

YOUNG JU'S HYBRID IDENTITY IN AN NA'S *A STEP FROM HEAVEN*

(Identitas Hibrid Young Ju dalam Novel *A Step from Heaven* Karya An Na)

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Abstract

This study discusses hybrid identity problem experienced by the main character, Young Ju, in *A Step from Heaven*. As a diasporic subject, she has to face some problems related to her identity. Her effort to survive among the differences of two different cultures (South Korea/eastern and America/western) is the main problem this study. Besides, the violence of her father becomes a barrier to her adaptation process in the new environment. For that reason, the problems are analyzed in this study using theory of hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha. The result of this study shows that to survive in a place with many differences especially it has relation to identity and culture, Young Ju needs to adopt some cultures that consider can give advantage in order to survive without losing the old culture. Then, this process leads her to be hybrid subject. By having the hybrid identity, it means that her hard work to accustom with the host society is running smoothly.

Keywords : Culture differences, Diaspora, Hybridity.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang masalah hibriditas identitas yang dialami oleh karakter utama Young Ju dalam *A Step from Heaven*. Sebagai seorang subjek diasporik, dia harus menghadapi masalah-masalah yang berhubungan dengan identitas. Usahanya untuk berjuang diantara perbedaan-perbedaan dari dua budaya yang berbeda (Korea Selatan/Timur dan USA/Barat) adalah permasalahan utama di penelitian ini. Di samping itu, kekerasan dari ayahnya menjadi sebuah penghalang dalam proses adaptasinya di lingkungan baru. Dengan alasan tersebut, permasalahan tersebut dianalisa menggunakan teori hybrid dari Homi K. Bhabha. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa untuk bertahan hidup di tempat dengan berbagai perbedaan terutama yang menyangkut identitas dan kebudayaan, Young Ju perlu untuk mengadopsi beberapa unsur kebudayaan yang dianggap menguntungkan dalam rangka untuk bertahan tanpa kehilangan budayanya sendiri. Kemudian, proses ini menuntunnya menjadi subjek hibrid. Dengan memiliki identitas hibrid, ini berarti kerja kerasnya untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan masyarakat berjalan dengan lancar.

Kata Kunci : Perbedaan Budaya, Diaspora, Hibriditas.

1. Introduction

A Step from Heaven tells about a four year old girl named Young Ju who moves from South Korea to the United States in order to get better life. She is so excited to hear about this place because her parents describe as a paradise. After she arrives in the United States, she realizes that it is not the heaven she expected.

The novel focuses on Young Ju and her family's life in a new place. She must adapt with her new environment. Besides, she also faces abusive father. She got slapped for crying when she forced curled her hair in American way or when she hated drinking coco cola. She does not understand what the problems she deals with: struggling to learn a new language,

financial problems that her families face, and her father's escalating anger.

A Step from Heaven tells about Young Ju sees the United States from her perspective, a tiny kid four years old. She is throwing into American culture and forced to learn and love it. It's so hard for a little girl like Young Ju. The story tells the voice of little Korean girl from childhood to adulthood. It takes time for her to adapt a new culture and new environment. Most immigrants experience same problems. They move to America in order to get better life and they also struggle to survive with some difficulties such as Young Ju experience.

Based on the brief explanation, I assume that Young Ju experiences hybrid identity after she moves

to the United States of America. She struggles to survive to change her life to get better than before. She learns a new language and her attempts to adapt with the host society's culture

Hybridity is one aspect of postcolonial conditions. Ania Loomba states that hybridity is a strategy premised on cultural purity, and aimed at stabilizing that *status quo* (1998: 173). Hybridity is a new product as a result of combination of two different cultures. In this case, Young Ju as the main character tries to adopt American culture/West culture that contrary with her original culture, Korean/East culture. It is a strategy for diasporic subject, like Young Ju, to survive in the midst of dominant subject that still regard as the others. In order to survive in a new land, she needs to learn many things in there. She learns their language, their culture, their style, and many more. If she does not do that, she can't live in the new environment unless she adapts first.

