya, 2006; Rydstrom, 2010; Fang, 2012; Ebrey, 2020). Thus, many documents containing the virtues women should

cultivate were written, such as *Biographies of Outstanding Women* (Mou, 2015; Andaya, 2006), *The Biographies of Exemplary Women*, and *Admonitions for Women* (Fang, 2012; Ebrey, 2020).

Later on, the teachings of Confucius were rejuvenated during the Song Dynasty reign (960-1279 CE) where the status of women and their positions in society began to decline. Specific legal codes were proclaimed, and established the patriarchal system and the legal authority of men over their wives, children and young men (Mou, 2015; Andaya, 2006; Hoffman, 2013; Ebrey, 2020). Later on, Emperor Yongle (1402-1424), in his quest to proclaim his accession throughout southern seas or Southeast Asia (Andaya, 2006; Tsai, 2011; Rush, 2018; Hucker, 2020), instructed that the *Biographies of Outstanding Women*, ten thousand copies of them to be exact, to be disseminated to barbarian countries such as those in Southeast Asia; thus, the significance of how female quality became a measure in regard of society's moral virtue was manifested (Andaya 12-16).

In the context of cultural position, females living in Southeast Asia are viewed as traditionally less inferior to men as they are expected to be submissive and conform to the norms of society (Andaya, 2006; Rydstrom, 2010; Chaudhuri, 2010; Venny and Rahayu, 2014; Yeoh, 2016; Ariffin, 2018; UNICEF, 2019). Throughout history, these Southeast Asian females were given great responsibilities to provide food and to oversee the household affairs for their families; becoming monks, riders, hunters, fishermen, sailors, soldiers, excellent farmers and traders, and contributed greatly in commerce as they dominated the domestic markets and their incomes helped to sustain the household expenditures. Some of them became female rulers and controlled the administration even in male-dominated societies (Andaya 2006; Reid 2015; Skott 2020). Even though these women had fairly favourable positions in their cultures and societies, they were expected to be submissive and comply with the norms of the societies. Many women also became objects to satisfy men's sexual needs, usually the men in royalty and the nobility in Southeast Asian countries where they were kept in quarters, exchanged and sometimes killed (Andaya, 2006).

Additionally, in comparing women's empowerment in South Asia and Southeast Asia focusing on countries in the Southeast Asian region namely, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippine, and Vietnam, and the South Asian region countries, namely Pakistan and Bangladesh, it has been suggested that, in many traditional societies in these two regions, women are expected to be subservient, obedient, and submissive as they are considered less valuable and have a lower status than men. This tradition of gender inequality persists as early as infancy, when many of these cultures traditionally favour sons over daughters. Sometimes, it is also preferable for the families in these societies to have sons as their firstborn, putting daughters in secondary position.

This favouritism of sons over daughters continues throughout their lives as, in many instances, the females in these societies are deprived of education and expected to do household chores leading them to face difficulties in pursuing well paid jobs. This is because, when they work, they are not well paid as a majority of these females who work

5

are categorised as unpaid workers. In particular, they constantly face discrimination in many areas, such as their rights, well-being, opportunities and economic and political autonomies, and treated differently from men in their daily lives. These many forms of discriminations then gradually affect their self-esteem and are also viewed as attempts to restrict their roles and retain subservience in patriarchal societies that, in turn, could hinder their empowerment in these two regions (Chaudhuri 19-22).

Similarly, in Southeast Asia, gender egalitarianism and women empowerment are still the main issues that the Association of South-Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) wants to support. While Asian women are assets in the countries of the South-Southeast Asian sub-region, 50% of women in the region serve in insecure employment globally. Alarmingly, this is due to the women being stereotyped as passive, weak and incompetent; thus, not able to execute important tasks (United Nation 5-6).

Therefore, in the scope of this study, I have selected the female protagonists in Ho's four novels, namely *Sing to the Dawn* (1975)*, Rice without Rain* (1986) *The Clay Marble* (1991) and *The Stone Goddess* (2003) which centralises on the themes of young Southeast Asian women who are portrayed as courageous, determined and resilient as they overcome life's challenges and achieving their goals in life. As Southeast Asian female characters living in traditional Thai and Cambodian societies, they are portrayed as subjected to the expectations and demands of the men in their lives and tend to surrender to their fates and comply with the patriarchal values ingrained in these cultures. Therefore, in this study, I intend to explore the transformation and identity stages that the four female protagonists in the four selected novels by Ho might have gone through and the causes that might have made them become decentred and acquire new identities that eventually help them to be empowered. I hypothesise that they have undergone various identity stages throughout their lives that would dislocate, alter, and drive them to empower themselves.

With specific regard to the aim of this study, I focus on how the concepts of identity fluidity by the Jamaican-born sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1932-2014) as well as the concepts of transculture/ality by the transcultural scholar, Arianna Dagnino (b.1963), can be applied in the novels as I explore the current mainstream understanding by the West of the Southeast Asian female identity perceived as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual in the four selected novels by Ho. Hall's concepts of identity fluidity comprises three stages, namely the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the postmodern subject, that will be further discussed in Section 1.4.1 and elaborated in detail in Section 3.2. Scholarship on the literary works through the lens of identity fluidity is unfortunately, so far, still very limited, with the exception of few notable studies, namely on the struggle of identity in a patriarchal Islamic society (Ida Rosida and Molalita, 2016); the relationship between space and identity (Contastinescu, 2016); the dynamics of a female identity as it is located, displaced and retrieved (Rajpal, 2017); the conflict of racial identity (Kirana, 2018); identity formation through changeable identity markers (Golban and Yurukler, 2019); and women's identity through psychological and cultural frames (Az-Zubaidy, 2019). These studies, as far as I have reviewed it, only concentrate on the last stage of identity fluidity whereby the identities

of the characters are viewed to be fluid, having no static, vital, or lasting identity as their identities are determined by their movements and whereabouts. Here, the identities of the characters transform when they move to new places and exhibit new identities according to how they are perceived or addressed by the society in which they live.

Subsequently, Dagnino's concept of transculture/ality, that will be further elaborated in Section 1.4.2 and Section 3.4, suggests that the complexities of today's cultural environments are shaped by the fusions and combinations of communication and interaction as societies interact and focus on similarities and the ability to reconcile everything that human beings and cultures offer despite their intrinsic differences. Dagnino then introduces seven tenets of transculture/ality: the first tenet, transculture/ality as an approach that views culture to be non-static, fluid and dynamic. The second tenet embraces the notion of transculture/ality as viewing the cultural borders of a society or nation as contradictory, conflicting, blurry and unstable. The third tenet acknowledges culture and the development of one's own cultural identification as a complex phase. The fourth tenet is that, as a consequence of the growth of transculture/ality, individuals have the freedom to make their own cultural decisions and to create several layers of identification. The fifth tenet stresses that transculture/ality does not refute the fundamental culture or nationality of an individual, but denies the notion of a set and self-enclosed culture. The sixth tenet finds transculture/ality to be a humble cultural behaviour and the last tenet recognises the importance of translingualism.

In the scholarship pertaining to the intermingling of cultures, the interweaving of dialogues, interactions and communications, or transculture/ality, my initial research has found few notable studies since its first establishment and interpretation of the concept by Dagnino. Subsequently, the concept has also been utilised to elucidate the transcultural nature of a writer and how the writer articulates her transcultural sense in her writings (Baranay, 2016); and in literary study as a conceptual framework to illustrate the feeling of non-belonging in a female protagonist (Niedzialek, 2018). Here, the studies have shed light on characters who have been through the transcultural process and have demonstrated a sense of non-belonging or a continuous process of identity formation that never comes to an end, viewed by Dagnino as the perfect cultural state of individuals.

Here, the transcultural process is seen as an open-ended mechanism that involves individuals reflecting on their experiences of the factors and conditions that have enabled them to be who they are. Nonetheless, my initial research has found very limited studies that have applied the concept of transculture/ality together with its tenets. Thus, I believe it is most appropriate for me to utilise Hall's concept of the three stages of identity fluidity and Dagnino's idea of transculture/ality as a two-pronged framework as I trace the transformation of the identity of Ho's female protagonists from typical, traditional young Southeast Asian women living in Thai and Cambodian societies to the more determined, resilient and confident young women.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

In literary scholarship pertaining to this problem of the Southeast Asian female identity, previous studies on challenging its stereotypes perceived as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual have focussed more on utilising the concept of postmodern narrative (Mashchenko, 2016), the concept of memory and space (Chen, 2016), eloquent writings from feminine perspectives (Yang, 2017), the concept of Chinese elements and the tactic of honey pot (Huang, 2017), the concept of reconstructing and reusing of ideas, actions, signs symbols and styles in order to create new insights (Fang, 2018), and the strategy of reverse stigmatisation (Ledru, 2019).

Moving away from the issue of racism or mother-daughter relationship common in works by Chinese American women writers, the new generation of Chinese American women writers are viewed as focussing more on the impact of sex, race and social-professional issues on Southeast Asian women living in America thereby engaging in new forms of resistance to stereotypes through the use of humour, political incorrectness and hyper-stereotypical characters. Here, the characters in the novels are shown to manipulate the stereotypes of the dragon lady, the China doll or the model minority in situations that they consider appropriate and when they feel the need to use the stereotypes to their advantage; thus, signifying their agencies and control over their own bodies.

