ABSTRACT


This research is intended to give an understanding of what identity is and how India descents deal with their identity in America. The writer describes and analyzes the identity conflicts dealt by India descents in America reflected in the film “The Mistress of Spices” by Paul Mayeda Berges.

This film was studied by using the descriptive qualitative method. In analyzing, the writer explains what identity is and what influences identity based on this film. Next, the writer analyzes the characters followed by the conflicts related to identity of India descents in America expressed in the film. Afterwards, the writer attempts to find the correlation of the characters and the conflicts of identity dealt by India descents in America.

From the data analysis, the writer found that there are three characters of India descents that have common conflict that is identity, when living in America as reflected in the film, they are: Tilo, Geeta and Jagjit. Each of the characters and scenes of this film express the identity conflict he or she deals with living in America, such as confronting with new culture, generation gap, and being unaccepted. Through the three characters and their conflicts, the writer can conclude that identity is something that always transforms.
APPROVEMENT

IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF INDIA DESCENTS IN AMERICA
IN *THE MISTRESS OF SPICES* FILM

A Thesis
Submitted In The Faculty of Adab and Humanities in Partial Fulfillment
Requirements for Strata One Degree (S1)

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The thesis has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s Examination Committee on Friday, November 29th, 2010. It has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Strata 1.

Jakarta, November 29th, 2010

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Jakarta, November 2010

Tuti Zakiyah
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Jakarta, November, 2010

The Writer
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IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF INDIA DESCENTS IN AMERICA

IN THE MISTRESS OF SPICES FILM

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2010
IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF INDIA DESCENTS IN AMERICA

IN THE MISTRESS OF SPICES FILM

A Thesis submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty
In Partial of the Requirements for
Strata 1 (S1) Degree

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ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT
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2010
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

The word “literature” can be used in a broader or in a narrower sense. As suggested by Ratna Nyoman Kutha in her book *Sastra dan Cultural Studies: Representasi Fiksi dan Fakta*, literature brings the meaning of a collection of tools that is meant for teaching, and guiding\(^1\). “Literature” can also be any kind of linguistic composition\(^2\).

Literature is associated with esthetic and beauty. Despite the content, the locus of literary beauty lies on the language. In a literary work, as suggested by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Teori Kesusastraan*,

“In a literary work, the language used is different from everyday language because it has been compiled, combined, experienced deotomisation (deotomisasi) and defamiliarisation (defamiliarisasi). There are words that exotic, different, or foreign (ostranenie). Moreover, a poet has the freedom to use or to play with the language (licentia poetica).”\(^3\)

In other words, language known in the literature is full of ambiguity and homonym. In literary language, signs, symbolisms, and the sound of words are emphasized. Literary language is connotative and referential, as well as having an expressive function in order to show the tone and the attitude of the speaker or the

---


author. Literary language sought to influence, persuade, and ultimately change the attitudes of the readers.\textsuperscript{4}

Literary work is a reconstruction that has to be understood by making use of mediation. Literary works build the world through the energy of words such as through the quality of paradigmatic relations, the system of signs and symbols. The words usually point to something else outside themselves. Language binds the whole aspects of life in order to be presented in a distinctive and a unique way, so that the actual events would be truly understood in a more meaningful way, more intense, wider and deeper.\textsuperscript{5}

The essence of literature is imagination and creativity, as literature is always associated with. Literature as a work of imaginative, the reference of literature is the world of fiction and imagination. Literature transforms reality into a text which presents the world in the form of words. While speaking of literature as the world of fiction, yet, Max Eastman suggests that the truth of literature is similar with the truth outside of the literary work, namely the systematic knowledge that can be proved. The main function of writers is to make humans see what is there in life and to imagine what is conceptually and factually has already discovered.\textsuperscript{6}

Literature as a function to improve life has the same function as culture. Literature and culture are interrelated to each other, because culture, as suggested

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{5} Nyoman Kutha Ratna (2005), \textit{op cit.} p.16.  
\textsuperscript{6} Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1990). \textit{loc.cit.}
by Marvin Haris, embraces all aspects of human life in a society that is obtained from learning, including the mind and the behavior\(^7\). From the definition, it is obvious that culture studies of human activity, and at a time makes it as an area of study that is also owned by literature.

It can be said that literature is one aspect of culture which plays an important role that is why it involves in culture. The essence of literature and culture is the essence of fiction and fact. Literary works are built on a basis of fiction produced by imagination that can reveal facts. While culture gives content until the facts found in literature can be understood comprehensively.

Literature and culture then becomes the subject of study in cultural studies. Literary work is the object of cultural studies that is rich with message and moral value and so on. Moreover, literary work is also valued as a record of cultural events. Cultural studies in terms of understanding the literary work as being represented by utilizing the clues in the text as the essence of plurality.

Speaking of literary works these days, there are a lot of literary works which are taken as an idea to put in the form of films. Literary works such as poems, short stories, novels, plays, that have read by a writer stimulating his imagination to create film works. Literary work turns out as radar to create new work. Film as a source of entertainment and a new learning method is easy to be accepted by anyone. It is because film is a form of practical visual but seeks to convey moral messages quickly to the film lovers. Film can also be used as a tool to reflect a particular culture.

\(^{7}\) Nyoman Kutha Ratna (2005), *op.cit.* p. 5.
Film *The Mistress of Spices* is raised from a novel of an Indian-American blooded writer, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni\(^8\). It is a film that represents spice as a symbol of the authenticity of Indian cultural traditions which presented through the main character, Tilo. Tilo is a woman who comes from India to America as spices expert immigrant in Oakland, California. In the film, some characters that are India descendant having conflicts with their identity especially when living in a place like America. The film also raised the question of keeping the integrity of the identity of the main character and other characters too. This film shows the character of Tilo experiencing a conflict within her when she falls in love with an American man. Tilo has to deal with two choices at the end whether to have love with the American man away from the rules that she regarded as binding herself to be the way she wanted or still get along with the rules in order to keep her India identity.

The theme of identity is exposed in the film through the characters, style, way of life and tradition of Indians and Americans. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her novel illustrates that a person with Indian attribute and cultural tradition is something that is difficult to be kept as identity if located in foreign countries like America because someone has to absorb and adapt foreign cultures received from the environmental and social condition surrounding; even she feels it didn’t fit him or her.

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\(^8\) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in 1956 in Kolkata India. She received her B.A. from the University of Calcutta in 1976. In the same year, she went to the United States to attend Wright State University where she received a master’s degree. She is an awad-winning author and poet. Her themes include women, immigration, the South Asian experience, history, myth, magic and celebrating diversity. Two novels, *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart*, have been made into films. Her short stories, *Arranged Marriage*, won an American Book Award.
Like other characters presented in the film, Geetha and Jagjit who act as the second-generation descendants of Indian immigrant, experienced the conflict of identity which they feel trapped by the cultural traditions of India that they must follow because it actually becomes something that burden them. Indian cultural traditions handed down on arranged marriage experienced by Geetha becomes a barrier at the same time having conflict with her family because she could not accept that arranged marriage. Furthermore, the issue on identity is also experienced by Jagjit character. Jagjit, a young man who is presented with Punjabi attribute often experience harsh treatment by his friends. His image of Punjabi makes him discriminated and oppressed. The issue on identity also makes this film interested to be studied.