Ones who want to achieve hybridity have to go through some stages and it takes times. They can't achieve it in a short time. It is proven in Young Ju's case. She struggles to live in the new environment. She must adapt new people, new place, new language and even new culture. This did not only happen to her, but also to the other immigrants, either they come from Korea or not. Most immigrants have the same difficulties and have to go through the same process to be accepted in the United States.

Based on discussion above, theory of hybridity from Bhabha's perspective is suitable to use in this research to analyze Young Ju experiences during her time in the United States in *A Step from Heaven*. Theory of hybridity from Bhabha (1994) has close relation with my research that discusses about family of immigrant life moves from one place to another, in this case from South Korea to the United States. Then, the reason why I choose this novel because the main character, Young Ju struggles to achieve hybrid identity as a strategy to make her efforts easier when she faces many problems in the host society. She becomes one of example of most immigrants that have same experience.

2. Research Methodology

This research can be categorized into a qualitative research. Qualitative research analyzes any of information from written description or text. Then library research is needed in order to collect data. Another source to collect more data taken from

journals, books, a novel, and article and any kind of written from related to the topic.

The data in this research are collected based on documentary method. Blaxter (2006:154) states "Documentary data collection uses written material as a basic of research." It means that the sources of the data in this research are taken from the written material. The data are divided into two types: primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected from *A Step from Heaven* novel by An Na. And the secondary data are taken from any kind of the books, interviews, articles, or internet that related with postcolonial studies, hybridity and *A Step from Heaven*.

This is the stage where the data taken from some primary and secondary sources are obtained and categorized. The writer can choose whether the data are important or not. If the data are not considered necessary, we can remove it. It gives benefit to the writer because it can make better understanding and can make analyzing easier. And also the explanation will be clearer and simpler.

This research uses inductive method in analyzing the data. Therefore, the discussion goes from the specific to the general, from particular to a whole group of idea or situations. First of all, I have to do is close reading. I need to read repeatedly the novel to get better understanding. The next step is obtaining some supported data and categorized it. After that, I analyze the data to answer the research questions. The first thing I have to do is analyzing the selected data that have obtained and categorized using certain theory, in this case I use Homi K. Bhabha's theory about hybridity. The first analysis is concerning main character in novel. The analysis focuses on every problem she faces using Bhabha's theory. The analysis started when Young Ju just moved to United States, but she feels unhomey. She feels it is not like she imagined before. Here, we need to explain clearly about what exactly happened to main character during her period after she moved to United States. And also explain the process of main character to adapt with her new environment. The progress how far is she can survive in the host country.

The next analyzing is to answer the second research question. It discusses about the life of diaspora group in the United States, especially around 2000s. I need to analyze it in order to know the background of American society in that era. Furthermore, this analysis also proves that there is a

relation between diaspora group's life in the novel and the real life.

The next analyzing is to reveal critical position of the author of *A Step from Heaven*. I analyze critical position of the author data that taken some interviews from internet and some information that related to the author. Here, I also try to find out the connection between the experiences of the author while she lived in the United States as immigrant with the discourse of hybridity in the novel. Thus, we will find out and understand more about the critical position of the author.

The last step of analysis is making conclusion. The conclusion contains brief explanation of the result of discussion and brief answer of the research questions based on the theoretical framework.

3. Result of Analysis

The whole of this discussion conducted in this study uses theory of hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha. The result of this study shows that the problem experienced by Young Ju represents of most immigrants who lived outside their country. Learning the host culture is the way for them to survive and to be accepted by the society. Acting like the American is necessary to do to make Young Ju avoid remembering her past and the longing for home. However, she intentionally maintains her own culture as reminder that she never becomes part of the American society completely. In this way, she is able to acquire a double identity, it is partial Korea and partial America. Having the hybrid identity is a sign that she is successful through the problems that she face in her mission to live peacefully.