It must be stated at this point of my discussion that the aforementioned studies only form a small scholarship which have attempted to address the widespread misconceptions by the West of the Asian female identity viewed as submissive, voiceless and hypersexual. In essence, these studies have centred primarily on the representation of Southeast Asian women residing abroad, especially in America, and on how they seek to counter such stereotypes living in intimidating, racist and discriminatory environments. The identities of the American-born Asian authors, personalities and characters represented in the novels are shown to be fluid and dynamic, and do not subscribe to the theme of subservient Southeast Asian women, whereby they appear to undergo a kind of process that has rendered them outspoken, assertive and confident. While these studies emphasise the positive qualities of these Southeast Asian women in addressing the Western idea that they are submissive, voiceless and hypersexual, and how these Southeast Asian identities appear to be fluid, complex and fluctuating, which appear to be inconsistent with the Western perspectives of them, the studies do not elucidate the processes through which these Southeast Asian women become driven, empowered and inspired to move away from being negatively stereotyped.

More importantly, the gap in scholarship on the four selected novels by Ho have led to pertinent questions arising: have the Southeast Asian female characters experienced a process of displacement and dislocation that changes them to be empowered and rejects the idea of them being submissive, voiceless and hypersexual? What about the Southeast Asian women portrayed as living in their own societies? Are they voiceless and submissive all along? Have they positioned themselves to being hypersexual as they are supposed to satisfy the needs and wishes of their men? Do they experience any kind of

process that might dislocate, displace and change them to be outspoken, assertive and confident, at the same time dismissing the Western perspectives of the Southeast Asian women as submissive, voiceless and hypersexual?

The notion of the Southeast Asian female identity that Southeast Asian females are weak, docile and voiceless has been thriving since the Gold Rush era. Thus, it is imperative to analyse how identity fluidity and transculture/ality respond to and elucidate the notion of the identity of Southeast Asian female in the works by female Chinese American writers. I have discovered that there is limited scholarship on Southeast Asian female identity through the lens of identity fluidity and transculture/ality pertaining to works by female Chinese American writers, specifically by Ho. Previous scholarship on the concepts of identity fluidity and transcultural study regarding the works of female Chinese American writers explore more on the transcultural identity of the writers itself. This scholarship includes a study that highlights the multiple and fluctuating identities of Chinese American writers and how their identities influence their works, namely *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1950) by Jade Snow Wong, *The Woman Warrior* (1976) by Maxine Hong Kingston and *Typical American* (1991) by Gish Jen (Bao, 2006).

Additionally, there have been studies that have examined Maxine Hong Kingston's formation of her various identities through her novel *The Woman Warrior* (1976) (Cheuk, 2006; Pan, 2010); the identity struggles of Southeast Asian women to reach self-expression and self-achievement in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* and *The Woman Warrior* (Micheli, 2016); *The Woman Warrior* as an example of transcultural writers' creations that is prevalent internationally with its inclusive diversity and become an inspiration for students to understanding cultural interconnections (Hornung, 2018); the identity formation of Southeast Asian immigrants' communities focusing on female characters in *Fifth Chinese Daughter, The Woman Warrior* and *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan (Li, 2014); a comparative study between *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Bonesetter's Daughter* by Amy Tan (Bhandari, 2018); and the identity formation of female Chinese immigrants through the cosmopolitan lens in *The Woman Warrior* (Sheng and Kim, 2019).

Previous scholarship that have highlighted the transcultural process includes a study that explores the conceptualisation of transnationalism and transculturalism in the female protagonists beyond the physical, mental and supernatural spaces of China and America in the work of Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club,* Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* and Ruthanne Lum McCunn's *Thousands Pieces of Gold* (Wong, 2002); and on how transculturation builds hybrid identities of the four Americanised daughters in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), namely Jing-Mei Woo, Waverly Jong, Lena St. Clair and Rose Hsu Jordan, as they overcome their struggles as second generations Chinese immigrants living in America in the novel (Resheq, 2008).

In the previous section, I have hypothesised that depictions of the more truthful meaning of the Southeast Asian female identity can be conceptually analysed in the four selected novels by Ho as the novels are believed to have been overlooked in regards to works by

9

Ho as there have been a limited number of notable studies conducted on the issue of the Southeast Asian Female identity through identity fluidity and the transcultural perspectives. Previous scholarship on *Sing to the Dawn* (1975) have explored, for example, the issue of gender inequality (Aquino, 2011; Keto, 2012; Zelmapulchra, 2017), strong patriarchal values ingrained in the Thai culture that is oppressive to the women (Wahyaka, 2012), gender roles construction that leads to highly patriarchal society (Nirmayanti, 2013), and oppressive land rent that fuel the motivation for a change (Disrekia, 2014). Another study highlights the novel as exemplary of Young Adult Literature texts used in the Singapore school syllabus in order to examine the language, arts and literature development in the Singapore educational context; and as an example of multicultural literature in order to encourage extensive reading (Loh, 2007; 2016). Similarly, another study illuminates the novel as an example of literary works used in a reading course of the English Language Education Study Programme at a university in Indonesia (Iswandari, 2015).

For the second novel, *Rice without Rain*, my initial research has shown that only three prominent studies, so far, has been conducted on the novel, namely the search for self-identity and personal development in the lives of young woman in traditional Thai society (Thongthiraj, 2006), the struggle against oppressive land rent system that pushes individual to seek for change (Pramita, 2011), and imbalance in power relations between genders and women's positioning (Nirmayanti, 2013).

Meanwhile, my initial research on the third novel, *The Clay Marble*, has shown that there have been only four notable studies on the novel; the first analyses the novel as an example of Multi-Ethnic Literatures used in the classroom in America (McIntosh, 2008), while the second analyses it to assist young learners to discover other cultures and as an aid to assist them in completing writing tasks given by their teachers (Barab et al., 2012). Additionally, a study focuses on the issue of patriarchy and the positioning of women in Cambodian society (Nirmayanti, 2013) and another, attempts to examine how speech acts illuminate the power to influence others (Christiyanto and Widyahening, 2012). To date, there is yet to be research on Ho's most recent novel, *The Stone Goddess*, except for one that analyses the novel as an example of children's literature highlighting the experience of historical immigration of the people of Cambodia to America (Sandmann, 2004).

Therefore, I have identified the gap of knowledge pertaining to scholarship on all Ho's novels as an examination of the issue of the Southeast Asian female identity based on the concepts of identity fluidity along with the tenets of transculture/ality. I conclude that previous scholarship on the four selected novels set in two Southeast Asian countries, namely Thailand and Cambodia, by Ho, as a contemporary Chinese American author, have demonstrated that there is an important academic need for application on the concepts of identity fluidity by Hall as well as the tenets of transculture/ality by Dagnino to be conducted. I aim to examine how the selected characters embrace changes in their pursuit of discovering their own innate identities as complexities begin when individuals have to make the choice of being firm to their roots or adapt to new cultural ideas experienced by them.

1.3   Justification of Texts Selection

As recalled, in this study, I explore the Western notion that the Asian Female identity are voiceless, submissive and hypersexual through an examination of the female protagonists in selected novels by Ho, namely *Sing to the Dawn Rice without Rain*, *The Clay Marble* and *The Stone Goddess*. These novels are most appropriate to my aim in exploring the Southeast Asian female identity by the West as culturally voiceless, submissive and hypersexual as the novels illuminate the lives of young women living in traditional Thai and Cambodian societies and their transformations of their identities concerning their struggles against the highly patriarchal societies. In short, the central themes of the novels highlight the characters' transformation of the identities of the female protagonists from a typical, traditional Thai and Cambodian young women to more outspoken identities who eventually have agencies and become independent. In my view, the narratives representing the Southeast Asian female identity in the lives of women in Southeast Asia have not been the subject of most of the literary works by female American Chinese authors. Thus, the novels by Ho are suitable for my study as she demonstrates a keen understanding of the significance of depicting the perspectives of Southeast Asian women living in Southeast Asia, namely in Thailand and Cambodia, where she reflects primarily on these women living in traditional Thai and Cambodian societies against real historical circumstances.

Sing to the Dawn is the first novel written by Ho and is set in Thailand during the 1970s. Initially written as a short story, the novel has been recognised internationally and awarded with several awards, such as first prize council of interracial Books for Children New York. It is also used as literature text for secondary students in Malaysia and Singapore. The novel is used as a compulsory reading text for the literature component by secondary school fifth formers in four states in Malaysia, namely Kelantan, Penang, Perak and Terengganu. The novel is relevant in the context of Malaysian society due to its depiction of differences between cultures and real-life experiences of people living in Asia as the young characters in her novel contain qualities that can be understood by other youngsters around the world. I have chosen the novel because, through this story, I can explore the issue of Southeast Asian female identity viewed as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual by the West through the process of intermingling of interactions and communications between the protagonist and other characters in the novel that could explain the process of her evolution of identity.

Rice without Rain, the second novel by Ho, has won numerous awards internationally including the first prize, National Book Development Council of Singapore (1988), the Parents Choice Award (1990), the Best Books for Young Adults award, the American Library Association (ALA) award, the Editor's Choice award, the Booklist award, and the Books for the Teen Age selection award, New York Public Library, all in 1991. Therefore, my selection of this novel is due to my aim to examine the growth of Jinda's identity based on her encounters and experiences with the students and several other characters in Bangkok.

The Clay Marble is the third novel written by Ho and is set in Cambodia. It has been recognised internationally and awarded with several awards, such as first prize for the Annual Short Story Contest, the AsiaWeek Magazine award (1983), the American Bookseller "Pick of the List" Notable Children's Trade Books in the Language Arts award (1992), and the Hungry Mind Reviews Children's Book of Distinction award (1992) ("Authors' Guild"). Hence, the novel is selected as I aim to examine the portrayal of Dara due to her experiencing many intermingling of dialogues with characters that may explain her transformation of identity.