**B. Focus of the Research**

As mentioned in the background of the study, this research will focus on raising the issue of identity as it is presented through characters in the film of *The Mistress of Spices*. The characters are India descents that live in America and face conflicts related to identity. This film shows several issues about identity that often occurring among India descents in a place like America. As a film that based on cultural theme, this film also presents the identity of India culture and how it is passed on to the next descendant. The identity problem dealt by the characters is part of the film that related in order to understand the essence of the film.
C. Research Questions

1. How are the characters of India descents in America presented in the film of *The Mistress of Spices*?

2. How do the identity conflict dealt by the characters as reflected in the film?

D. Objective of the Research

The objective of the research is to find out how identity of India descents characters is described in the film, and to find out how the characters deal with their identity as India descents when living in a modern multicultural country like America.

E. Significance of the Research

The writer expects this research can be beneficial for the readers who want to know more about what identity is. The writer also hope that the readers can expand their knowledge about cultural studies hoping that more literary works are chosen by using the theory of cultural studies as done by the writer.

F. Methodology of the Research

The method of the research involves some important aspects that complete the research:

1. Method of the Research

   In the research, the writer uses the descriptive qualitative method in order to find out the identity of India descents characters using the concept of identity.

2. Data Analysis

   Based on the method that is utilized, the writer analyzes the data using the concept of identity by the following steps:
• Identifying the identity of India descents characters presented in the film as part of the role.

• Analyzing how the identity conflict dealt by the characters by using the concept of identity.

3. Research Instrument

In the research, the writer uses herself as the main instrument in collecting the qualitative data about the identity of India descents in the film of *The Mistress of Spices* in some ways, such as; watching the film many times very carefully so that the writer can understand the story, identifying the identity of the characters from the film scenes, and making notes taken from the scenes that supports the writer in analyzing the data.

4. Unit Analysis

The unit analysis in this research is a film directed by Paul Berges, *The Mistress of Spices*. The film is also adapted from a novel with the same title by an Indian-American author, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in the year 1997. The film was produced by Balle Pictures in 2005, starring Aishwarya Rai.

5. Time and Place

This research is accomplished on the ninth semester of 2009-2010 academic years at English Letters Department of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Definition of Film

Film is a work of art and art culture which made up on a basis of cinematography by recording it on celluloid, video tape, video disc, and other materials of technological invention forms, types, and sizes, as well as electronic or chemical processes other processes with or without sound, which can be performed or displayed with a projection system, mechanical, electronic or other.\(^8\)

According to Effendi Uchyana Onong, film is a powerful communications medium, not just for entertainment, but also for enlightenment and education. According to Alex Sobur (2003), film is raised from the shadow of reality life that is experienced in daily life causing the tendency to find the relevance between the film and the reality life. Even Jakob Sumardjo, from film and television center, stated that film serves as experiences and values\(^9\). The effects of film is caused by the imitation of what he or she witnesses that deserved to be done by everyone.

Film is a technology utilized for the mass entertainment to spread up information and various messages in a broad scale besides press, radio, and


television\textsuperscript{10}. Film included in a mass communication contains the aspects of entertainment, and education. The facts that implicitly presented in film are based on the phenomena occurring in a community. Some of the theme of film focuses on the social problems, frustrations, pleasures, and joys of human relationship such as love, friendship, marriage, divorce, family interactions, sexuality, and so on. Even, film is made in an imaginative way\textsuperscript{11}.

Film has the ability to play the space and time, to develop, to lessen, to back and move freely within the boundary of wide area. Film is viewed through visual pictures and real sounds that able to handle a variety of subjects. The elements found in a film makes it an alternative form of art that has great demand in a society.

B. The Concept of Identity

The concept of identity has become a popular concept; it refers to a great number of different meanings. Originally, the concept of identity entered the social sciences through the work of scholars such as Carl Rogers, Harry Sullivan and especially Erik Erikson (1963-1968). In literary field of knowledge, identity is one of the theme raised that is derived from the concept of Cultural Studies\textsuperscript{12}.

\textsuperscript{10} Sean Mac Bride, komunikasi dan Masyarakat Sekarang dan masa depan, aneka suara satu dunia (Jakarta: PN Balai Pustaka, Unesco, 1983), p. 120.

\textsuperscript{11} Mafri Amir, Etika Komunikasi Massa dalam Pandangan Islam, (Jakarta:Logos, 1999), p. 20.

\textsuperscript{12} Cultural Studies is a field of studies that develops on the second half of 20th century. It began in England in 1964 followed by the establishment of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) by Stuart Hall. Hall emphasizes a new way of cultural studies through
“Identity” may be defined as the distinctive character belongs to any individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category and or group. The term comes from the French word *identite* which finds its linguistic roots in the Latin noun *identitas, -tatis*, and a derivation of the Latin adjective *idem* meaning “the same”. The term emphasizes the sharing of a degree of sameness or oneness with others in a particular area\(^{13}\).

‘*Identity continues to be the problem it was throughout modernity*,’ says Douglas Kellner, and adds that ‘*far from identity disappearing in contemporary society, it is rather reconstructed and redefine*.\(^{14}\) He also points out that ‘*identity today becomes a freely choosen game, a theatrical presentation of the self*’ and that ‘*when one radically shifts identity at will, one might lose control.*’

Today of *identity* and and its problems are more often than ever particularly in modern times. One thinks of *identity* whenever one is not sure of where one belongs, that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper.

‘*Identity*’ is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty. *Identity* entered modern mind and practice dressed from the start as an individual task. It was multi-disciplinary research. Multi-disciplinary research is a study where a problem from different disciplinary like politics, economics, socials, cultures and so on required to be discussed. *Identity* is one of the theme that is raised in Cultural Studies.


up to the individual to find escape from uncertainty. Not for the first and not for the last time, socially created problems were to be resolved by individual efforts. The ‘diembedded’ identity simultaneously ushered in the individual’s freedom of choice and the individual’s dependency on expert guidance.

Christopher Lasch, points out the meaning of identity ‘refers to persons and to things. Both have lost thier solidarity in modern society, their definiteness and continuity.’ Lasch explains that the world constructed of durable objects has been replaced ‘with disposable products that are designed for immediate obsolescence’. In such a world identities can be adapted and discarded like a change of costume.

In contemporary studies of identities, such as suggested by Stuart Hall (1996:6), is a never-ending process, always incomplete, unfinished, always create new process and has different from previous process. Hall also proposes the term identification above the essentialist\textsuperscript{15} concept of identity. The concept of identification can also be regarded as a postmodern version of the modern concept of identity, as a shifting image of identity so to speak. Identification is an ongoing process where we seek some unified sense of ourselves through symbolic systems and identify with the ways in which we are seen by others.

Hall also argues that identities are constantly in a process of change and transformation. Particularly when talking about the process globalization which has generated a worldwide migration of peoples and objects, which has simultaneously

\textsuperscript{15} The essentialist argument about identity is a ‘true one self’. For instance, the essentialist definition of ‘Serbian’ identity would suggest that there is one clear, authentic set of characteristics which all Serbians share and which do not alter across time.
brought about a global quest for identity, as suggested by Friedman 1994 and Featherstone 1995)\textsuperscript{16}.

More concept of identity, based on a book called \textit{Identity and Difference} edited by Kathryn Woodward, Identities in the contemporary world derive from a multiplicity of sources – from nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender, sexuality – sources which may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory fragmented identities. Each of us may experience some struggles between conflicting identities based on our different positions in the world, as a member of a particular community, ethnicity, social class, religion, as a parent, as a worker or as unemployed\textsuperscript{17}.

Therefore the construction of one person identity throughout life lies on one’s different experience that he or she is struggling within the social life and what kinds of society surrounds him or her based on those different sources. In other words, as suggested by Woodward (1997:1):

\begin{quote}
The concept of identity raises fundamental questions about how individuals fit into the community and the social world and how identity can be seen as the interface between subjective positions and social and cultural situations. Identity gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live.
\end{quote}

According to Woodward, identity of one person can be reflected through one way of representing him or herself within the society whether socially or culturally.

