

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background, problems, objectives, the significance and the limitation of study.

1.1 Background

Gender is an organizing principle of social order that divides people into two main categories: "men" and "women". They are expected to be different and treated differently and often unequally, with men usually being more privileged. The social constructionist perspective explains variations in gender differences across cultures and historically through social processes. Gender behaviors and practices, according to social constructionists, arise from group norms and expectations, institutionalized patterns of social interaction, organizational policies, and legal and bureaucratic rules and regulations (Lorber, 2018).

Gender is a social construct through which individuals relate to their social environment. Gender creates a divide which mostly is dictated by one's sexuality and in effect, one's inheritance of the genitalia. In effect, these directly or indirectly create social roles and behavioral patterns which are assessed and accepted in society based on one's gender orientation. Thus every society has defined gender roles and social conducts expected of the two traditional genders that make up the society. However, with the emergence of the feminist movement which is geared towards of the society, masculinity has since been subjected to a crisis of model and form (Ebekue, 2019).

The social construction of gender dictates the masculine and feminine roles deemed appropriate within a society. Society has traditionally socially constructed

women to be mothers and the primary parent, leaving fathers much too often on the sidelines of parenthood. For example, if a parent is a man, they have fewer rights than a parent who is a woman (Amato, 2018).

Individual definitely is the basic component of society. The interaction of an individual to each other creates a group. Moreover, the social groups interact to others and develop their relationships that come into a society. According to Hodkinson (2017), society has a large meaning that refers to the whole social world where people, as a relatively big group of community, institutions live, exist and move. It basically involves social relations that include the detail of daily interactions, communication and the operation of broader social groupings and social differentiation, such as gender, class, ethnicity and age (Pardede & Neisyaa, 2022).

Feminism as a social movement has the main goal of gender equality. Gender is an important analytical tool to see the position in the social structure of society. Talking about gender is incomplete if it does not talk about the stereotypes that follow it. Stereotypes are known as marking or labeling a person or a group based only on the perception of a particular group. Stereotypes are always detrimental and cause discrimination (Neisyaa & Aprilia, 2020).

The traditional roles of men and women are defined to ensure the power of the head of family. Historically, the head of family has always been male. In society, men tend to be the head of family with the highest status; they are strong, brave, and dominating. Leadership, heterosexuality, and authority are demanded from men, according to Hodges and Budig In (Yenti & Neisyaa, 2020).

Related to the topic of Asian males, the men are often considered a good catch because the stereotypes there assume that Asians are well-educated, hardworking, stable, and property or business owners. Masculinities in social constructions refer to the social roles, behaviors, and meanings prescribed for men in any given society at any one time. The above stereotypes are similar to the ones about Asians in the United States (Chang, 2019).

Consequently, the representation of masculinity should be seen as having a double nature: on the one hand, they reveal a form of masculinity that already exist. In culture, but on the other hand, the construction of masculinity that they depict in culture. Conversely, a representation might describe a critique. In both cases, however, the model of masculinity exists in a back-and-forth relationship with culture (Reeser, 2020).

Thus, social constructionism helps view masculinity as a social process that changes depending on a man's interactions and cultural environment. Social constructionists look past biological differences and reproductive anatomy, and instead consider how men are social beings that use symbols and practices to establish themselves as group members (Hagerdorn, 2019).

One of the novels that captured this cultural phenomenon is *Interior Chinatown*. In this novel have phenomena of masculinity or social construction related to the topic of this research. The novel *Interior Chinatown* delves into the experiences and struggles of Asian Americans, particularly focusing on issues of cultural identity and assimilation. Researching this novel allows for an in-depth analysis of the complexities and nuances of the Asian American experience, including topics such as

racial stereotypes, cultural expectations, and the search for belonging. By studying the novel, you can explore how Yu's portrayal of characters and their interactions sheds light on the challenges faced by Asian Americans in navigating their cultural heritage within a predominantly white society (Tan, 2020).

Many literary works raise the issue of masculinity especially on male social construction. The data of this research will be classified based on *Burr's* (2018) theory that the literature surrounding masculinity as a social construction will consider how race, media, and pornography shape men perform masculinity by using social constructionist theory to analyze masculinity and examine how men construct manhood. The literature surrounding masculinity as a social construction explores the ways in which societal norms, expectations, and beliefs shape the concept of masculinity. It recognizes that masculinity is not an inherent or fixed trait but rather a social construct that varies across cultures and historical periods, which analyses the social construction experienced by the main character in the novel, Willis Wu.

The topic of masculinity or male social constructions is academically interesting because it allows for an exploration of how gender norms are formed, how they impact individuals well-being, how they intersect with other social categories, and how they can be redefined to promote equality and social change. The study of masculinity and male social constructions has gained significant attention recently as scholars, psychologists, and sociologists aim to understand how these constructs shape men's experiences, behaviors, and identities.

The researcher found several previous studies that used some issues. Omar (2011) investigated masculinity, entitled "Masculinity and the Acceptance of

Violence: a study of social constructions." This study aimed to empirically measure masculinity and its relationship to the perception of violence. Moreover, Swain (2001) also investigated masculinity with the entitled "An ethnographic study into the constructions of masculinity of 10-11 years old boys in three junior schools". This study investigated the masculinity construction of 10-11 years old boys at school. In another research, Masduqi (2021) investigated "Taiwanese American discrimination in Charles Yu's novel Interior Chinatown." This study focused on Taiwanese American discrimination in the Interior Chinatown novel by Charles Yu. The results of this study are the forms of discrimination against Taiwanese Americans in the novel Interior Chinatown consist of two types, namely direct discrimination and indirect discrimination. The causes of Taiwanese American discrimination in the novel Interior Chinatown consist of two factors, they are stereotypes and prejudice.

All of the research above shows that the topic of masculinity or male social constructions is very interesting because it shows the complex and ever-evolving nature of gender roles and societal expectations placed on men. The study of masculinity and male social constructions has gained significant attention recently as scholars, psychologists, and sociologists aim to understand how these constructs shape men's experiences, behaviors, and identities. However, there is still not yet research on the novel Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu using Burr's theory. Therefore, the researcher is interested in investigating "Male Social Constructions in the Novel Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu".

1.2 Problems of the Study

The problems of the study are formulated in the following questions:

1. What are the Asian Guy social constructions portrayed in the character Willis Wu in the novel Interior Chinatown?
2. How do social constructions impact Willis Wu's personality or character in the novel Interior Chinatown?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem of the study, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out and analyze the Asian Guy Social Constructions portrayed in character Willis Wu in the novel Interior Chinatown.
2. To analyze how the social constructions impact Willis Wu's personality of the character in the novel Interior Chinatown.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1. Theoretically, this research will be helpful to contribute in enriching literary research, especially in the field of male social constructions that are mostly found the literary work.
2. Practically, this research will be helpful for the readers of the novel Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu as a source of knowledge. This research is also beneficial for finding the form of Asian Guy Social Constructions. More importantly, the researcher wants to convey the issues of social Construction of Asian guy, Asian America Families and immigration.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Based on the novel *Interior Chinatown* in this research, the researcher focuses on male social constructions portrayed in the character Willis Wu in the novel *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu based on Burr's theory (2018).