The last novel that I have selected is *The Stone Goddess* which portrays the protagonist Nakri as being oppressed and confined in a labour camp under the rule of the Khmer Rouge. I selected this novel to examine how the protagonist's evolution of identity develop after her series of interactions and communications with many characters after her decision to migrate to America with her family.

To sum it all, the main theme of the novels explores the protagonists' lived experiences as Southeast Asian females as they are involved in many series and forms of interactions, communications and dialogues with other characters and events that influence their everyday lives. Ho portrays the female protagonists as living within the traditional culture of their societies, struggling with their identities as Southeast Asian females and constrained within the power imbalance between gender. Though each protagonist is portrayed as possessing a different background and characterisation, all of them struggle with the issues of inequality between gender, discriminations, and social and economic oppressions.

1.4   Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of analysis, then, I have chosen to explore the concepts of identity fluidity and transculture/ality in the selected novels in order to analyse the protagonists based on the problematised issues discussed earlier.

1.4.1   The Concepts of Identity Fluidity

With regards to the conceptual framework for my study, I begin, firstly, with the understanding of the term 'identity fluidity' which will be applied along with the concept of transculture/ality. As I have stated earlier, the conceptual framework used in this study is also based on three concepts of identity fluidity by Stuart Hall as outlined in "The Question on Cultural Identity" published in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (2011). The first concept, 'the enlightenment subject', is a concept of a person who is centred and balanced, 'a unified individual' capable of thinking and making decisions accordingly, of being aware and responsive to their surroundings, and of being able to act accordingly. Here, Hall outlines the formation of a 'fully centred' person whose centre is an 'inner core' or the essence of a person that materialises when they are born. This centre of a person, or the essence of a person, is what Hall terms as 'identity'.

From birth, the essence of a person will develop with the self but, fundamentally, it will still remain the same throughout a person's lifetime. According to Hall, the essence of a person will help form the self to be 'fully-centred' and capable of thinking, making decisions and acting according to what they think is appropriate. As a person strengthens their 'inner core' and become aware of their actions, the person will continue to develop their identity throughout their life. Hall asserts that this conception of identity is very 'individualist' (597).

The second conception of the self is 'the sociological subject' that Hall posits is reflected in the increasing complexity of a modern world and the consciousness that the "inner core" or the essence is not developed on its own. Rather, it is constructed through the person's association with what Hall terms as "significant others" who impose the values, meanings and symbols or, in short, the culture of the world on the person that the person lives in. Hall draws a connection between this notion and the key figures in sociology; for example, the theorists of symbolic interactionism and American sociologists, namely George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929) who develop the "interactive" conception of identity and the self. This classic sociological conception affirms that, through the "interaction" between the self and society, identity is created yet the essence of a person is still within the person.

However, the essence is now shaped and altered through continuous interactions with his or her cultural worlds "outside" and the identities they offered. In this sociological conception, identity will link the "inside" with the "outside" or the person with his or her society. Hall adds that the condition, when we put our own selves into our cultural identities and accept their meanings and values as "part of us", has helped to "align our subjective feelings with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world". Thus, Hall concludes that identity connects the person with the society, at the same time stabilising the person and his or her cultural world as they become "more unified and predictable". Then again, in modern societies, the person who have previously undergone the unified and stable identity is now said to be fragmented comprising many contradictory or unresolved identities.

Hall posits that, at this stage of identity fluidity, the stable self will be decentred by five major theoretical moves, namely Marxism by the German philosopher, economist and political theorist Karl Marx (1818-1883), the understanding of the unconscious mind by the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the idea of language by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), the view on power by the French philosopher and social theorist Michael Foucault (1926-1984), and the feminists that resulted in the loss of the stable "sense of self". The loss of a stable "sense of self", also known as dislocation or decentring of the subject, is used to elucidate the way individuals are displaced both from their social and cultural positions, and from themselves, that form a "crisis of identity" for the individuals. Similarly, as a result of structural and institutional changes, the identities, that shape the social landscape and guarantee the subjective conformity of the objective "needs" of the culture, are breaking up. The process of identification then, as we put our own selves into our cultural identities, becomes more "open-ended, variable and problematic" (598).

13

As the process of identification becomes more flexible, fluid and difficult, "the postmodern subject" is materialised. This last concept of identity fluidity by Hall is theorised to have no static, vital, or lasting identity due to the ways we are either represented or addressed within the cultural system that surrounds us (Hall qtd. in Hall). Identity, then, becomes shaped and modified continuously or, as Hall terms, a "moveable feast". Identity, according to Hall, is defined by history and not biology as a person embraces a different identity at different time. More importantly, this identity is not unified around a coherent self. Additionally, there are contradictory identities within each and every one of us that are drawing us in different directions; thus, our identifications continuously change. Hall adds that, if we think that we assume a unified identity from the day we are born till the end of our life, it is because we create a reassuring story or "narrative of the self" about ourselves (Hall qtd. in Hall). Thus, Hall concludes that the "fully unified, completed, secure and coherent identity" is just a dream for us to achieve. Rather, as the structures of meaning and the representation of culture develop, we are faced with a puzzling, momentary development of possible identities that we can relate to albeit temporarily (598). Thus, in the context of the study, I have decided to also analyse the decentring of the female protagonists in the four selected novels by Ho using the concept of 'transculture/ality' as another conceptual framework of this study as an approach to the study of the development of individual identity in order to critically analyse the relationship between cultures or within cultures.

1.4.2   The Concept of Transculture/ality

At this point in the discussion, it is imperative that I begin with the definition of the term 'transculture/ality' to demonstrate the significance of the application of this concept in this study together with the concept of identity fluidity. Dagnino, in *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility* (2015), conceives the term 'transculture/ality' due to her attempt to expand the term 'transculturation' first coined by the anthropologist, ethnomusicologist and scholar of Afro-Cuban culture, Fernando Ortiz Fernandez (1881-1969) through a combination of the concepts of transculture/ality by the German scholar of philosophy, screenwriter and author Wolfgang Welsch (b. 1946) and the concept of transculture by Anglo-American and Russian literary theorist and critical thinker, Mikhail Naumovich Epstein (b. 1950) (126-127). Transculture/ality rejects the notion of "cultures as an island or spheres" and views the idea as "deceptive". Instead, the characteristics of cultural conditions today are formed by "mixes and permeations" as cultures interact and focus on "the commonalities and the urge to connect that all human beings (and cultures) share despite their intrinsic differences" (Dagnino 126). Dagnino also uses the concept of transculture by Epstein as the concept of transculture suggests a space for all 'existing and potential cultures' to mingle and communicate and as a transcultural dimension which "lies not apart from, but within all cultures" (Dagnino 127). Thus, transculture is a process of mutually accepting all cultures; "a process of interaction between cultures in which more individuals find themselves feeling outside the ethnic, racial, sexual, ideological, and other limitations imposed by the culture into which they were born" (Dagnino 127).

Dagnino presents seven tenets of transculture/ality as a new theoretical dimension, and as a tool of cultural examination and investigation that can be applied within a literary context that includes the phenomena of cultural interactions. The first tenet is that transculture/ality is an approach that views culture as not static and fluid where, in the context of ethnicities and nations, culture is not solid, exclusive and independent. Rather, it is formed through interactions, infusion of communications and "ongoing transforming dialogues" between or among cultures. The second tenet welcomes the idea of transculture/ality as perceiving the cultural boundaries of a society or nation as overlapping, concurring, blurry and unstable. The third tenet accepts culture and the formation of one's cultural identity as a dynamic process. The fourth tenet is that, as a result of developing transculture/ality, people have the right to make their own cultural choices, to act independently to "allegiances", "plural affiliations" and "multi-layered identities", and construct a persona that is composed of many different elements. More importantly, the fifth tenet emphasises transculture/ality as a cosmopolitan approach that does not deny the fundamental culture or nationality of an individual but rejects the notion of "fixed, self-enclosed, cultural, ethnic, and national identities or allegiances". The sixth tenet presents transculture/ality as a humble cultural behaviour and the last tenet accepts the relevancy of translingualism (140). Dagnino also states that there is no special formula or procedures to be transcultural as it is formed through the ability to "negotiate between different cultural identities – depending on the specific individual capabilities, attitudes and experiential backgrounds". Dagnino adds that the concept of transcultural also allows the process of transcending, or what she describes as "metamorphosis", to be done at an individual level and "can have a collective resonance" (130). In transculture/ality, the individual construct is seen as a dynamic process of a humble openness to other cultures.

Thus, in this study, the concept of identity fluidity and transculture/ality will be examined in tracing the interaction within the cultures that might shape the identity of the female protagonists in the four selected novels by Ho, namely, *Sing to the Dawn, Rice without Rain*, *The Clay Marble* and *The Stone Goddess*, where the issues concerning the Southeast Asian female identity can be examined in the novels. Additionally, Ho, the author of these novels, has been chosen as she embodies the generation of mobile writers who has interacted with many cultures and experienced "transpatriation" or the power to adopt new ways of self-identification thus expressing her own transcultural awareness creatively through her works. According to Dagnino, in her work titled "Transculturalism and Transcultural Literature in the 21st Century" (2012), transcultural writers, such as Ho, may have experienced the process of "cultural dislocation, live transnational experience", able to speak fluently in more than one language, experience many cultures or travel to other places and are open to identities that are flexible and diverse (1).