\textsuperscript{16} Toon van Meijl and Jelle Miedema \textit{ibid.}, p.4.

\textsuperscript{17} Kathryn Woodward, \textit{Identity and Difference}, p.1.
Identity also act as a tool in order to interact with the society in one life that he or she lives.

In addition, identity embarks from the fact that in contemporary world like we are living in now has caused a ‘crisis of identity’. Such ‘crisis of identity’ is characterized by the presence of in search of identity which includes a kind of ‘project’ over one’s body such as: plastic surgery, making a tattoo, piercing on certain parts of the body, hair rebounding and so on. Also having odd attitude that way too far from social norm and value such as the gay community, lesbian, drugs addiction, night clubbers, and single mothers and so on.

‘Identity crisis’ are words and ideas which characterize contemporary or late-modern societies. Identity crisis has become important questions which are caused by globalization and other processes that linked with global change such as history, social change and political movements. Kathryn Woodward explains that there are two main important matters in relation with identity crisis.

First, crisis occurs due to the existence of ‘advance technology development in modern world’ that may cause such identity ‘project’ as mentioned earlier. Second, the crisis may occur as a result of fluctuating stream of globalization such as happening now. The problem of migration for instance, the mass movement of population from one area to another or one country to another country is being the
most complicated cases in shaping identity of ones area or country of the present time\textsuperscript{18}.

In addition to that, globalization can also be defined as a condition or an ongoing process where the boundaries line between cultures of different nations gets thinner and even lose at all. This is the impact from such advance technology development especially in communication and transportation that are extraordinarily fast moving. Therefore, the positive impacts that derived from globalization are the open chances for any cultures to get interact to each other and to flourish\textsuperscript{19}.

According to cultural studies, identity is an entity that able to change based on a certain history, time and space. There is ‘no fixed’ (essences) in such entity because everything is able to be ‘made’ and ‘remade’ again. In other words, identities are fluid, having different elements which can be reconstructed in new cultural conditions, and that they are not fixed essences which are permanent for all time (Weeks, 1994)\textsuperscript{20}. Thus in cultural studies, it is called as non-essentialist.

Moreover, cultural studies perceives identity as a project, as suggested by Anthony Giddens in his book of Modernity and Self-Identity\textsuperscript{21}. Giddens opinion about identity is that identity is ‘a thinking way of self’. What we think is able to

\textsuperscript{18} Kathryn Woodward (1997) in Robertus Wardi, Cultural Studies: Tantangan Bagi Teori-Teori Besar Kebudayaan, Publisher Koekoesan, p. 115.


\textsuperscript{21} Anthony Giddens, in Robertus Wardi, Cultural Studies: Tantangan Bagi Teori-Teori Besar Kebudayaan, op cit, p. 118.
change gradually from one environment to another environment in a different space and time. Therefore, Giddens says that ‘identity acts as a project’, which means identity is our creation, something that undergoes change, a movement of ‘heading to’ instead of an ‘arrival’. Identity project is arranged from what we think we are now based on our past and present, along with the idea of what we are going to be, the desire of our future lane22.

1. Generational Differences Influence on Identity

As explained by the writer earlier that identity is not fixed and keep on changing from time to time depend on the situation and condition of one social life he or she lives in. In addition to more recent process of globalization where fast moving transportation and communication has taken place, people tend to move from one destination to another easily. Therefore, the process of migration leaves high number of immigration to the destination country.

Again, this phenomenon causes transmitting of cross cultural problems which able to influence the identity of the migrants at the destination country. Take for example, the South Asian American. This South Asian American generally identified by their generational differences which differ the first generation with the second generation as well as with the third generation.

On the other hand, generation as a cohort is commonly used to describe people moving from one age group to another, such as preteens, teenagers, college age generation, and so on. The idea of generation as a life stage, in contrast, is often

22 Anthony Giddens, ibid, p.118.
attributed to the conflicts between younger and older generations which are usually linked with parent-child generational conflict compounded by cultural, social, and political clashes.

First-generation, such as defined by social scientists and historians, as being made up of immigrants or refugees, the first to live in the United States. The first-generation usually tries to adopt a new culture, a new way of life, a new way of expression, and to fit in to the new environment around them. Other source also suggests, first-generation refers to the people who leave the country in which they were born and move to a different country with intent on making a new life in the new country. The 1.5 generation refers to the children who immigrated with their parents as youths, having received some education in their home country, but receiving most of their education in the United States. They are bilingual and bicultural, and they have the ability to negotiate generational and ethnic boundaries. They are often referred to as the in-between generation, and have been characterized as confused and marginalized. However, they have also been described as the ‘bridge’ between the first and second generations.

Meanwhile, the second generation consists of those who are American born, having received all of their education and socialization in the United States. In brief, they refer to the generation being born in the United States to parents who

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immigrated or emigrated from other country. For countries like the United States, the children of the first-generation are citizens.

2. Dominant, Negotiated and Oppositional Identity

According to Frank Parkin’s theory of ‘meaning system’ discusses about three potential responses to a media message, they are dominant, negotiated, or oppositional. Stuart Hall also stressed the role of social positioning in the interpretation of mass media texts by different social groups, which he derived from the theory of Frank Parkin’s ‘meaning systems’24.

First, a dominant is disposed to totally accept one of his or her identity. For instance, if a person prefers to be an American, he or she would run all of activities based on American culture, ethnic, and society. Second, a negotiated would not accept the whole of two cultures, such as Indian or American identities but rather negotiate both. Third, an oppositional is disposed not to respond and to reject one of the identity he or she has run in which he or she is not comfortable to present the identity.

C. Character

Character applies to any kinds of literary work that is presented in a narrative work or drama. It is defined by the readers as having moral quality and a particular tendency such as being expressed through the character’s dialogues, expressions and actions. In a film, character is also an important element that functioned to develop the story because character is a person who carries out the events which then becomes

a story. By understanding the characters in one story, the readers are able to get what the story is all about.

Based on a function of character in a story, character can be divided into two, major and minor. Major character can be differentiated into two:

1. The protagonist character is usually easy to identify, he or she is the core character that carries out positive characterization or presents positive moral values. Protagonist is often struggles with the antagonist.

2. The antagonist character is the one who carries out negative characterization and or presents negative values. The antagonist can be difficult to identify, especially if he is not a human being, but rather the hostile social or natural environment with which the protagonist is forced to contend.

Character is then developed based on the characterization which can be distinguished into two, flat and round characters.

1. Flat characters are those who represent a single characteristic, trait, or idea, or at most a very limited number of such qualities. Flat characters are also called as type characters, as one-dimensional characters, or, when they are distorted to create humor, as caricatures. Flat characters are less complex than round ones.


2. Round characters are the opposite. They represent a number of qualities and traits and are complex multidimensional characters of considerable intellectual and emotional depth who have the ability to grow and change\textsuperscript{27}.

Characters can also be distinguished on the basis of the capacity to develop or change as the result of their experiences. The rate of character change varies widely. In some literary works, the development is so subtle that it may be unnoticed; in others it is sufficiently drastic and profound which cause a total reorganization of the character’s personality or system of values and beliefs. For instance,

1. Dynamic characters change in some significant ways during the course of the work\textsuperscript{28}. They can pass through a significant emotional and spiritual crisis\textsuperscript{29}.

2. Static characters do not change in any significant ways during the course of the work. Static characters tend to be minor ones, and are tied to the idea of statis and passivity\textsuperscript{30}.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, p.26.