4. Discussion

American dream becomes the main reason why many immigrants want to start a new life in there. Based on James Truslow Adams, in his book *The Epic of America*, stated that "the American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement." People come to the United States have same opportunity to achieve American Dream, to reach their goals. This also happens to the immigrants from South Korea, including Young Ju. Furthermore, Palludan Philip in his book, *Issues Past and Present*, defines that "American Dream means a dream that had come true for many people (1978:3). The term American Dream seems to influence many people to come to American

land because they thought the chance to bring their dreams into reality widely open. The better economic condition becomes one reason why Young Ju and her family have to move to the United States.

"Apa says that in Mi Gook everyone can make lots of money even if they did not go to an important school in the city. Uhmma says all the uhmmas in Mi Gook are pretty like dolls. And they live in big houses. Much bigger than the rich fish factory man's house in the village." (Na, 2001:5)

From quotation above, it can be concluded that moving to the Mi Gook; the term is used by Korean people to call the United States, can make economic advancement for the family. At least this is what Young Ju's father believed by moving to the United States. Becoming a rich man will be easier if they live in there, even richer than people they have ever known before. "In Mi Gook, you can grow up to be anything what you want" (Na, 2001:11). Not only her father, Ju's mother has the same perception about their decision come to the United States. Being American is the fastest way to make all their dreams become reality. They can make the advancement of life not only from economic aspect but also from social and education aspect.

The dream of the immigrants has never completed if they keep staying in their homeland. This statement has a connection with their background coming to American country. Young Ju as one of the immigrants realizes when she is living in the United States. However, to pursuit her dream, Young Ju faces some problems that experienced by most immigrants in everywhere.

"Who is that girl? She cannot be me. Her hair is too big. It stands up big as a bush, just like the hair of the toy man with the rainbow face. Uhmma did not tell me this was curly hair. She said it would look like the sea. But it does not. I am a Mi Gook girl with big ugly toy-man hair." (Na, 2001:13)

The problem even comes before Young Ju arrives in Mi Gook, or as known as the United States. Her mother changes her appearance just like most American girl with curly hair. She does not know what curly hair is yet, all she knows that she does not look like herself. She feels like become someone else with so weird appearance. The way Young Ju's mother makes over her hair actually as the sign she is applying mimicry process. Mimicry is the stage that is

used by someone to imitate some cultures. The process of imitating new culture does not make someone lose her own culture immediately (Bhabha, 1998: 85ff). On the contrary, she will maintain her culture no matter what happened because she considered it as a thing that she has to keep safe. Still, it is the process where the subject copying the dominant cultures to get some advantages to making his way easier to be having hybridity. However, the subject does not fully copy it, but he just copying which is the culture can benefit him. After having hybridity, his effort to be accepted by the society will be easier. Even though mimicry is the process adopting a new culture, but the subject still maintain his own culture as his real identity. So, the subject can recognize who truly he is. Moreover, this situation also represents as a foreshadowing of how foreign she'll be then once she lives in there. Yet, she can't avoid the fact that she decided to leave her homeland no matter what happen to her appearance.

However, when Young Ju finally moves to the United States, she did not find what she expected before. Mi Gook is not the heaven after all. She disappointed about this fact. If this is not heaven, it means that she will never find Harabugi, the term grandfather for Korean. Instead, she gets other difficulties, such as about the drink.

“Here, try this drink. Everyone in Mi Gook loves Ko-ka Ko-la. They drink it like water. You will love it too.”

“I put the cup to my mouth and take a small taste. Ahya! It hurts. This drink bites the inside of my mouth and throat like swallowing tiny fish bones. Maybe this what Mi Gook people love? I want to push the drink away, but I cannot show bad manners.” (Na, 2001:20)

This condition represents how Young Ju is feeling uncomfortable because of the drink. Before she drinks it, Young Ju thinks there is something wrong with the Coca-Cola. It is different from the drink she has ever known before. It has a dark color and expels bubbles. She really does not understand why the American loves it so much. She also says that the taste is awful. She describes like her mouth and her throat full of tiny fish bones. It makes her suffer and does not want to drink it. This indicates that Young Ju and the local people have different estimation in the taste of Ko-ka Ko-la. Young Ju prefers to choose another drink than the favorite drink of the American.