1.5   Methodology

In this study, I explore the Western idea that Southeast Asian women are voiceless, submissive and hypersexual through an examination of female protagonists in Ho's selected novels, namely *Sing to the Dawn, Rice without Rain*, *The Clay Marble* and *The Stone Goddess* using the concept of identity fluidity by Hall and the concept of transculture/ality by Dagnino as a two-fold framework in order to address my three objectives. My methodology is based on a textual analysis that aims to explicate the identity transformation of the female protagonists through the concepts of identity fluidity and the transculture/ality perspectives.

In this study, my initial research on the concepts of identity fluidity shows that there is very limited academic scholarship on the subject but only one that is noteworthy. Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2017), a Polish sociologist and philosopher, coined the phrase "liquid modernity" in his book *Liquid Modernity* (2013), to characterise the transient status of individuals in modern society, in which people are constantly movable, always changing, and highly adaptable. In his work, Bauman argues that identity in modern life is fluid and rapidly changing since it has no permanent bonds, resulting in individuals having loosely connected relationships that can be undone at any time. Individuals in liquid modernity, according to Bauman, are not bound by their birthplace, past, or societal traditions because these rules are inapplicable to the current condition of society.

In essence, Bauman claims that the concept of identity stems from people's desire for security and a sense of belonging, which can only be achieved in a modern society that is fluid and always changing and evolving. Individuals begin their search for identity when they embrace modernity because they are allowed to select the conditions that best suit them, whereas before modernity, they were resigned to their fate. At this point in the discussion, it is important to highlight that Bauman relates the evolution of identity to people's desire to live a better life, to cope with the trends that modernity brings, or merely to the fact that they travel to different regions. Bauman, on the other hand, has yet to discuss the process by which people's identities evolve.

My research on gender fluidity, on the other hand, reveals that it refers to a person who is experiencing a gender identity problem that does not exactly fit into either the male or female categories, but instead occupies a place with various dimensions in which both genders appear to be mixed up. The term "gender fluidity" itself was first established in the 1980s to define a non-binary gender that does not suit into either the male or female categories. These people oscillate between the masculine and feminine extremities of the gender spectrum over time or at a certain point in their lives (Lundquist-Arora, 2020). Thus, using the concept of gender fluidity in examining the lives of young women living in traditional Thai and Cambodian societies is not appropriate nor relevant in order to address the research problems and issues identified in this study.

In the context of this study, I discovered that Hall has been studying identity since his first essay on the subject, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1996), in which he argues

that cultural identity is not only about "being", but also about "becoming", as identities continue to transform and evolve across time and space. Later, in "Introduction: Who Needs Identity," published in *Question of Cultural Identity* (1996), Hall discusses how identity is not unified, but rather increasingly blurry, dislocated, and fragmented, always multiplying and constructed across various intersecting discourses, practises, and positions. *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural Studies* (2017), a more recent release of his work, explains how, in Western culture, the hierarchy of human identity is forcibly broken apart when marginalised groups provide deeper perspectives to the representations of difference. It is pertinent to note that all of these works by Hall have centralised on the concept of identity as continuously evolving and integrating the past, present and future experiences of individuals. However, his study on identity in "The Questions of Cultural Identity", *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (2011) is very in-depth and provides a very clear understanding of the process of identity fluidity through the three stages of the enlightenment subject, sociological subject, and postmodern subject, as well as the subject's decentring process which I will thoroughly discuss in Section 3.2. More importantly, the concepts outlined in this particular work compared to the others by Hall are more suitable and relevant to address the research gap of knowledge identified in this study.

Therefore, in order to address the current mainstream understanding by the West of the Southeast Asian female identity perceived as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual in the selected novels, I apply the three concepts of identity fluidity, as well as the concept of transculture/ality in order to examine how the identity of the female protagonists evolve, transform and how they renegotiate their identities after going through the stages of identity fluidity, in their practices of their traditional cultures in the Thai and Cambodian societies in the novels.

I also apply the concept of transculture/ality through the decentring process to examine how it shapes the identities of the female protagonists, as young women living in traditional patriarchal Thai and Cambodian societies. Lastly, the application of the tenets of transculture/ality will be undertaken to discover the female protagonists' various responses to the practice of traditional cultures in Thai and Cambodian societies.

Accordingly, the novels are divided into two sections under their respective scope of culture: the analyses of *Sing to the Dawn* and *Rice without Rain* are narrowed to the respective female protagonists' practice of culture in Thai society while *The Clay Marble* and *The Stone Goddess* focus on the respective female protagonists' practice of culture in Cambodian society. Examples will then be extracted from the novels and will serve as evidence in my analysis. A close reading, whereby an examination of the protagonists' behaviours, thoughts, speeches, opinions and judgements, is done in relation to identity fluidity and transculture/ality as they are decentred and their identities evolve.

Consequently, in Chapter Four, the discussion of all the novels will be divided into two parts under the respective research objectives answered. I attempt to analyse the protagonists' attitudes and frames of mind, their opinions and judgements, their

emotions, speeches and behaviours in relation to identity fluidity and transculture/ality in order to discover how they renegotiate their identity as women living in Southeast Asia in Ho's selected novels. I do so in order to provide textual evidence whether they indeed conform to such as defined in the hegemonic narrative, that they are indeed the same: voiceless, submissive, and hypersexual.

1.6 Research Objectives

The research objectives of my study are as follows:

1. to explore how the three concepts of identity fluidity, namely the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, the postmodern subject, and the decentring of the subject through transculture/ality are reflected in the novels through the female protagonists' practice of traditional cultures in the Thai and Cambodian societies.

2. to examine how the identities of the female protagonists, as young women living in traditional patriarchal Thai and Cambodian societies constrained within power imbalance and gender relations, are shaped through the decentring process by transculture/ality.

3. to discover the female protagonists' various responses to the practice of traditional cultures in Thai and Cambodian societies by applying the tenets of transculture/ality.

1.7 Research Questions

The following are my research questions:

1. How are the three concepts of identity fluidity, namely the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, the postmodern subject, and the decentring of the subject through transculture/ality, reflected in the novels through the female protagonists' practice of traditional cultures in the Thai and Cambodian societies?

2. How are the identities of the female protagonists, as young women living in traditional patriarchal Thai and Cambodian societies constrained within power imbalance and gender relations, shaped through the decentring process by transculture/ality?

3. How do the female protagonists' respond to the practice of traditional cultures in Thai and Cambodian societies through transculture/ality?

1.8   Significance of the Study

This study is significant as I wish to contribute to the scholarship on these selected novels by Ho by providing alternative perspectives to the current debates and discourse on the Southeast Asian female identity which may help in responding to the mainstream Western conceptions and stereotypical notions that they are voiceless, submissive and hypersexual. While previous studies on works by the Chinese American writers focused mainly on the portrayals of Southeast Asian women living abroad, especially in America, and on how they strive to address stereotypes living in challenging, sexist, and prejudicial environments, they do not reveal the processes by which these Southeast Asian women are transform to become motivated, driven, and compelled to withdraw from being unfairly stereotyped. Therefore, I hope that my study, while exploring the Southeast Asian women portrayed living in their own societies and how they too may reflect identities that are fluid and complex, would also seek to explain the processes by which these women are empowered and driven to demonstrate inconsistencies with the Western perspectives that they are voiceless, submissive and hypersexual.

More importantly, Ho, through her novels, has depicted young female characters living within the traditional cultures of their societies, grappling with their identities as Southeast Asian females, and yet previous studies have focused more on Dawan, the protagonist in *Sing to the Dawn*, and centred mainly on the patriarchal structure that has significant impacts on the lives of the protagonists as the patriarchal structure consumes them psychologically, emotionally and physically that they resist, fight and eventually become empowered. However, as far as I see it, there are only very limited studies focusing on the other three protagonists in Ho's three other novels, namely Jinda of *Rice without Rain,* Dara of *The Clay Marble* and Nakri of *The Stone Goddess*. Moreover, the evolution of the protagonists' identities has not been explained fully in the studies from the beginning of the novels to the end so as to how they discover their own voices and their true identities. Therefore, my study is significant as I aim to analyse all the four protagonists in Ho's novels and to provide a sound understanding of how the transformations of identities of the female protagonists take place as I explore the notion by the West that the Southeast Asian female are voiceless, submissive and hypersexual, and investigate whether these female protagonists are portrayed as such in the four novels by Ho.

As I have stated earlier, there is, unfortunately, an absence of scholarship pertaining to the female protagonists in Ho's four novels as previous studies have focussed more on her three novels, namely *Sing to the Dawn, The Clay Marble,* and *Rice without Rain*. Therefore, my study aims to fill the gap of scholarship on the protagonists in all four of Ho's novels which is still undermined in terms of scholarly value and overlooked in terms of its Southeast Asian female identity discourse.

In addition, I also hope to add to new conceptual approaches in examining the issue of the Southeast Asian female identity by using a combination of the concepts of identity fluidity together with the concept of transculture/ality as previous studies on the *Sing to the Dawn, Rice without Rain* and *The Clay Marble* have applied the theories of feminism,

19

gender studies, and psychoanalytical criticism. Consequently, my study hopes to contribute to a different understanding of the female protagonists' practice of culture in the traditional Thai and Cambodian societies from which they attempt to find a way to have agency, to be vocal and to become empowered through the intermingling of dialogues, interactions and connectedness based on an application of the three stages of identity fluidity and the process of the decentring of the individuals.