\textsuperscript{29} James H. Pickering & Jeffrey D. Hoepner, \textit{op. cit}, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, p.27.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Introduction

*The Mistress of Spices*, produced in 2005 is a fiction film by Paul Mayeda Berges which based on the novel of the same title written by an Indian-American author, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. This film shows how the originality of Indian tradition and culture is brought up by the characters who are also India descents living in a fast growing modern country like America.

The India descents characters are trying to cope with their identity when living in a socially modern culture of America. The characters in the film can also be identified as the first and the second generation. Therefore, the characters deal with identity dilemma as described in *The Mistress of Spices* film.

In this chapter, the writer tries to find out how the characters of India descents are presented, and to find out how the identity conflict dealt by the characters as reflected in the film. In relation with their generational differences, they indeed want to maintain their inherited culture. However, there are some issues that they face which affect their identity. The problem of identity is very commonly occurred among most of immigrants of one culture while living in a different culture especially like in America, where the population comprises of different origin and culture.

It happens as a result of migration of immigrants from the place of origin to other destination country. A movement of people from one country to another is
being an inevitable process occurring in this era. In fact, such movement of people or migration is a very common phenomenon since as early as 18th century. In the traditional view, migration was a process in which people left their countries due to considerations that pushed them from their homes, or attractions that drew them to another land or a combination of these push and pull factors. Once the migrants had left their homeland and moved to the host country, they had to try to manage with problems of cultural differences, language differences, and the struggle to make a living.31

Usually, after having a stable life in the destination country, many migrants were never able to return to their land of origin. Instead they break their ties to their homeland, adapted to the new circumstances, and finally assimilated into the country to which they had migrated. According to sources, migrants in America from South Asian descent alone are rooted from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Madras which visited the United States from as early as 18th to 20th century.32

Even up to now, according to the United States census, Indian migrants are considerably large in number. Indian Americans are the third largest constituency in the Asian American community after the Chinese American community, and the

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Filipino American community\textsuperscript{33}. At the destination country, Asian Americans usually deal with identity problem based on certain factors that influenced their identity.

**B. Data Descriptions**

In the data descriptions, the writer attempts to describe the explanation of the characters in the film which are formed into several lists that consist about the identity. In the data analysis, the writer will try to analyze the data that has been described in the data description by using the concept of identity.

In the film, there are several characters that the writer takes to be analyzed in this paper. The characters described in the film are India descents that live in a small town of San Francisco in the United States where minorities of American live. Minorities include Indian immigrants and African Americans. The characters that will be described are Tilo, Geetha, and Jagjit.

The characters of India descent are consisting of the first generation and the second generation immigrants. It is very important to identify which generations they are belong to, because it helps the writer to find out the issues occurring behind the conflicts and actions that described in the film. Analysis of characters includes the major and minor characters which undergoes a certain conflict regarding their identity. The first generation is presented by Tilo, and the second generation is presented by Geetha and Jagjit.

In this chapter, the writer attempts to classify her findings into two groups. They are the characters and how they deal with their identity conflict as India descents based on the conflicts they face such as described in the film. The writer will give some statements and proofs found in the film scenes as the corpus of the research as presented in the following tables.

1. The List of Characters in the film The Mistress of Spices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | Tilo       | “This good. Very good. Great things will happen in this new land for you. Riches. Happiness. And maybe even love.”[08:27]  
“I discovered I could see things others could not. I knew which servant go sleeping with her master. I told a wealthy land owner where to find his lost ring. And I warned to the village Headman of the floods before they came.”[09:27]  
“I was taught the power of the spices and the consequences for breaking the rules.”  
“First rule, you are here to see to the others desires. Never to use the spices for your own. Second rule, you may never leave the store. So there’s no danger of a strange away from the spices. Final rule, you may never touch another skin.”[12:02]  
“I’ve neglected what is important. Anant Soni, who comes every month for rendi, oil from the castor plant to massage into his mother arthritic hands. And Prameela Viji, who sells million dollars’ houses and sends the money to her sister in a shelter. I’ll give her a special blend of garam |
|    |            |        | Fortuneteller/Gifted | Obedient | Dutiful |
masala today for hope. Thank you spices reminding of my duty to others.[49:19]

“Bring him in. I can help him...I have to help him Chillis. His hurt.”[17:28]

“Teach him to be a Master like you.”
“Because I want to. Cinnamon, you have found a true friend for Jagjit to guide him through the highest and the lowest of life in America...”[26:04]

“I’ll stay up all night and split the seeds for Haroun. I must protect him.”[12:18]

“Dadaji, you said you would do anything to bring Geeta back into the family. Mix this in your rice and for one hour you will have a golden tongue. Whatever you ask, people must obey.”[14:11]

“I’ve never left you. I could’ve lived with you and him. Love cannot be wrong. But I will leave him if it means losing you. I give my life to you.”[32:50]

“Dadaji, Geeta is such a nice girl. She’s pretty, well-spoken and loves my mango pickle.” [25:29]

“Is it all right to work late in the night in the office with men and that also being drove by these men in their cars. You tell me? Who will want to marry her?”[25:41]

“I’m going out...I’m not ashamed of anything.”[26:35]

“Fine! Then I’m going to move in with Tony! Because he’s been asking me all this

Helpful

Kind

Devotion

Nice, pretty and well-spoken.

Adopts modern life

Rebellious
time and I’ve been saying No because I’ve been thinking of you. But now I will! And I’ll just go ahead and marry him. Because that’s what we want!” [36:37]

“…go and get me daal chini…”[15:23]

“Oh, what’s the problem Osama? Yeah...tough guy, Turban! Turban!” [15:48]

C. Character Analysis

In the fiction film of The Mistress of Spices, the writer has taken several statements in a form of dialogues of three different characters that play important role in the essence of the film story. It is because these three characters have common problem and they are presented in conflicts with their identity as India descents in America. Therefore, character analysis is important to be discussed in this paper. Further explanations about the characters will be elaborated as below.

1. Tilo

Tilo is the major character in the film because she occupies the most in the film scenes. In the beginning Tilo herself narrated the early scene as a character of a mistress of spices. She is destined by her fate to be a mistress of spices to fulfill her duty as an expert in the uses of spices. She is sent by First Mother to San Francisco of the United States to run a Spice Bazaar to fully use her ability of spices for other
people’s need. Every morning, she opens her Spice Bazaar for her loyal customers who are in need of her help. Her Spice Bazaar is often visited by Indian community as well as others. She is not only providing a numerous variety of spices, but also other Indian thing like *Mehndi*.

Tilo is originally from a small village in India. She was born to poor Indian parents. Since she was born, her parents’ faces were heavy with fallen hope to have another girl. It is because a daughter is meant nothing more than a dowry debt for poor Indian. Tilo remembers her past when she was a little girl, she used to wander alone and at that time she discovered she could see things that other people could not. In other words, she is gifted with psychic ability. Soon, Tilo became famous and she was known widespread throughout the villages, until one day several bandits came to kidnap her to lead to riches. Her parents were killed and she was taken by the bandits with a boat to a canal.

“I discovered I could see things others could not. I knew which servant go sleeping with her master. I told a wealthy land owner where to find his lost ring. And I warned to the village Headman of the floods before they came.” [09:27]
Yet, she escaped from the bandits by jumping into the river, which then leads her to her fate, to the First Mother. Living with the First Mother, she was taught to be a mistress of spices. She learnt a whole knowledge of spices; its name, color, smell, sound, its power, and the rules as well as the consequences for breaking the rules. Therefore, she has to obey all the rules even in her Spice Bazaar in San Francisco. She is forbidden to use the spices for her own desire, to touch with other skin, and to leave the store. These rules are being applied by her when running the Spice Bazaar in San Francisco.

