CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Human beings do not live in the world with nothing. They have something to be followed as their principle to behave, it is tradition and something that they will always live with, that is culture. Humans live together with all of these and they cannot live out from these two things. Mostly, humans’ tradition and culture are based on the country where they live. The tradition and culture are brought by the ancestors to be inherited continuously from generation to generation. The elders believe that tradition and culture are worthy values that have to be kept and to be taught in their ancestry so they will not vanish but keep growing and remain in their ancestry’s life forever. They also believe that tradition and culture are good things to be followed and will bring something good in life.

Tradition and culture certainly are valuable treasures that are inherited from ancestors but they do bring obstacles especially for women. Most of tradition and culture exists not to support women but require them to fight for their rights. In other words, tradition and culture do not affect anything for men but they do affect women. They do not give contribution for women to stand up against their rights. The portrayal of this issue can be found in a short story entitled *A Pair of Jeans* and *Everyday Use* that will be analyzed in this research paper. These two short stories are going to be compared to reveal the issues that I am concerned about.

*A Pair of Jeans* is a 1988 short story written by Qaisra Sharaz, a Pakistani who lives in UK. Qaisra Shahraz was born in Pakistan and raised in England. She has lived in Manchester since age nine. Her aspiration to become a writer developed in her early teens. Shahraz says she writes mainly to entertain and explore women’s issues. She writes mainly about Muslim women living in western societies, exploring the challenges and problems they face. She writes about the cultural conflict between the Pakistani origins of the protagonist and the Western way of life that she is living in Britain. Miriam, the protagonist, is a young Pakistani woman who studies at a British college. One day she meets her future parents-in-law at home, dressed in a
Western style, with a pair of jeans a short top and a leather jacket. The very conservative Pakistani in-laws are shocked and want to break their son's engagement with Miriam.

*Everyday Use* is a short story written by Alicia Walker and was first published in 1973 as part of Walker's short story collection, *In Love and Trouble*. She is an African-American novelist, short-story writer, poet, essayist, and activist who was born in Eatonton, Georgia. Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" is a short story about the conflict multi-generational families have with understanding the importance of identity and ancestry. The story centers on the relationship between a mother and her two daughters and the conflict that ensues between daughters and between a mother and a daughter. The story begins in the South during the 1960's. It takes place in Maggie, and her mother's home. When Dee, Maggie's older sister, comes to visit with her boyfriend the family learns that she has changed her name to Wangero because she did not want to be named by white people anymore.

The stories truly give the image on the issues that have been mentioned above, how tradition and culture give big effect for women in fighting for their rights, which can be easily found in real life. Besides, the story is written because the authors were inspired of their own experiences of their live, which makes the story more reliable.

The issues that I have concerned above lead me to conduct a research using short stories *A Pair of Jeans* and *Everyday Use* as the subjects. The analysis of the subject will be feminist analysis. The specific feminist theory that is going to be used in this research is the postcolonial feminism theory. The postcolonial feminism theory has been chosen because it supports the issues in this research paper which can be seen in the short stories.

Qaisra Shahraz was born in Pakistan and brought up in Manchester, England, from the age of nine. She studied English and Classical Civilization at the University of Manchester and went on to gain two Master Degrees at the University of Salford - in English and European Literature and in Scriptwriting for Television and Radio. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a director of Gatehouse Books, publishing books written by students for Skills for Life classes. She is an advisor for the University of Lancaster for a three-year writing project entitled 'Mediating Marginalities', and has hosted and led many workshops and seminars in creative writing, abroad and in the UK. Qaisra Shahraz is the author of two novels, and is working on a third. The first, *The Holy Woman* (2001), is a powerful love story,
introducing the reader to the traditions of a vibrant world of four Muslim countries. It was awarded the title 'Best Book of the Month' by Waterstones. Her second novel is *Typhoon* (2003), a sequel set in the village of Chiraghpur. Qaisra Shahraz’s début into the world of literature began with her short stories. Many of her earlier stories are based on her experiences while growing up in the United Kingdom. Her first, ‘A Pair of Jeans’, has been published many times in a number of countries, notably in Germany where it is studied as a literary text in schools.

Novelist, poet and feminist Alice Malsenior Walker were born on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia. Alice Walker is one of the most admired African-American writers working today. The youngest daughter of sharecroppers, she grew up poor. Her mother worked as a maid to help support the family's eight children. After college, Walker worked as a social worker, teacher and lecturer. She became active in the Civil Rights Movement, fighting for equality for all African Americans. Her experiences informed her first collection of poetry, *Once*, which was published in 1968. Better known now as a novelist, Walker showed her talents for storytelling in her debut work, *Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970). Walker continued to explore writing in all of its forms. In 1973, she published a set of short stories, *In Love and Trouble*; the poetry collection *Revolutionary Petunias*; and her first children's book, *Langston Hughes: American Poet*. She also emerged as a prominent voice in the black feminist movement. Walker's career as a writer took flight with the publication of her third novel, *The Color Purple*, in 1982. Set in the early 1900s, the novel explores the female African-American experience. Three years later, Walker's story made it to the big screen: Steven Spielberg directed *The Color Purple*.

In conducting this research, I choose this topic because I am interested in the issue of postcolonial, especially how people with hybrid identity react in their society with different tradition and culture between theirs and their living society. Besides, I am really interested in the experiences that they have with their hybrid identity. They should have been experiencing many unique and unpredictable things because they carry ‘hybrid identity’ in their life. The stories that I chose for conducting the research are also get my interest. *A Pair of Jeans* and *Everyday Use* are stories which contain the issue that I interested about and the stories also present women as the ones who experienced the issue. The stories show how women’s struggle in their social life because they carry hybrid identity in their life. The stories not only expose
the postcolonial issue but also feminist as well. That is why I choose postcolonial feminism as the theory in conducting the research.

1.2 Main Problem

Tradition and culture in each country somehow become women’s biggest obstacle in fighting for their rights.

1.3 Previous Study


1.4 Problem Formulation

1. How does the identity of the characters portray the postcolonial issue in the stories?
2. How is postcolonial feminism portrayed in both stories?
3. How does the cultural and traditional background of the authors affect the way they wrote the stories?

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope is the short stories A Pair of Jeans by Qaisra Sharaz and Everyday Use by Alice Walker. The limitation is the characters who are Miriam, Fatima, Begum, Ayub, Farook, Mama, Dee, Maggie and Hakim-a-barber also the setting and symbol in the short stories.
1.6 Goal of Research

1. To find out how the identity of Miriam, Fatima, Begum, Ayub, Farook, Mama, Dee, Maggie and Hakim-a-barber portrays postcolonial in *A Pair of Jeans* and *Everyday Use* through the analysis of the hybrid identity.

2. To find out the portrayal of postcolonial feminism in *A Pair of Jeans* and *Everyday Use*.

3. To find out how the cultural and traditional background of Qaisra Sharaz and Alicia Walker affects the writing of the stories through the study of biography of the authors.