Feeling different is the common problem that experienced by the diasporic subjects who leaves their native country for living in another place. This

condition happens because they feel some differences in many ways. Not only the language that used for communication, but also in appearance, environment, the style of life or culture. According to Bhabha (1994:9), it is called the unhomely feeling. Bhabha added that the state of the unhomeliness is not a state of lacking home or the opposite of having a home is rather the feeling of unbelonging. It means that the diasporic subjects feel alienated, they are not considered as part of the local society where they currently living now.

The language is the most common problem of the immigrants' encounters after moving from their native country. And the language can be a serious matter depends on what the background of the immigrants is. For immigrants who have the background with better education, it is not a serious problem after all. However, some of them have a lack of education. Despitefully, education is not the main reason why they leave their native land. They leave their place where they were born for various reasons, such as economic factor, politic factor, marriage, or unstable condition of their country make them decided to go out from there.

“Sometimes Amanda says things I do not understand. Yesterday she told me that she and her parents went apple picking and they had doughnuts and hot cider. "I love cider," Amanda said. "Don't you?" (Na, 2001:46)

“I nodded and said yes, even though I did not know what cider was...”(Na, 2001:46)

Young Ju seems to experience a big problem, language. As a young girl, her mistakes in pronouncing the language that she has not ever known can be tolerated. But, as an immigrant, her broken English may be able to lead her into some problems in future. It means that this is not a good situation for Young Ju as an immigrant if she keeps speaking with her hardly understandable language. She must learn and master it as one condition if she wants to survive. Therefore, she can show her existence in the midst of domination of local society's culture in the United States with adapt their culture so that she seems like the real American even though it is never complete.

The hard life of Young Ju during her times in the United States is not only because of her attempt to adapt to her new life, but also the problems from her family. After moving to America, her family starts falling apart. Her father becomes someone that she totally does not recognize. It is the effect how hard the

life he gets after moving. It is far from his expectation. He is getting crazy and he wreaks his disappointment to Young Ju and her mother. Apa hits Young Ju's mother for an unclear reason while he gets drunk. This moment makes Young Ju feel sad. Young Ju is the immigrant who has very complicated problems. She has to struggle to adjust to the new environment and learn some new culture. At the same time, she has to face her abusive father and also protect her family from the brutish father. All those problems make her become a strong girl, as strong as a man.

‘‘I do not see Apa's hand. It is too fast. I only hear the slap, loud as breaking glass. I bite my bottom lip. Hard. I cannot cry. It will only make it worse. I close my eyes and start to pray, Please, God, please make everything better. What did I say, Apa yells. Slap. I open my eyes and look at Uhmma. She covers her lips with her hand. A little blood comes out from between her fingers. My tears are falling onto my knees. I hold my breath so I will not cry out.’’ (Na, 2001:29)

These quotations above represent the incident that happens to Young Ju and her mother. It shows how Apa treats them so rudely. He does not like when Young Ju or her mother protest his order. He wants them to follow everything he said. If they disagree or refuse, they will get a slap or hit. Apa as a father and patriarch does not give a good example for his children. He even hit Young Ju's mother in front of Young Ju's eyes.

Being different is common things experienced by someone who is living in diaspora like Young Ju. She realizes that after she encounters some difficulties in her times in the United States. She knows that it does not only happen to her, but also to her mother, her father and the other immigrants everywhere they are currently living. Young Ju understands that she will suffer from feeling unhomey and she will be haunted by her past. She trapped in two cultures. It means that she is experiencing in-betweenness situation. It becomes the common problem since the diaspora subject decides to leave their homeland. This is the first stage that experienced by diaspora subject in order to survive. Young Ju must follow the local culture which different from her own culture. She needs to adapt and learn some new cultures to make easier step to achieving hybrid identity as a survival strategy to live in the host country. If she wants to live peacefully, she has to do her best to adapt some cultures and act like American without losing her own culture.