As discussed earlier, previous studies of works by female Chinese American writers narrowing on challenging stereotypes of the Southeast Asian female identity perceived as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual only focused their attention on how the Southeast Asian women are empowered, and motivated to counter negative stereotyping, yet the studies have not articulated the processes by which these women are compelled to rebel against being negatively stereotyped. Therefore, by using the concepts of identity fluidity by Hall as the framework in the study, it will hopefully provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the processes that help to explicate the stages of identity formation as I explore the Western notion of the Southeast Asian female identity as voiceless, submissive and hypersexual of the four female protagonists based on the three stages, namely the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the postmodern subject. Furthermore, using the concepts of transculture/ality as a component of the framework will allow for a detailed discussion of the processes that the four female protagonists have experienced and how they embrace changes in their pursuit of finding their identities.

1.9   Limitations of the Study

In this study, my analysis is limited only to Ho's four novels namely *Sing to the Dawn, Rice without Rain, The Clay Marble* and *The Stone Goddess*. I also limit this study to only Ho's four novels and not her short stories, poetry and other publications because of its different genres. My study is also limited to Ho's portrayals of the female protagonists of her four novels focussing on their perceptions and states of mind, their thoughts and judgments, their feelings, their expressions and their actions in relation to identity fluidity and transculture/ality. In addition, these female protagonists are chosen to explore the processes involved in the transformation of their identities in order to address the objectives of my study which are to analyse the female protagonists in their practice of culture in Thai and Cambodian societies.

As such, in *Sing to the Dawn*, my analysis centres on the protagonist, Dawan, as she struggles for gender equality and compete against her brother to convince their father that she is also entitled to continue her studies in the city despite being born a girl. In *Rice without Rain*, I focus on analysing the protagonist, Jinda, in her quest to be liberated from the class struggle and the patriarchal society as she fights to free her father from prison. In *The Clay Marble*, I analyse the portrayal of Dara and her struggle in the power imbalance between genders; living in a secondary position in her family as well as her deep connection with Jantu, her newfound friend. I will also analyse Nakri, the protagonist in *The Stone Goddess,* as she finds strength due to her freedom from the labour camp after the fall of Khmer Rouge regime and her loss of her sister.

My study is also limited to the concepts of identity fluidity by Hall (2011) in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* as his concepts of identity fluidity, namely the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the postmodern subject, contain a process that seeks to understand the stages of identity formation and how the stages can explicate the process by which the protagonists go through While Hall's concepts of identity fluidity are similar to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, Bhabha's concepts are confined to postcolonial studies whereas Ho's novels, on the contrary, do not address the issue of postcolonialism. Thus, by applying Hall's concept of identity fluidity in the novels, I hope to provide a different understanding of the Southeast Asian female identity through Ho's portrayals of the female protagonists.

I would also like to underline that the framework of my study is limited to the seven tenets of transculture/ality by Dagnino (2015) in her book *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility* as discussed earlier. I hope that the implementation of these tenets will shed light on the significance of the three stages of identity fluidity and the decentring of the subject by transculture/ality in the developments of the identities of the female protagonists in Ho's four novels.

In using this two-pronged framework of the concepts of identity fluidity by Hall and the tenets of transculture/ality by Dagnino, I aim to provide a solid comprehension of the Southeast Asian female identity through Ho's portrayals of the female protagonists in her novels. Although the two-pronged framework can be argued as being similar to the stages of liminality by the British cultural anthropologist Victor W. Turner (1920-1983), based on the gap of knowledge, however, the stages of liminality cannot be applied here as they do not explicitly answer the process of the protagonists' evolution of identities.

1.10   Definition of Key Terms

1.10.1   Southeast Asian Female

Here, the Southeast Asian female refers to women who live in countries in the Southeast Asia region that are geographically situated at the south of China. These countries are known as Mainland Southeast Asia or Indochina, consisting of countries, such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and West Malaysia. While Southeast Asia is separated from China by a highland system that differs from the Yunnan Plateau, several powerful Chinese dynasties have succeeded in promoting the concepts of Confucius teaching as they attempted to gain dominance over their neighbours in Southeast Asia whereby specific legal codes were proclaimed and established the patriarchal system and the legal authority of men over their wives, children and young men. (Andaya 12-16).

1.10.2   Decentring of the Subject

The displacement or dislocation of identity as individuals' identity shift from its original identity to another identity that the individuals adopt from other symbols, values and meanings when they connect to society and get involved in interactions, communications and dialogues (Hall 606-611).

1.10.3   Identity Fluidity

Comprises the three stages of identity, the first stage, the 'enlightenment subject', is a concept of a person who is centred and balanced, capable of being aware and responsive to their surroundings, being able to act accordingly and to remain the same throughout the life of the individual. However, this stable, unified and balanced individual will be decentred as the individual interacts with society at the second stage of the self, termed as the 'sociological subject' since it is constructed through the individual's association with other people who communicate and place beliefs, meanings and symbols on the individual. As the process of identification becomes more flexible and complicated, the 'postmodern subject' is materialised which is theorised to have no permanent identity due to the manner in which we are portrayed or addressed within the cultural system that surrounds us (Hall 597-598).

1.10.4   Power Imbalance

Women in Southeast Asia have been placed in a secondary role and regarded as less inferior to men in the way that culture or society determines the rights, responsibilities and identities of men and women in relation to each other (Andaya 227).

1.10.5   The Enlightenment Subject

The conception of the self when a person is born with an inner quality that shapes the person to be fully centred and capable of a personal consciousness as the person continues to develop his/her identity throughout his/her life (Hall 597).

1.10.6   The Sociological Subject

The inner core quality of a person continues to develop while the person links the self with society through interactions, communications and connections within the society by establishing values, meaning and symbols in a person's sphere (Hall 597-598).

1.10.7   The Postmodern Subject

The continuous development of the identity of a person due to the person's previous experiences and histories, also considered as a fluid process (Hall 598).

1.10.8   Transculture/ality

The process of intermingling of cultures as identities intermingle, interweave, interact and communicate thus further forming an identity that are open to other cultures and becomes more universal (Dagnino 127).

REFERENCES

Amornvivat, Sutapa, "Thai Women Need to Break the Glass Ceiling." *Bangkok Post,* 17 June 2015, https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/594956/thai-women-need-to-break-the-glass-ceiling, Web. 3 January 2018.

Andaya, Barbara Watson. *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia*. University of Hawaii Press, 2008. Print.

---. "Localising the Universal: Women, Motherhood and the Appeal of Early *Theravada* Buddhism". *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies.* 33.1 (2002): 1-30. Print.

Anderson, Emily and Grace, Kelly. "From Schoolgirls to 'Virtuous Khmer Women': Interrogating *Chbab Srey* and Gender in Cambodian Education Policy. *Studies in Social Justice"*. 12. 2 (2018): 215-234. Print.

Andrews, Karen. "Women in Theravada Buddhism." *Tibetan Buddhist Encyclopaedia,* 31 December 2014, https://tibetanbuddhistencyclppedia.com/en/index.php/Women_In_Theravada_Buddhism_By_Karen_Andrews. Web. 24 June 2021.

Aquino, Lalaine, Y. "When the Asian Girl Speaks: A Comparative Analysis of Two Young Adult Novels in English Written by Asian Women." *Humanities Diliman: A Philippine Journal of Humanities*. 8.2 (2011): 80-104. Print.

Ariffin, Eijas. "Women's Rights in the Region Still Has a Long Way to Go." *The Asean Post,* 08 March 2018, https://theaseanpost.com/article/womens-rights-region-still-has-long-way-go. Web. 10 November 2018.

Austin et al. "Reviews the book *Gathering the Dew* by Minfong Ho". *Book Links.* 13.4 (2004):16. Print.

Az-Zubaidy, Thamir. "Women's Rights and Identity in August Strindbers's the Stronger". *Journal of the College of Education Wasit University.* 2.2 (2019): 1199-1208. Print.

Bamford, Nick. "East is East and West is West-a Literary and Historical View from the Perspective of Madame Butterfly" Cross-Cultural Communication Conference, Bangkok, 28-29 January, 2016. Print.

Barab, Sasha, et al. "Game-Based Curriculum and Transformational Play: Designing to Meaningfully Positioning Person, Content, and Context". *Computers & Education*. 58.1 (2012): 518–533. Print.

Baranay, Inez. "Belonging on the Borders". *Coolabah.* 21 (2017): 24-32. Print.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Wiley Publishers, 2013. Print.

Bhandari, Nagendra B. "Reinventing Cultural Identities in Diaspora: A Mother-Daughter Dyad in Tan's Narrative". *Tribhuvan University Journal*. 32.1 (2018): 261-272. Print.

Bloom, Susan P. "Book Review of *Gathering the Dew*". *Horn Book Magazine*. 79.3 (2003): 348. Print.

Boonaree, Chommanaad and Goulding, Anne. "The Role of Communities Library in Empowering Female Citizens in Disadvantage Areas of Thailand." *The International Federation Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA),* 2019, http://library.ifla.org/2481/. Web. 2 February 2020.

Buranajaroenkij, Duanghathai. "Political Feminism and the Women's Movement in Thailand: Actors, Debates and Strategies." *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Asia,* 2017, http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/thailand/13363.pdf. Web. 20 August 2019.

Chandler, David. *A History of Cambodia.* Aviation Publishing, 2009. Print.