“I was taught the power of the spices and the consequences for breaking the rules.”
“First rule, you are here to see to the others desires. Never to use the spices for your own. Second rule, you may never leave the store. So there’s no danger of a strange away from the spices. Final rule, you may never touch another skin.” [12:02]

Tilo’s loyal customer such as Haroun, who comes to her Spice Bazaar every morning often ask his day’s fortune and blessing from Tilo. Haroun is a Muslim India man originally from Kashmir who came to America hoping for a better luck in foreign land. Tilo is called as Ladyjaan by Haroun because he believes that Tilo has
the ability to see fortune. He knew that Tilo had helped Ahmed to get a green card. That is the reason why Haroun asks for his fortune from Tilo.

“This good. Very good. Great things will happen in this new land for you. Riches. Happiness. And maybe even love.”

Running the Spice Bazaar in San Francisco, Tilo aimed to fulfill her duty as an expert in spices to help others who in need of her help. All spices are available in her store and customers can get other Indian things too, for instance, Mehndi, spices for Indian cuisines, Indian herbs for healing, spices drinks, oil, and many other ingredients for specific purposes like mental health and so on. Tilo feels the responsibility to perform her duty to her customers.

Often she is able to serve the customers very well enough even though they have different problems to overcome, she always ready to help them with her spices. She could fulfill the customers’ desire with different uses of spices available in her Spice Bazaar. In brief, Tilo is a dutiful person to her customers regardless their origin, background, culture, religion, color and race are. For example, she helped Haroun, an
Indian Muslim man, Myisha and Kwesi an African American who always come to her spices shop for to get what they need, as well as Anant Sonia and Prameela Viji.

“I’ve neglected what is important. Anant Soni, who comes every month for rendi, oil from the castor plant to massage into his mother arthritic hands. And Prameela Viji, who sells million dollars’ houses and sends the money to her sister in a shelter. I’ll give her a special blend of garam masala today for hope. Thank you spices reminding of my duty to others.” [49:19]

Tilo is kind to her customers too. It is shown when Tilo sees with her psychic ability that something bad will happen to Haroun, she wants to protect Haroun with her spices. She gives some kalo jire seeds to protect him from evil eyes. She stayed up all night to prepare the kalo jire seeds for Haroun and on the next day, she sent the kalo jire to Haroun’s flat.

“I’ll stay up all night and split the seeds for Haroun. I must protect him.”[12:18]
Not only that, Tilo also made up a special recipe for Dadaji to overcome his family problem. Tilo, who is always open to listen any problems that her customers have, such as giving some solution to Dadaji’s problem due to his conflict with his grand daughter Geeta regarding a man named Tony. After hearing Dadaji’s problem, Tilo made a special drink for the family in order to get things right.

“Dadaji, you said you would do anything to bring Geeta back into the family. Mix this in your rice and for one hour you will have a golden tongue. Whatever you ask, people must obey.”[14:11]

Tilo is also a helpful person. It is shown when one night a man got a little accident in front of her Spice Bazaar and let the man in to get some medication. The man is Doug, an American man who later on she falls in love with. Tilo mixes a few spoon of spices powder with a coconut milk to put on the wound areas. On the next day, Tilo receives a visit from Doug again only to say his thanks to Tilo, and from then on Tilo starts to like him. Yet, she cannot follow her desire to be with him due the rules that she should not use the spices for her own desire.

“Bring him in. I can help him…I have to help him Chillis. His hurt.”[17:28]
Tilo also helped Jagjit to get a martial art class from Kwesi for him, so that he will never be bullied anymore by his friends at school. Tilo takes some of her money to pay for his martial art class with hope that Jagjit can protect himself from any kinds of criminal act and to guide him through the highest and the lowest of life in America. Tilo is afraid that Jagjit would choose the wrong friends. Therefore, as an India immigrant who came from the same origin as Jagjit, Tilo understands Jagjit’s situation.

“Teach him to be a Master like you.” “Because I want to. Cinnamon, you have found a true friend for Jagjit to guide him through the highest and the lowest of life in America...”[26:04]

When Tilo met Doug, the American man, conflict began to happen to herself especially when she realized that she fell in love with Doug. She knew all the rules that forbid her to fall in love. One by one, the rules has been broken accidentally. Tilo and Doug touch each other hands and Doug began to ask her out but Tilo refused to go out with him because she remembers the rules. On the next day, her customers complaint about the spices they bought that the spices didn’t work for them. Nevertheless, Tilo accepts Doug’s request to get out with him to see the beauty of
San Francisco city and other places like China town. When she came back to her Spice Bazaar at night, her shop had been messed up and robbed.

Tilo was warned by her First Mother that she has gone too far and ordered her to come back to where she belongs because she has broken many rules. Tilo was asked to stay away from Doug, the American man and never to be seduced by him. It is because a mistress of spices is forbidden to fall in love. However, all Tilo wants is just to follow her desire for love without leaving her traditions. Then, she has chosen to go back.

On the next day, Tilo found out that her customers like Dadaji, Jagjit, Kwesi and Myisha have found all their desires. They all have got what they need. And Tilo also wants only a night with Doug for her desire. Yet, she also promised never to leave her spices because she has devoted herself for the spices. Her devotion to the spices can be shown through this dialogue when she assured the spices that she will never leave them.

“I’ve never left you. I could’ve lived with you and him. Love cannot be wrong. But I will leave him if it means losing you. I give my life to you.”[32:50]
Tilo has shown her devotion to the spices. She would do anything for the spices even though she has to lose her love. In the end, she is allowed to be with Doug without leaving her traditions as an India descent. It can be inferred from this film that the spices are like tradition to her. A tradition that is passed on from one generation to another that should not be abandoned. Even though one is living in other country, foreign land, such as in this film America, the tradition cannot be left behind because it has become one’s identity.

Throughout the explanations above, the writer concludes that Tilo is a protagonist character. In here she receives conflict from the spices which keeps on reminding the rules she has to obey. And Doug who comes into her life making her fall in love with him and seduces her to be with him creating conflict between her and the spices. As a result, Tilo is faced with an internal conflict in which she has to decide whether to follow her desire to be with Doug or to obey the spices if she didn’t want to lose the magic of the spices for the sake of her customers.

Tilo, as a traditional India woman who is still embracing the India tradition and culture that is shown through her clothes, way of life and belief, must live in America because of her duty as an expert of spices as well as the owner of Spice Bazaar. In here, she has to confront with her desire to be with the American man she loves with the possibility that she would be influenced by the American culture or to leave him in order to keep the authenticity of her India culture. In here, Tilo can be assumed to oppose the new culture. She is comfortable with the present culture she has embraced.
2. Geeta

Geeta plays as a minor character because she is infrequently appear in the film and only holds a little role in the story of the film. Her character is slightly described in the film scenes but Geeta also plays a role as an India descent in America. Geeta is considered as the second generation because she was born and grown up in the United States. She is a young woman, a daughter to Indian parents and a grand daughter to Dadaji. Geeta is described as a nice, pretty and well-spoken.

“Dadaji, Geeta is such a nice girl. She’s pretty, well-spoken and loves my mango pickle.” [25:29]

Geeta is an independent woman because she is working. Since her grandfather Dadaji arrived in America staying with her and her parents, her Dadaji always complains about her appearance and her American lifestyle. Geeta is always complaint by Dadaji about her being working late at night with men and being drove by men. Geeta’s Dadaji afraid that she will lose her Indian tradition and according to him it is necessary that Indian woman should keep her culture.
Yet, Geeta has been assimilated with American culture and adopts modern lifestyle. Her appearance is similar to other American women. She has her make up on her face and wears sexy outfit almost showing her chest when she is going out with her friends at night. Her sexy appearance shocks Dadaji so much because according to Dadaji that good Indian woman would never wear anything like Geeta is wearing.