The matter of language becomes the most common problem for the immigrants. Uhmma, Young Ju's mother is one of those immigrants that trying her fortune in another country. Along with Young Ju and Apa, they try to find peace place for the future outside their homeland. However, it is not easy to undergo. As the immigrants, their English is not too good. It caused some problems that they have to go through if they want to blend with the society.

‘‘Uhmma and Grill Woman spoke in a language of mixed and chopped Korean and Japanese, glued together with pieces of English.’’ (Na, 2001:56)

"No, scratch chiisai"... Uhmma was quick to laugh at all of her friend's words. Her squeaky-shoes laugh was back and her face shone bright as a full moon on cold, clear nights. Sometimes when she was speaking fast, she put her cup down and her hands waved and danced in the steamy air. This was a different Uhmma. Not a sad, tired Uhmma who cooked and cleaned and sometimes yelled, but a stranger who had a friend and a secret language all her own. Not my Uhmma. A Suna.’’ (Na, 2001:57)

The quotation shows how the way Young Ju's mother communicate with others. She realizes that her English is not good. She just knows some words in English. She finds some difficulties when she has to speak with people around her. However, Young Ju's mother finds solution to cover her lack of English. When she speaks with her friends, for example, she uses Korean language and sometimes blends it with the words from English language that she knows. This is the way she anticipates when she can't find the right word to convey meaning in foreign language. At first, this difficulty may make her suffer. But she finally finds pleasure while she is speaking English. She looks to enjoy it as she acts like the real American with her good English.

Mixing between Korean and English can give benefits for Uhmma, she can learn new culture without losing her own culture, in this case, the language. She can adopt the culture from the dominant society and keep still maintain what she had. It becomes a sign that following the dominant culture is the easiest way to adjust with new environment.

Maintaining the original culture is important thing for the immigrants who want to adopt new culture without considering wherever they live. The

aim of maintaining the original culture as reminder who they are and where they come from. The culture is also as the evidence that the immigrants have their own identity. Even though they live in the host country, they still maintain the culture as the way of mocking over the dominant culture. They just copy some culture that giving them benefit in order to survive in the midst of society.

The process of imitating the dominant culture is strategy that is used by the immigrants like Young Ju if she wants to survive in her new place. She undergoes her life in the United States by learning the behavior of people around her. She learns very hard to speak English. She knows her English is not good enough. She determines to repair her language so that she can speak properly. Thus, her effort to blend with new environment becomes easier than before.

Having a friend is the evidence that Young Ju's adaptation with the new environment is going well. Amanda is the American girl that she considers as her best friends. She spends most times with Amanda. But, this relationship gets her in conflict. Young Ju's parents do not like Amanda. They asked Young Ju not to be friend with her.

“I can't see Amanda? My only friend. The only person who lets me ask questions and be someone other than a good Korean daughter. The thought of not seeing Amanda makes me so angry I can barely hold on my corner of the carpet.” (Na, 2001:103)

“You are becoming too American. That girl is worthless Apa says. No, I argue quietly. She is not.” (Na, 2001:104)

The sign of immigrants' success in doing adaptation can be seen when they all can blend with new people around. The immigrants who could adjust with the circumstance and imitating the behavior of local citizen are the ones who went through some difficulties in their life outside the old country. The faster they adapt to the environment, the less they will feel suffer because of disparity.