---. *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot*. Routledge, 2018. Print.

Chaudhuri, Sanjukta. "Women's Empowerment in South Asian and Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis," MPRA Paper. University Library of Munich, 2010. Germany. Print.

Chen, Yu Min C. "The Contested Autobiographical Space: Reimagining China in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior"*. *Southeast Review of Asian Studies.* 38 (2016): 17-37. Print.

Cheuk, David. "Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior: Forming and Identity through Silence." Diss. University of North Carolina, 2006. Print.

Cheung, King-Kok. *Chinese American Literature Without Borders: Gender, Genre, and Form*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Print.

Christiyanto, Yudha and Widyahening, Evy Tri. "A Discourse Analysis of Speech Acts in Minfong Ho Novel entitled *The Clay Marble*". *Karya Ilmiah Mahasiswa Progdi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP*. 2.2 (2016): 1-15. Print.

Collett, Alice. *I Hear Her Words: An Introduction to Women in Buddhism*. Windhorse Publications, 2021. Print.

Constantinescu, Catalin. "Postmodern Readings of the Relationship between Space and Identity". *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory*. 2.1 (2016): 73-90. Print.

Dagnino, Arianna. *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility.* Purdue UP, 2015. Print.

---. "Transculturalism and Transcultural Literature in the 21st Century". *Transcultural Studies.* 8.1 (2012): 1-14. Print.

---. "Rediscovering Alessandro Spina's Transculture/ality in The Young Maronite". *Humanities.* 5.2 (2016): 1-11. Print.

Derks, Annuska. *Khmer Women on the Move: Exploring Work and Life in Urban Cambodia.* University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. Print.

Dewey, Morgan. "Sexualized, Submissive Stereotypes of Asian Women Lead to Staggering Rates of Violence." *NNEDV*, 21 March 2016, https://nnedv.org/latest_update/stereotypes-asian-women/. Web. 7 July 2018.

Disrekia. "The Meaning of Dawan's Struggles for her Rights to Study in Bangkok as Seen in Minfong Ho's *Sing to the Dawn*." Diss. Sanata Dharma University, 2014. Print.

Duncan, Pattin. *Tell This Silence: Asian American Women Writers and the Politics of Speech.* University of Iowa Press, 2004. Print.

Ebrey, Patricia. "Women in Traditional China." *Asia Society,* 2020, https://asiasociety.org/education/women-traditional-china. Web. 1 July 2020.

Epstein, Mikhail N. "Transculture: A Broad Way Between Globalism and Multiculturalism". *American Journal of Economics and Sociology.* 68.1 (2009): 327–351. Print.

Esterik, Penny V. *Materializing Thailand.* Routledge, 2020. Print.

Falk, Monica Lindberg. "The struggle for Recognition and Justice: Gender Inequality and Socially Engaged Buddhism in Thailand". in *Gender Inequalities in Asia: Configuring, Contesting and Recognizing Women and Men,* ed. by Helle Rydstrom. Nias Press (2010): 149-169. Print.

Fang, Venus. "Feisty Geishas, Friendly Dragon Ladies and Imperfect Model Minorities: The New Asian Women of YouTube." Diss. University of Calgary, 2018. Print.

Fang, Xiangshu. "Construction of Womanhood in Confucian Texts for Girls". *Studies in Literature and Language.* 5.2 (2012): 78-82. Print.

Fawthrop, Tom and Jarvis, Helen. *Getting Away with Genocide? Elusive Justice and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.* Pluto Press, 2004. Print.

Fukuzawa, Naomi C. "Pierre Loti's Autobiographical Novel *Madame Chrysanthème* (1885): A Mirror of 'Almost Colonised' 1880s Meiji-Japan from the Late-Imperialist French Traveller". *Nouveaux Mondes, Nouveaux Romans. French Society of General and Comparative Literature.* (2018): 135-154. Print.

Golban, T. and Yürükler, E. "Social Construction of Identity in Louis De Bernières' Novel *Birds Without Wings*". *Humanitas.* 7.14 (2019): 406-422. Print.

Guofang, Li and Beckett Gulbahar H., editors. *Strangers of The Academy Asian Women Scholars in Higher Education*, Stylus Publishing, 2006. Print.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora". *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media.* 36 (1989): 222-237. Print.

---. "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" in Questions of Cultural Identity, ed. By Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, SAGE Publications Limited, 2011, pp. 1- 17. Print.

---. "The Question of Cultural Identity." in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, ed. by Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2011, pp. 595-634. Print.

---. *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Studies.* Harvard University Press, 2017. Print.

Hanpatchaiyakul, Kulnaree et al. "Lived Experience of Thai Women with Alcohol Addiction". *Asian Nursing Research.* 11 (2017): 304-310. Print.

Harris, Ian. *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice.* University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. Print.

Ho, Minfong. *The Minfong Ho Collection.* Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2010. Print.

---. *The Stone Goddess.* Scholastic, 2005. Print.

Hoffman, Jeanne. "China's Search for the Future: A Genealogical Approach". *Futures.* 54.1 (2013): 53-67. Print.

Hornung, A. "Diversity and Life Writing in the Transnational Classroom." in *Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education and Societal Contexts*, edited by Gertz S., Huang B., and Cyr L. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 211-234. Print.

Howard, Michael C. "Thailand." *Countries and Their Cultures*, n.d., https://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Thailand.html. Web. 31 January 2018.

Huang, Sheng. "When Tiger Mothers Meet Sugar Sisters: Strategic Representations of Chinese Cultural Elements in Maxine Hong Kingston's and Amy Tan's Works." Diss. Curtin University, 2017. Print.

Hucker, Charles O. "Yongle: Emperor of Ming Dynasty." *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 2020, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Yongle. Web. 1 July 2020.

Isaac, Kathleen. "Book Review of Gathering the Dew". *School Library Journal.* 49.3 (2003): 233. Print.

---. "Book Review of *The Stone Goddess*" *School Library Journal.* 51.3 (2005): 69. Print.

Iswandari, Yuseva Ariyani. "The Effects of Literature Discussion in EFL Book Report Class". *2nd International Language and Language Teaching Conference,* Indonesia: Sanata Dharma University, 2015. Conference Presentation.

Jiwani, Yasmin. *"*From Dragon Lady to Action Hero: Race and Gender in Popular Western Television." in *Asian Women: Interconnections,* edited by Tineke Hellwig and Sunera Thobani. Womens Press, 2006, pp. 161-182. Print.

Kaithong, Benjapa and Sawangdee, Yothin. "Transforming Roles and Functions of Women in the Northeast Region of Thailand". *Journal of Community Development Research, (Humanities and Social Sciences)*. 11.1 (2018): 27-41. Print.

Kent, Alexandra. "Shades of Gender and Security in Cambodia." in *Gender Inequalities in Asia: Configuring, Contesting and Recognizing Women and Men,* edited by Helle Rydstrom. Nias Press, 2010, pp. 127-148. Print

Keto, Richard Ferdinand. "Dawan's Motivation in Getting Education in Minfong Ho's *Sing to the Dawn."* Diss. Sanata Dharma University, 2012. Print.

Kijponphol, Wachirapon et al., "An Analysis of Gender Representation in Thai Primary School Health and Physical Education textbooks". *Proceedings of 15th International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences 2019 (IC-HUSO 2019) Khon Kaen University*, Thailand 11-12 November 2019. Print.

Kirana, Jeannita. "Negotiating Identity in the Novel of *Everything I Never Told You."* Diss. State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah, 2018. Print.

Lapanaphan, Thitaree and Chinakkarapong, Suphisara. "Critical Feminist Analysis: Gender Construction, Impacts and Perception of Thai Women". *Social Science Asia.* 6.1 (2019): 27-42. Print.

Le Mare, Ann, et al. "Returning Home: The Middle-Income Trap and Gendered Norms in Thailand". *Journal of International Development*. 27.2 (2015): 285-306. Print.

Ledru, Juliette. "Challenging Stereotypes in Chinese American Women's Literature (2001-2010)". *Epistemological Others, Languages, Literatures, Exchanges and Societies Journal.* 10 (2019): 1-13. Print.

Lee, Joey. "Southeast Asian "China Doll" or "Dragon Lady"?" *Bridges: An Undergraduate Journal of Contemporary Connections 3.* 3.1 (2018): 1-7. Print.

Lee, Susan Hagood. "Ideological Inequalities: Khmer Culture and Widows' Perception of Remarriage". *Journal of International Women's Studies.* 19.5 (2018): 29-44. Print.

Lewis, Jeffrey. "From Culturalism to Transculturalism". *IOWA Journal of Cultural Studies 1.* 1.1 (2002): 14-32. Print.

Li, Zhang. "Oppression, Resistance, Empowerment, and Formation of Female Subjecthood in the Site of Family: A Study of Chinese American Women's Writing." Diss. Josai International University of Japan, 2014. Print.

LinDa, Saphan. "Gendered Modernity in Cambodia: The Rise of Women in the Music Industry," *Khmer Scholar, 28* August, 2016, http://khmerscholar.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Gendered-Modernity-SAPHAN.pdf. Web. December 12, 2018.

Lilja, Mona. *Power, Resistance and Women Politicians in Cambodia: Discourses of Emancipation.* NIAS Press, 2008. Print.

Litalien, Mannuel. "International Institutionalization of Gender Equality and Gender Religious Activism." The 6th European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference University of Iceland, Reykyavik, 25-27 August, 2011. Conference Presentation.