“I’m going out...I’m not ashamed of anything.” [26:35]

When Geeta’s Dadaji receives a letter from his old army friend in India asking for an arranged marriage, Geeta is amused by the idea. She laughs and thinks that she
does not want to sacrifice her career, family and all her friends to go back to India, a place where she only visited twice. Then, she admitted to her parents and grand father that she already has a boyfriend, a Chicano, Mexican American man. Geeta’s confession has made them angry and disagree with her choice. Her parents and her Dadaji want her to get married with an Indian man. As a result, Geeta becomes rebellious to her parents. She decided to leave the house if her parents didn’t agree with her own choice. She insists to move in with Tony, her boyfriend and to get married with him. Her father couldn’t say anything of her action.

“Fine! Then I’m going to move in with Tony! Because he’s been asking me all this time and I’ve been saying No because I’ve been thinking of you. But now I will! And I’ll just go ahead and marry him. Because that’s what we want!” [36:37]

In this situation, since Geeta is mostly influenced by American culture, she thinks that she has the right to choose her own life regardless the culture and tradition she has to follow that binds her to choose her own life. Even though her parents and her Dadaji want to pass on the Indian tradition to her by making an arranged marriage with an Indian man, yet Geeta rejected the idea of arranged marriage
because she already has her own love. In here, Geeta, as the second generation of India descents has preferred to be free and to adopt American lifestyle instead of Indian tradition. She has lost many of her identity as India descent and dominantly influenced by American culture. As explained earlier, it can be seen from the way she dressed and her attitude.

3. Jagjit

Jagjit is an Indian Punjabi boy. He is one of the regular customers that often come to Tilo’s Spice Bazaar. Usually, he comes with his mother to get certain spices that are available in Tilo’s Spice Bazaar, such as daal chini, and chillis. Jagjit is an obedient son. He obeys his mother order when his mother asks him to get daal chini in Tilo’s shop.

“...go and get me daal chini...” [15:23]

From Jagjit’s appearance suggests that Jagjit comes from a traditional Punjab descent that never been influenced by American culture. Therefore, Jagjit is still wearing his turban to show his identity as a Punjab boy. However, due to his identity which shows his origin that is Punjabi, he becomes a subject to his friends bully.
Jagjit starts to face difficulty socializing with his friends at school especially with his American friends because he is seen weird by them. His Punjab attribute like the turban makes him being called “Osama”. His friends also treat him rudely like pulling off his turban from his head and throw it away. Jagjit receives rude and harsh treatment because of his Punjab identity. Jagjit couldn’t do anything about it because he is a defenseless boy. He could not defense himself because he is only by himself.

“Oh, what’s the problem Osama? Yeah...tough guy, Turban! Turban!” [15:48]

Jagjit’s identity that he is trying to identify himself through his cultural appearance as a Punjab origin has caused him to be marginalized. Instead, he is being alienated and discriminated by his peers. In Jagjit’s case, though his identity has already shown or formed during his age, identity is apparently a lengthy process neither begins nor ends with adolescence. One’s identity can be examined through the conditions that influence him or her to the adjustment of the personality of self to his or her environment. Since Jagjit undergoes such treatment from his friends, he
intends to change his appearance or identity. He starts to take off his *turban* so that he can be accepted by his peers and assimilate with them as others.

Later on, Jagjit changes his identity that can be identified through his physical appearance. He is no longer wearing *turban*, instead, he acts like his friends, wears gold accessories, and gets his ear pierced. His way of talking has changed, more rude and American like. For instance, Jagjit comes to Tilo’s spice shop to buy something for his mother, with a new appearance without a *turban* on his head, earrings, T-shirt, short pants, and new haircuts. When Tilo asks how he does in school, he answers Tilo’s question with rude intonation.

Jagjit gets his new appearance, his new friends at school and he no longer worries about being bullied ever again by his friends, because he looks the same as others now. Jagjit changes his appearance due to peer pressure that he gets at school. He is also ashamed of his Punjabi identity that is a *turban*. His *turban* put a burden on him in which he cannot get friends at school because of the *turban*, especially when he is called “Osama” by the boys at school.
As mentioned earlier, in here Jagjit’s change is concerned with the process of getting his true identity, since his age is very crucial in the construction of identity. As suggested by Woodward in her book *Identity and Difference*:

“*Identities in the contemporary world derive from a multiplicity of sources – from nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender, sexuality – sources which may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory fragmented identities. Each of us may experience some struggles between conflicting identities based on our different positions in the world, as a member of a particular community, ethnicity, social class, religion, as a parent, as a worker or as unemployed.*”

According to Woodward, every single person has his or her own identity that can be derived from different kinds of background. Ones identity can be identified based on his or her background. The difference in ones background becomes his or her identity that simultaneously represents his or her identity in society. However, as people grow up with different time and distance, people tend to experience friction in determining his or her own identity especially when he or she tries to fit with the larger community. Therefore, individuals’ identity defines themselves in the social and cultural contexts, which can draw some assumptions about the sort of identity one is.

Identity that Jagjit tries to show is consciously chosen by him in order to present his new identity as a common American boy. He wants to be treated equally as others. Therefore, he acts just like other boys at his school that enables him to mingle with the boys. He thinks that with a new appearance, he can be accepted. Yet, he is actually chosen the wrong friends, because his friends insist him to bring gunfire.

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in his pocket to Tilo’s spice shop. Since Tilo has the ability to read somebody’s mind, she immediately takes the initiative helping Jagjit to overcome his problem. Tilo takes some money and give it to her African American friend, who is a regular customer of her spice shop that has the skill of karate. Tilo wants Jagjit to be taught karate so that he can defense himself from any kinds of bully. Also, Tilo wants Jagjit to be able to go through the highest and the lowest life in America.

D. Identity Conflict Dealt by the India Descents in America

Identity problem dealt by the India descents as described in the film is explicitly occurred to the three characters, Tilo, Geeta and Jagjit. Each of the characters can be analyzed of having the same conflict that is dealing with their identity of India descents that live in a modern multicultural country like America. Even Tilo, Geeta, and Jagjit have been living in America for a long period of time, the influence of their India root culture and tradition still remain within their scope of life. It is because India is rich in culture which has been shaped by its long history, unique geography demographics and the absorptions of customs, traditions and ideas. India also has diversity in its people, religions, climate, languages, customs, and traditions which differ from place to place within the country, but posses a commonality. Therefore, even in modern life and lifestyles, most Indian remains their values and beliefs which they receive from their culture.

As a result, such influence of the originality of culture has eventually triggered conflicts in the life of Tilo, Geeta, and Jagjit’s identity. The writer analyzes their identity as India descents in America because they have conflicts related to their root culture and tradition even though they have lived in America for a long period of time. It is because they could not get rid of their culture even though they live in a new culture such as the modern life of America. However, the conflicts they face are different which caused a dilemma to them. In analyzing the identity problem and how they deal with it, the writer uses the concept of identity.

As stated in theoretical framework in the previous chapter, the writer chose the concept of identity as well as other aspect related to identity problem that may found in the characters’ conflicts. The writer will give further explanation on how the characters deal with their identity based on the conflicts they undergo as below.