“After all the department awards have been handed out, they go to the GPA awards. one person in every class with the highest grade point average receives a certificate. The ninth grade GPA award goes to Youngpark.” (Na, 2001:112)

Young Ju is one diasporic subject who is living in the United States. As diasporic subject, she needs to adjust with the condition which absolutely different

with the place where she lived. Good for Young Ju, she did well as young girl. She can adjust to the new environment although at the beginning the problems that she faced make her suffer. The GPA award is the evidence that her hard work to get accustomed with her new place for staying is going well. Getting a predicate as the student with the highest grade point average is not easy for someone like Young Ju where she is an n immigrant with broken English. However, Young Ju proved she could pass through all problems that she got when she is living in the United States. Furthermore, it shows that she applied what she got in her life. It can be said she is successful achieving hybrid identity as a survival tool in the host society.

Having hybridity is key term for any immigrants who continue their life in another country. By having hybrid identity, they can be accepted by the society. It means that they can find peacefully in living. In other words, their dreams that they pursuit by moving to another country can be reached.

Korean diaspora group is one of the largest diaspora groups who are living in the United States. It becomes the second destination for the immigrants from Korea after China country. Furthermore, Korea immigrants are the fifth largest Asian Diaspora group which dominates in the United States after Chinese, Filipino, Indian, and Vietnamese. The Korean population is estimated about 1.8 million or 0.6% of the United States population. The factor that makes them came to the United States was famine that occurred in Korea. The immigrants come to the United States for various reasons. Commonly, they look for an opportunity to create their dreams. Indeed, they realize that if they keep staying in their old country, they will never change the condition in their life getting better. Because of that, many of them decided to leave their homeland for the better life in the future. Moreover, the condition of the country where they were born becomes the push factor to come out from there (Min, 2011:2).

A Step from the Heaven shows that living in the United States is not easy. Young Ju as a girl who moved to the United States knows this very well. As the immigrant, she proved what most people think about America as promised land is totally not fully true. Many people move to “the promise land” because they think it is easy to undergo. Many people get influenced by “American dream”. Many immigrants come to the United States because of this reason. They believe that the American Dream is the way out for who's failed to attain their dream in its country. American Dream itself had emerged around the immigrants who came to America in the 17th Century.

By living in the United States, it will lead them to get the improvement of life, or in other words, their problem such as political aspect, economic aspect or another aspect can be solved. However, this happens to depend on how hard their struggle to make it. So, there is no guarantee if moving to the United States their life getting better.

All immigrants around the world have the same feeling when they are living outside their own country. Sometimes they feel homesick about the past. This is common phenomena for diaspora subject. Their memory of the past is part of their life. It cannot be separated from them because between their past and their soul is related each other. Their experience in the past life interference creates as what they are right now. Thus, they cannot forget about it easily. For all that reason, the diaspora subject keeps maintaining the things that remind about it. It gives them a chance to recreate feeling nostalgia and also for the cure of their homesick of home.

An Na, The author of Young Adult book *A Step from Heaven* was born in South Korea in 1972. In the age of four, she has moved to the United States. She grew up in San Diego, California and got a title as Bachelor of Arts from Amherst College. Her first novel becomes the Finalist National Book Award and won the Michael J. Printz Award in 2002 from American Library Association. Before starting her career as writer, she was a former in middle school English and History teacher. Beside *A Step from Heaven*, she has written another book, *Wait for Me* (2006), and *The Fold* (2008).

Literary work can't be separated from the author herself. More or less the experience or the feeling of the author can be found in there. For example, An Na writes the story based on what she experienced. She writes the story by remembering of her memories when she was young age. The novel tells that before leaving her country, Young Ju changed her hair into curly. This also happened to the author. However, not all the events in the novel are reflection of the events that experienced by the author itself. For some events, there is a little difference between An Na and the character Young Ju. For instance, An Na said that she has many friends when she was living in the United States from her activity in church. But, Young Ju shows the opposite. She only has one friend, Amanda, even though she does not completely trust her. Then, Young Ju and An Na grow up in distinct family's condition. Young Ju with inharmonious family because of her abusive father while An Na lives with her stern and very traditional father but still did well and can adjust with the circumstance. It shows that

even though the story based on the author's experience, it does not mean the whole of the story talk about her life.