Liu, Shuang. "Immigrant Self-Representation: Chinese American Immigrant Writers Ha Jin and Yiyun Li in the International Context." Diss. University of Maryland, 2018. Print.

London, Ellen. *Thailand Condensed: 2000 Years of History and Culture*. Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2008. Print.

Loh, Chin EE. "Constructing Conversations: Re-Framing the Language Arts and Literature Classroom." *Proceedings of the Redesigning Pedagogy: Culture, Knowledge and Understanding Conference*, Singapore, May 2007. Conference Presentation.

---. "Engaging Students in Extensive Reading through Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom". *Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang.* 4.1 (2016): 48-52. Print.

Lundquist-Arora, Stephanie. *Coping with Gender Fluidity*. The Rosen Publishing Group, 2019. Print.

Marchetti, Gina. *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction*. University of California Press, 1994. Print.

Mashchenko, Olena "Gish Jen: Loosening the Canyon of the Canon". *Respectus Philologicus.* 30.35 (2016): 9-14. Print.

Maxwell, T.W. et al. "Becoming and Being Academic Women in Cambodia: Cultural and Other Understandings". *Cogent Education.* 2.1 (2015): 1-12. Print.

McIntosh, Lola. "Mirrors of Me: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States: Searching for Our Roots in Multi Ethnic Literatures of the United States". Online article, 2008.

McKenzie, Jessica. "Negotiating Local and Global Values in a Globalized World: The Envisioned Future of Thai Adolescents". 30.2 (2020): 1-19. Print.

Micheli, Laureanda Grazia. "Asian American (S)wordswomen." Diss. Universita degli Studi di Padova, 2016. Print.

"Minfong Ho." *Minfong Ho - Biography*, n.d., minfong.ag-sites.net/bio.htm. Web. 3 December 2017.

Mou, Sherry J. *Gentlemen's Prescriptions for Women's Lives: A thousand Years of Biographies of Chinese Women*. Routledge, 2015. Print.

Niedzialek, Ewa. "The Desire of Nowhere-Nadine Gordimenr's Burger's Daughter in a Trans-cultural perspective". *Colloquia Humanistica*. 7 (2018): 32-52. Print.

Nirmayanti, Yuliana Tri. "Young Ordinary Women as Strugglers, Leaders and Conflict Survivors in Minfong Ho's Novels." Diss. Sanata Dharma University, 2013. Print.

Oh, Seiwoong. *Encyclopedia of Asian-American Literature*. Infobase Learning, 2015. Print.

Ortiz, Fernando. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Translated by Harriet de Onis. Duke University Press, 1995. Print.

Pan, 2010 Rihanna Yulan. "Desire for the Other in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts.*" Diss. University of Macau, 2010. Print.

Paner, Isabel. "The Marginalization and Stereotyping of Asians in American Film." Honours Thesis. Dominican University of California, 2018. Print.

Park, Patricia. "The Madame Butterfly Effect". *Bitch Magazine: Feminist Response to Pop Culture*. 64 (2014) 28-33. Print.

Peleggi, Maurizio. *Thailand: The Worldly Kingdom*. Reaktion Books, 2007. Print.

Perkins, Linda. "Reviews the Book *Gathering the Dew.*" *Book List*. 99.13 (2003): 12. Print.

Pramita, Antonita Y., "Jinda's Motivation to Struggle Against the Land Rent System in Minfong Ho's *Rice without Rain.*" Diss. Sanata Dharma University, 2011. Print.

Prasso, Sheridan. *The Asian Mystique: Dragon Ladies, Geisha Girls, and Our Fantasies of the Exotic Orient*. Public Affairs, 2006. Print.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Routledge, 1992. Print.

Rahma, Anis Nurulita. "Analisis Tindak Tutur Ilokusi Dalam Dialog Film Animasi Meraih Mimpi." *Journal Universitas Airlangga*. 2.2 (2014): 13-24. Print.

Rajpal, Pradeep K. "Transgressing Cultural Borders, Displacements and Retrieving Identity in Neb's *The Flooded Desert*". *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*. 5.3, (2017): 273-277. Print.

Rama, Ariadi. (2018). "Bringing Women to the Front of Cambodia's Art Scene." *Khmer Times*, 7 Mar. 2018, https://www.khmertimeskh.com/112291/bringing-women-to-the-front-of-cambodias-art-scene/. Web. 3 December 2018.

Razak, Farahanna. A. et al. Emerging Patterns of *Bangsa Malaysia* in Anthony Burgess' *Time for a Tiger. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*. 5.1 (2016): 265-271. Print.

Reed, Christopher. Introduction. *The Chrysanthème Papers: The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthème and Other Documents of French Japonisme*. by Felix Regamey, Pierre Loti and Emile Guimet, University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. Print.

Reid, Anthony. *A History of Southeast Asia, Critical Crossroads*. Wiley Blackwell, 2015. Print.

Resheq, Reem Awni Huda. "Transculturation in the Shaping of a Hybrid Identity: Ahdaf Soueif's the Map of Love and Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club." Diss. The University of Jordan, 2008. Print.

Rosida, Ida and Molalita. "The Identity Construction of Jordanian Muslim Woman Reflected in *Willow Trees Don't Weep* (2014) by Fadia Faqir". *INSANIYAT, Journal of Islam and Humanities.* 1.1 (2016): 41-56. Print.

Rungreangkulkij, Somporn, et al. "Gender Inequality Identified as an Underlying Cause of Depression in Thai Women". *Journal of International Women's Studies*. 20.7 (2019): 395-408. Print.

Rush, James R. *Southeast Asia: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2018. Print.

Rydstrom, Helle, editor. *Gendered Inequalities in Asia: Configuring, Contesting and Recognizing Women and Men (Gendering Asia)*. NIAS Press, 2010. Print.

Sundara. *Women in Theravada Buddhism.* 23 September 2019, https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts/articles/women-in-theravada-buddhism. Web. 24 June 2021.

Sandmann, Alexa. "Contemporary Immigration: First-Person Fiction from Cuba, Haiti, Korea, and Cambodia". *Social Studies*. 95.3 (2004): 115-121. Print.

Sariarslan, Mentap. "The Issue of Orientalism in Giacomo Puccini's Madame Butterfly and David Henry Hwang's M. Butterfly". *Electronic Turkish Studies*. 11.10 (2016): 501-512. Print.

Scales, Pat. "Reviews the Book *Gathering the Dew"*. *Book Links*. 13.3 (2003): 57. Print.

Shaw, Brian J. "Diverging Identities in a Dynamic Region." in *Southeast Asian Culture and Heritage in a Globalising World,* edited by Rahil Ismail, Brian J. Shaw and Ooi Giok Ling. Routledge, 2016, pp. 1-18. Print.

Sheeley, A. M. "Learning for Cambodian Women: Exploration through Narrative Identity and Imagination." Diss. The University of San Francisco, 2012. Print.

Sheng, Anfeng and Kim Seon Kee. "Identity Formation and Cosmopolitan Vision in Asian-American Literature". *Journal of Foreign Language and Cultures.* 3.1 (2019): 23-29. Print.

Shi, Xueqin. "Women, International Migration and Development: Chinese Women's Migration to Southeast Asia since 1978". *International Journal of China Studies*. 1.1 (2010): 216-229. Print.

"Sing to the Dawn." *Infocomm Media Development Authority*, 27 September 2019, www.imda.gov.sg/for-industry/sectors/Media/film/films/sing-to-the-dawn. Web. 3 January 2018.

Skott, Christina. "The *Regio Femarum* and its Warrior Women: Images and Encounters in European Sources." in *Women Warriors in Southeast Asia,* edited by Vina A. Lanzona and Frederik Rettig. Routledge, 2020, pp. 82-103. Print.

Snodgrass, Mary E. *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature.* Infobase Publishing, 2014. Print.

Somswasdi, Virada. "Where Thai Women Stand: The Status of Thai Women Today." An interview by Kemasingki, Pim, *Chiang Mai City Life,* 2010, https://www.chiangmaicitylife.com/clg/our-city/interviews/where-thai-women-stand-the-status-of-thai-women-today/. Web. 3 January 2020.

Sritaragul, Parada. "The Spiralling Effect in the Case of Rape Scenes in Thai Soap Opera." Diss. University of Wien, 2017. Print.

Strangio, Sebastian. *Hun Sen's Cambodia*. Yale University Press, 2014. Print.

Subhimaros, Paweena. "Flower of the Nation: Gendered Representations of Thailand beyond the Borders." UK Postgraduate Conference in Gender Studies University of Leeds, United Kingdom, 21-22 June 2006. Conference Presentation.

Subrahmanyan, Arjun. "Reinventing Siam: Ideas and Culture in Thailand, 1920-1944." Diss. University of California, 2013. Print.

Tansanguanwong, Pamornrat. "Gender in Thai Schools: So We Grow Up to be What We Are Taught?" *World Bank Blog,* 29 Oct. 2015, https://blogs.worldbank.org/Eastasiapacific/gender-in-thai-schools-do-we-grow-up-to-be-what-we-are-taught. Web. 18 June 2018.

Taywaditep, Kittiwut Jod, et al. "The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality." in *The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality*, edited by Robert T. Francoeur et al., Continuum International, 2006, pp. 1021–1053. Print.

Terrell, Alice Katie. "Thai Buddhism and Women with a Christian Response." Diss. Liberty University, 2009. Print.

Thavry, Thon. *A Proper Woman: The Story of One Woman's Struggle to Live Her Dreams*. Thavry Thon, 2017. Print.