The first character Tilo who is confronted by a conflict with her First Mother and the magical power of her spices since she met with an American man named Doug. Tilo is afraid that she would lose the purity of her India culture and tradition as well as the magical power of her spices if she chose to be with the American man. When she realized that she fell in love with Doug, she started to break the rules that are forbidden to her. She remembers well all the rules that stop her from being affected or influenced by new culture that is American culture. The rules she obliged to obey are actually aimed to keep her from being easily affected by the new culture. In other words, she has to keep and maintain the purity of her Indian culture and tradition that has grown up in her.
In the beginning, Tilo is reflected through her identity as a pure Indian woman that can be seen through her physical appearance such as her clothes. For instance, she wears traditional Indian clothing like the saris\textsuperscript{36}. Tilo wears the saris every day before she starts her day in Spice Bazaar, which identified her identity as an India descent. In addition to that, Tilo’s identity can also be seen through the traditional jewelry she wears such as the Kachappuram. Kachappuram is a chain or belt of gold or silver is worn around the waist. Tilo wears kachappuram since she was a girl that shows a symbol of Indian tradition as well as the identity. Not just that, Tilo also performing her belief like doing the Pooja\textsuperscript{37} every morning before she opens her Spice Bazaar. Those are some of her identity of India descents that is reflected in the film.

Tilo’s conflict began when she accepted Doug’s request to go out with him to see the beauty scenery of San Francisco city and other places, while she was forbidden to get out from her Spice Bazaar. When she came back to her Spice Bazaar at night, her shop had been messed up and robbed. Her First Mother warned that she has gone too far and ordered her to come back to where she belongs since she has broken too many rules. Tilo was asked to stay away from Doug, the American man.

\textsuperscript{36} Saris are native to all of India and they have been worn for thousands of years. Saris come in every color and in several different materials. They are rectangular piece of cloth and most are about 6 yards in length. There some types of saris such as the embroidered one and plain one. They are worn with a matching blouse and petticoat. Saris are worn by young ladies and woman. Traditional ones are the hand woven saris. Nowadays, they are made from cotton, silk, or man-made materials. Retrieved from \url{http://www.pardesifashions.com/Sari/Default.aspx}. Accessed on 14 March, 2010.

\textsuperscript{37} Pooja is a religious ritual which some Hindus perform every morning after bathing and dressing but prior to taking any food or drink. Pooja is seen as a way of relating humans to the domain and actions of the divine, and can be performed for anything considered divine, from Vishnu to a holy tree. Retrieved from \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_India}. Accessed on 14 March, 2010.
and never to be seduced by him. It is because a mistress of spices is forbidden to fall in love. Tilo was also warned by Haroun, her regular customer who also a minority from Kashmir, about her change.

Based on her conflict, Tilo is seen dealing with her identity as a minority that lives within the majority of American people. Living as part of American people, she thinks that she needs to adapt with the new culture. However, she doesn’t mean to leave her identity as an Indian that rich in culture and tradition. It is because according to her fellow minority that she should never mingle with the majority community such as American people because afraid that she would be influenced by their modern culture which is oppositional to her India traditional culture. However, all Tilo wants is to follow her desire for love because she never intend to leave her culture and tradition.

The second is Geeta, who is described as the second generation that has conflict with her grandfather and her parents. Geeta’s conflict is triggered as a result of the influence of generational differences on identity. Geeta’s situation as the second generation is very common occurring among India descents especially those who come from Asian origins in the United States. As a result of generational differences in Asian American communities, it causes diversity of social and cultural issues. It also common with “generation gap” that occurs between children, parents, and grandparents that emerge because of age and time.

In general, the first generation is foreign born, and they enter the United States knowledgeable in the language and culture of their homeland. The second
generation, however, growing up in the United States, is less fluent in the parents’ native language and is more fluent in the English Language. Moreover, they may have conflicts with the culture and expectations of their parents, as the second generation is more familiar with the culture of the United States\textsuperscript{38}. This causes the “generation gap” between the first and second generations like in \textit{The Mistress of Spices}.

The “generation gap” is not a new phenomenon, but when it is considered with cultural gaps, the conflicts or issues that arise between children, parents, and grandparents change significantly. For Asian American families, age is not the only obstacle between generations. Social and political views that arise because of cultural differences also create generational barriers that contribute to the generation gap.

The cultural gaps between Asian American children and their parents mostly affect those children whose parents are first generation or immigrants. Because the parents have been socialized in Asia, their value systems may differ from their children who have been socialized in the United States. Their children have been raised under a different set of circumstances; they were exposed not only to their parents’ influence; but the influence of the media, school, peers, and community organizations.

These different settings influence the way Asian American youths view society, politics, and culture. For example, these children will mostly likely experience their parents speaking their ethnic language at home, eating ethnic foods,

\begin{footnote}
Mary Yu Danico, Franklin Ng., op cit, p.152.
\end{footnote}
and interacting with other Asian immigrants. They are also more likely to have parents who maintain connections to family and friends in their homeland.

In Geeta’s situation, she is seen dominantly embracing American culture instead of Indian culture. It is clearly expressed through the way she dressed, the language she used, and the way of life. The American culture has totally influenced her identity. It is because Geeta was born and grown up in America. Therefore, she has long been socialized with American people as well as its culture.

This situation is reflected through the conflict that Geeta faces between her parents and her Dadaji. What her parents and Dadaji experience about culture is different from the way Geeta experience. It is called “generation gap”. It can be shown in the situation where Dadaji complaint about Geeta’s clothes, socializes, and chooses love partner. Even though Geetha feels right about anything she does, her grandfather does not understand of what she is doing. Instead, her grandfather is always complaining which turn up into a conflict between him and Geetha. Such conflicts occurring due the problem of generational differences or “generation gap” are common among those Asian immigrants in the United States. It is mostly due to what Asian American youths observe and experience at home is a significant contrast from what they observe in the mainstream media and at school.

For Asian Americans, the cultural differences are what they define as “gap” that they experience at home and outside in the community and larger society significantly impact the relationships they have with their parents and grandparents. Many Asian American youths face communication barriers at home, such as
happened to Geetha who has conflict with her grandfather and her parents. Geetha has to decide whether to choose her love partner, a Chicano man or to accept an arranged marriage\footnote{Arranged marriage which has been a practice in India is seen as an act of love. The family (usually the parents) looks for certain traits in a marriage partner. Some desirable traits looked for in both male and female are: matching levels of education, matching cultures, close parental cities, matching religions, and so on. Usually, this turns into an interview process where photos are provided of the boy or girl in question along with bio-data about his or her life and family. If that meets with approval, arrangements will be made for the parents to meet the boy or girl and their family. Traditionally, however, the bride and groom would not even see each other until the day of their wedding. There is usually a small courtship period where the bride and groom can meet and talk under the careful watch of a guardian. Also, if either one of the two do not want the marriage, it is likely to be cancelled. Retrieved from: \url{http://www.pardesiservices.com/tradition/arrangedmarg.asp}. Accessed on 14 March, 2010.} that her grandfather had matched for her.

If her grandfather and parents force her to accept the arranged marriage, then she rather leave the house and live with her boyfriend because it is contrary to her wishes. Geetha feels she has the right to choose anyone she likes because she is grown up already. She also feels that she has been following her parents’ decision all the time and it is the time that she should decide something for her own life. This conflict causes Geetha to move away from her house and live with her Chicano boyfriend. Geetha decides to leave the house because her parents never understand her. For Asian Americans, this is what they define as “gap” because they are confronted with negotiating between two cultures and the age gaps that exist between the generations.