Dealing with the fact that there are many differences that she found, it forced her to copy the culture from American to survive and make her dream keep alive. By copying the host culture, it means that Young Ju is doing assimilation between her Korean cultures with American. She determined to learn American ways of life so that her adaptation with the environment becomes easier.

Learning the host's culture is needed if the immigrants want to survive. As one of the immigrant, the author commits the same thing. In same time, she wants to maintain her culture. It is hard thing to do if the immigrants are living outside their motherland without getting influenced by American culture. As Bhabha says that there is no culture that can maintain without any change (1994:126). The effort to imitate and maintain two different cultures exist in the novel. It is explained that some characters in the novel have to struggle to take care their culture while they are also learning new culture. For example, Gomo is one character that has difficulty if she wants to speak Korean because her husband asks her to use English all the time. In this case, she considers that practicing speak her own language is important thing to do, so she often visits Young Ju's house so that she can speak Korean that she cannot do it in hers. Of course, the strong desire of the immigrants to maintain their culture and to survive with hope realizing their dream becomes the motivation living in betweenness, stuck in two cultures. This condition gives them opportunity to blend into the midst of dominant society and certainly lead them having double identity which is they use to show that they can survive among any differences.

5. Conclusion

The life of Young Ju as an immigrant in the United States who tries hard to survive for advancement of life. First, the unhomey feeling is a problem that she has to face after leaving her country. This feeling exists as the effect of some differences. South Korea as Young Ju's homeland certainly has different values and cultures with the country where she is living now, the United States. She has to struggle harder to adapt with new environment. Too many differences make Young Ju feels that she does not belong to place she lives in. It creates the memory of the past and the longing of her past life. Learning and trying to imitate everything about the host cultures is the one and only way to survive. It means she will

act like the real American such as how the way they talk, how their appearance, what the food they love and much more. But, in doing this process, Young Ju still maintain her cultures as her identity and as a reminder who really she is. Then, it is also as mockery over the domination culture. by doing mimicry process, it will lead her to have a hybrid identity. It is used as a strategy to survive and to be accepted by the host society. Having the hybrid identity means Young Ju succeed through the problems that she faces in order to keep survive among the differences.

Besides the problem because of the differences, Young JU as the main character has another problem. She has to face her abusive father who treats her so bad. Apa's brutality is not only in physical but also in psychologist matter. her father also dislike if Young Ju having a friend with any American such as Amanda. In his perspective, American girl like Amanda just only gives bad influence to Young Ju without considering the benefits the Young Ju can get from this friendship. Young Ju's father refuses to accept the culture of American people which makes his adaptation process unsuccessful. His stereotype about American's culture as gives a barrier to the Young Ju's adaptation process. This is why it can be said that Young Ju is the immigrant with very complicated problems.

A Step from Heaven also describes the life of Korean diaspora group in the United States through some characters inside. As most common immigrants from other countries, Korean immigrant also sees the America as the perfect destination to continue their life. Korea immigrants become one of the largest Diaspora groups which dominated the United States. Some events in the novel represent what actually happened in real life that experienced by many immigrants. An Na as the writer gives description about the real condition of Korean immigrant mostly based on her own experience, even though not all moment experienced by her, or it can be said as the portrays of immigrant life in the United States. Through the main character, she also shares her life while in the United States. An NA and Young Ju have similarity in some cases. Both moved to when they were young. Either An Na or Young Ju left Korean because of economic reason. It also becomes the dominant issues among Korean immigrant. An Na also gives the illustration through Young Ju's character how hard the life of immigrants to change their life. Specifically, she describes how Young Ju experienced being unhomeliness and then doing mimicry process to copy some cultures without losing her own culture. Finally, she finds out that having double culture or having a hybrid identity is the best strategy to survive in the

midst of the dominant society and to be accepted by them.

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