Thongthiraj, Rahpee. "Negotiated Identities and Female Personal Space in Thai American Adolescent Literature". The Lion and the Unicorn. 30.2 (2006): 234-249. Print.

Tsai, Shih-Shan H. *Perpetual Happiness: The Ming Emperor Yongle*. University of Washington Press, 2011. Print.

Tully, John A. *A Short History of Cambodia: from Empire to Survival*. Allen & Unwin, 2006. Print.

United Nations Children's Fund. *Gender Counts: A Quantitative Assessment of Gender Inequality and Its Impact on Girls and Boys in Southeast and Southeast Asia.* UNICEF Southeast Asia and the Pacific, 2019. Print.

Venny, Adriana and Rahayu, Ruth Indiah. "Patriarchal Systems and Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Southeast Asia: Lesson from the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste on Patriarchy and the Rise of Women's Participation in State Politics." in *The Success and The Barriers to Women's Representation in Southeast Asia: Between State Policies, Political Parties and Women's Movement,* edited by Maria Hartiningsih, Kemitraan Bagi Pembaruan Tata Pemerintahan, 2014, pp. 37-72. Print.

Wahyaka, Hermanus. "*Gender bias in the rural community as reflected in Minfong Ho`s Sing to the Dawn". LTT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching. 15.2 (2012): 29-41.* Print.

Walsh, Mélanie. Report on the Status of Cambodian Women: Domestic Violence, Sexual Assaults and Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation. *Project on Women's Rights in Cambodia,* Université Du Québec à Montréal, 2007. Discussion Paper.

Walters, Jonathan S. "Communal Karma and Karmic Community in *Theravada* Buddhist History." in *Theravada Buddhism and the Religious Cultures of South and Southeast Asia*, edited by John Clifford Holt, Jacob N. Kinnard and Jonathan S. Walters. State University of New York Press, 2003, pp. 9-40. Print.

Wang, Hanying. "Portrayals of Chinese Women's Images in Hollywood Mainstream Films- An Analysis of Four Representative Films of Different Periods". *Chinese Media Research*. 9.1 (2013): 75-79. Print.

Wekemann, Ursula. "Women in Cambodia – Analysing the Role and Influence of Women in Rural Cambodian Society with a Special Focus on Forming Religious Identity." Diss. University of South Africa, 2016. Print.

Wiggins, Joy L. "Minfong Ho: Politics in Prose". *Journal of Children's Literature*. 32.2 (2006): 52–59. Print.

Welsch, Wolfgang. "On the Acquisition and Possession of Commonalities." in *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*, edited by Frank Schulze-Engler and Sissy Helff. Rodopi, 2009, pp. 1–36. Print.

Wong, Sui-sum, Grace. "Conceptualizing Transnationalism and Transculturalism in Chinese American Women Narratives and Memoirs: Jade Snow Wong, Ruthanne Lum McCunn, and Amy Tan." Diss. University of Hong Kong, 2002. Print.

Woo, Miseong. "The Pioneer Writers of Asian Descent and America's Literary Encounter with Southeast Asia: Edith Eaton's Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Winnifred Eaton's A Japanese Nightingale". *Situations*. 7.1 (2013): 63-80. Print.

Yang, Chingyen Myer. "Breaking Silences: Telling Asian American Female Subversive Stories in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and Fae Myenne Ng's *Bone*". *Asiatic*. 11.1 (2017): 211-228. Print.

Yeoh, Brenda S. A. "Migration and Gender Politics in Southeast Asia". *Migration, Mobility & Displacement*. 2.1 (2016): 74-88. Print.

Zelmapulchra, Clara Nusaca Novitri. "The Influence of Gender Schema Towards Dawan's Mind Development in Minfong Ho's *Sing to the Dawn*". Diss, Sanata Dharma University, 2017. Print.

BIODATA OF STUDENT

Syamsina Zahurin Shamsuddin graduated from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor with a second-class upper degree in Mass Communication. She then enrolled on a Postgraduate Teaching Course programme at the Institute of Teachers Education, Temenggong Ibrahim, Johor Bahru, Johor, before graduating with a CGPA of 3.67 in 2000. She continued her Masters in World Literature from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Serdang, Selangor and graduated in 2007. Zahurin then continued her PhD in English Literature at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, UPM since 2017. Her main areas of interest are Malaysian and Southeast Asian literature, identity and transculturality, particularly on women. She currently works at the Institute of Teachers Education Malaysia, Cyberjaya, Selangor. In 2018, she contributed as a Committee Member for the Abstract Committee for MICOLLAC 2018. She was responsible for assisting the Head of the Abstract Committee in the technical preparations of the Literature abstracts for the Programme Book Committee. She was also a recipient of the Universiti Putra Malaysia Geran Putra Siswazah (GP-IPS/2018/9653400) worth RM25,000 and worked under the supervision of Dr. Ida Baizura Bahar for two years (2018-2020) on a research entitled "Contesting the Asian Female Identity Through Transculturalism in Minfong Ho's Novels". She also won third prize at the Three Minutes Thesis (3MT) competition at the faculty level and went on to represent the faculty at the university level in 2019.

She has presented papers at eight conferences as follows:

i. The 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature 2018 (AICLL 2018), Madani Hotel, Medan, Indonesia [Universiti Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan,18-19 April 2018]
ii. The 10th Malaysia International Conference on Languages, Literature and Cultures 2018 (MICOLLAC 2018), Hatten Hotel, Melaka, [UPM Serdang, 14-16 August 2018]
iii. The 12th Malaysia International Conference on English Language Teaching 2018 (MICELT 2018), UPM Serdang, Selangor, [UPM Serdang, 5-6 October 2018]
iv. The 5th International Conference on Linguistics, Literature and Culture 2019 (ICLLIC 2019), The Wembley Hotel, George Town, Penang, [Universiti Sains Malaysia, Georgetown, 29-30 July 2019]
v. The International Language and Education Conference 2019 (ILEC 2019), Sama-Sama Hotel, KLIA, Sepang, Selangor, [Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 9-10 October 2019]
vi. The International Conference on Language and Literature 2020 (ICLL 2020), International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak, Selangor, [International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak, 15-17 January 2020]
vii. Persidangan Antarabangsa Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan (PASAK5 2020), (Google Meet), Selangor, [Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia, Kajang, 24-25 November 2020]
viii. The 11th Malaysia International Conference on Languages, Literature and Cultures 2018 (MICOLLAC 2020), Online (http://micollac.up.edu.my/), [UPM Serdang, 23-25 March 2021]

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Syamsina Zahurin Shamsuddin and Ida Baizura Bahar. "Contesting the Asian Female Identity through Transculturalism in *Rice without Rain*." E-Proceedings of the 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature 2018 (AICLL 2018), Medan, Indonesia, April 18-19, pp. 280-289, 2018. [The AICLL 2018 Conference E-Proceedings is indexed in BASE, CiteFactor, Crossref, Dimensions, Garuda, Google Scholar, Indonesia OneSearch, KnowledgeE, PKPIndex and WorldCat]

Syamsina Zahurin Shamsuddin and Ida Baizura Bahar. "The Fluid and Transcultural Self: Renegotiating the Southeast Asian Female Identity in *The Clay Marble* by Minfong Ho", *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*®, Vol. 26, Issue 2, pp. 115-126, June, 2020. [Scopus Indexed Journal]

Syamsina Zahurin Shamsuddin, Ida Baizura Bahar, Manimangai Mani and Mohammad Ewan Awang. "Renegotiating the Fluid and Transcultural Self in the Cambodian Traditional Society: A Critical Reading of *The Stone Goddess* by Minfong Ho", *Journal of Language and Communication*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 104-119, April, 2021. [JLC is indexed in MCC MyJurnal, Google Scholar, UDL Edge, Academia Linguist List and My CITE]

UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

STATUS CONFIRMATION FOR THESIS / PROJECT REPORT AND COPYRIGHT

ACADEMIC SESSION: Second Semester 2020/2021

TITLE OF THESIS / PROJECT REPORT:

RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FEMALE IDENTITY THROUGH IDENTITY

FLUIDITY AND TRANSCULTURE/ALITY IN SELECTED NOVELS BY MINFONG HO

NAME OF STUDENT: SYAMSINA ZAHURIN SHAMSUDDIN

I acknowledge that the copyright and other intellectual property in the thesis/project report belonged to Universiti Putra Malaysia and I agree to allow this thesis/project report to be placed at the library under the following terms:

1. This thesis/project report is the property of Universiti Putra Malaysia.

2. The library of Universiti Putra Malaysia has the right to make copies for educational purposes only.

3. The library of Universiti Putra Malaysia is allowed to make copies of this thesis for academic exchange.

I declare that this thesis is classified as:

*Please tick (√)

☐	**CONFIDENTIAL**	(Contain confidential information under Official Secret Act 1972).
☐	**RESTRICTED**	(Contains restricted information as specified by the organization/institution where research was done).
☑	**OPEN ACCESS**	I agree that my thesis/project report to be published as hard copy or online open access.

This thesis is submitted for:

☐	**PATENT**	Embargo from _____ until _____
		(date) (date)

Approved by:

_____   _____
(Signature of Student)   (Signature of Chairman of Supervisory Committee)
New IC No/ Passport   Name: Dr. Ida Baizura Bahar
No.:
Date: Date:

[Note: If the thesis is CONFIDENTIAL or RESTRICTED, please attach with the letter from the organization/institution with period and reasons for confidentially or restricted.]