Meanwhile immigrant’s adults, usually the community and solidarity they experience with other immigrants help them to cope and adjust to a new environment that is often very foreign to them. Being able to speak their ethnic language and to
talk about the shared experiences helps them to solidify their ethnic identity. This applies to Dadaji, Tilo, and Haroun where these two characters reflect the solidarity between immigrants. For example, Dadaji always come to Tilo’s spice shop to buy some spices that he needs for his mental peace. Dadaji also often shares his experiences and stories about his problems at home especially about his every complaint to Geetha. Dadaji feels uncomfortable with Geetha’s appearance and her social life. Dadaji wants her grand daughter to be like a traditional Indian woman. He wishes Geetha to marry with an Indian man that he has matched for her through his old army friend in India. However, Geeta rejected it.

The same connection among immigrants is also reflected by Haroun towards Tilo. As a regular customer of Tilo’s spice shop, Haroun usually comes to her shop to share his stories. He also asks for her advices in anything he does. He shows great respect to Tilo and he even cares about Tilo. Sometimes he warns Tilo to take care of her and the store because of the place they live in is susceptible to criminal. Haroun acts towards Tilo shows how strong their bond is as immigrants that came to the United States for having much better life. This kind of bond is established to gain the sense of community with other immigrants. It commonly occurs in the larger society where there are large concentrations of Asian Americans. In places like California, Hawaii, and New York, where Asian American families have an opportunity to find
groceries that allow them to continue cooking ethnic foods, newspapers that keep in touch with events in Asia, and media that delivers the news in their ethnic language. While grandparents and parents or the first generation keep their sense of similarity of culture with other immigrants of the same generation, the children usually face a different set of obstacles that let bridging the gap between what they experience at home and what they face at school and in the mainstream media. Immigrant parents expect their children to behave like their parents, yet the children in the United States are faced with peer pressure and cultural pressures to fit in and assimilate.

The third character is Jagjit, a Punjabi boy. Jagjit is always bullied by his friends at school because of his turban. Jagjit shows his India descents identity through his traditional Punjabi attribute such as the turban he always wear on his head. His traditional Punjabi attribute caused him difficulty to assimilate with other students at school. Because of his turban, his friends called him “Osama” and treat him rudely. He is discriminated and has no friends. His identity has put a burden on him. As a consequence, he chooses to change his appearance by eliminating his turban off his head which makes him more comfortable around his friends than before. Not just shifting in appearance, Jagjit also change his name into Jag. Later after that, Jagjit has many friends.

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40 Ibid, p.151.
41 Turban is traditional clothing worn by most men in India. The hair turban is a headdress that basically consists of a long piece of unstitched cloth, which is wrapped around the head. Retrieved from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turban. Accessed on 14 March, 2010.
Jagjit’s conflict suggested that a boy like Jagjit is susceptible of having identity problem especially among Asian American. According to Mary Yu Danico and Franklin Ng in *Asian American Issues, Contemporary American Ethnic Issues*, in the United States, youths find that their social life is concentrated around their friends, and in public spaces, such as malls, cyber cafes, and movie theatres. Therefore, children’s social life is often unsupervised by their parents and self-monitored. Parents have limited interactions with their children’s daily activities, because their parents are busy in earning money for the family.

Therefore, Jagjit is actually negotiating with himself in search of his identity. Since he is unaccepted among his American friends so he decided to be like his fellow friends. However, he is actually choosing the wrong friends. He receives pressure from his own friends suggesting him to do criminal act such as forcing him to bring gunfire in his pocket to Tilo’s shop. At the end, Tilo suggested him to overcome his problem. Tilo asked him to learn karate so that he can defense himself from any kinds of threat.

Finally, after analyzing the three characters of Tilo, Geeta and Jagjit, the writer finds out that there are similarity with the problem they are facing, that is identity. They are India descents living permanently in the United States within a larger American community in a small town of San Francisco. Each of these characters can be identified their identity through the way they are reflected in the film. The conflicts they are dealing with derive from the root problem which related with their identity as India descents, creating such conflicts as elaborated above. Even
though they already show their identity, they feel the need to transform based on the environment they live. Each of them can oppose, negotiate or even accept the identity that they are comfortable with. Therefore, the writer concludes that ones identity is something that always transforms depend on the social and cultural environment ones lives, because sometimes ones has to absorb and to adapt the culture received from the environmental and social condition surrounding.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Indian immigrants’ story presented in the film of *The Mistress of Spices* directed by Paul Mayeda Berges is about what identity is and how these Indian immigrants deal with their identity with different conflicts they face as minority community in the United States. The life and conflict of Indian minority community presented in the film is part of the facts that occur among Indian immigrants in the United States. Such as presented in the film, there are three Indian descents from the first and the second generations of immigrant settle up their lives in a small town in San Francisco, America. Because of their Indian descent identity, they get certain obstacles that caused into a conflict in their life.

The film tells about how the three characters of Tilo, Geetha and Jagjit’s problem to choose the life they want to live in America just like others. Yet, they also have to consider the Indian culture and tradition that has passed on to them and to retain their identity as Indian descents in America. First, Tilo, who was born and grew up in India trying to adopt herself with American modern lifestyle which in fact has many differences with her Indian traditional culture. Therefore, she must confront the problem with her Indian identity and the environment she lives. She realizes that even she has to adapt with new culture, yet she could never leave her traditional culture. Therefore, she opposed the culture that she is not comfortable with.
Second, Geeta, who acts as the second generation of Indian immigrant. As the second generation, it is inevitable that Geeta has a “generation gap” with her grandparent and her parents. As a result, these two different generations often have cultural conflicts. Geeta who has spent most of her ages in America has been dominantly influenced with American culture. Meanwhile her grandparents and parents still embrace their homeland value systems. Therefore, Geeta is inflicted with dilemma when her grandparent decided to make an arranged marriage for her with an Indian man. Yet, Geeta rejects it and with rebellious, Geeta insists to leave the house if they cannot accept her own decision to be with the man she loves.

Third, Jagjit, a young Punjabi boy who gets obstacle to deal with the environment especially at school because of his Punjabi attire. At school, he gets peer pressure in which his friends keep on bullying him by mocking him as “Osama” due to his turban. As a consequence, he changed into a new identity like other American boy by changing his appearance and his name in order to be accepted by his school peers. Jagjit is shown negotiating with his identity. Even he has been accepted, he is unhappy with his new identity.

Through the three characters and their conflict with identity, it can be concluded that identity is actually something that able to transform depend on the social and cultural environment ones live in. It becomes an individual’s freedom of choice and the individual’s dependency to choose his or her true identity based on the social and cultural background. Afterall, there is ‘no fixed’ identity because everything is able to be ‘made’ and ‘remade’ again. In other words, as suggested in
Identity and Difference. Kathryn Woodward said that “Identities are fluid, having different elements which can be reconstructed in new cultural conditions, and that they are not fixed essences which are permanent for all time.”

B. Suggestion

In this thesis, the writer uses the concept of identity to analyze the film. The writer also analyzes three of the characters which involve in identity problem that creates conflicts within him or herself resulting to a dilemma. These three characters are explicitly shown as having the identity problem especially relating to cultural issues. Therefore, the conflicts they undergo can help the film viewers in understanding the story of the film. The writer also suggests the film viewers and other researchers to watch it carefully and repeatedly in order to understand the film. The concept of identity that the writer used for her analysis is the most suitable to apply in the film analysis. By using the concept of identity, it can prove the three characters having identity problem within the community when relating with their root culture. During analysis, the writer finds out that there are a lot of literatures can be read as references.

The writer also suggests this research able to get any literatures about minority community living within a larger community such as in this film in which Indian minority living in a modern multicultural country like America. A literature work that discusses about the problem they undergo especially dealing with identity.

42 Kathryn Woodward, Identity and Difference, op cit. p.26
Therefore we can understand more about what identity is and how to deal with identity based on the culture and tradition we embrace.
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