

Filipino American Identity Development in Something in Between

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Abstract

Identity development is essential in all human lives. Adolescents who are members of ethnic minority groups are seemingly more confused about their identity. This paper was to explore Filipino American identity development of the main character, Jasmine de Santos, in Melissa de la Cruz's *Something in Between*. It is analyzed within the theoretical framework of Jean Kim's Asian American Identity Development, the concept of Homi K. Bhabha's hybridity, and Edward Said's Otherness. In *Something in Between*, De la Cruz uncovers the issues of ethnic identity development that responds to the modern and multicultural society in the U.S. Although Jasmine acknowledges her minority status at first, cultural conflicts and contacts with the White majority cause Jasmine difficulties in identifying herself and leads her to have negative attitudes toward her ethnicity. However, political involvement helps her overcome her identity conflict and develops a full sense of her ethnic identity. Jasmine represents herself as a Filipino American—the hybrid—who is inseparably positioned between American and Filipino standpoint. Hybridity is found as the key concept rendering Jasmine's new life perspective and enabling Jasmine to merge her strong sense of being Filipino American into other identities.

Keywords: Asian American, Ethnic Identity, Young Adult Novel, Diversity

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Introduction

Identity development is essential in all human lives because identity impacts on several facets of living. Therefore, enabling individuals to develop identity is crucial. The developmental task can be critical throughout the lifespan, but significantly approached when adolescence begins (Arnett, 2006; Ferrer-Wreder & Kroger, 2019; Kroger, 2006). However, identity development in adolescence can be complex. Bemused amid social shifts and pressures, young individuals are at risk of heading to the wrong directions to overcome “a war within themselves” to achieve a true identity (Erikson, 1968, p. 17). Accordingly, understanding the development of identity in adolescences is useful to help youngsters strive to adulthood successfully and safely (Tekeng, 2008). Particularly, adolescents who are members of ethnic minority groups are seemingly more confused about their identity. Young ethnic minorities are likely to struggle to identify who they truly are and which set of cultures they belong to because the set of two different values, the original and the mainstream, adds extra burden to the development of identity (Phinney, 1989). In order to prevent low self-esteem and identity loss, Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) underlines that ethnic identity, which is a sense of belonging in an ethnic group and the pride in being an ethnic minority, is pivotal in helping ethnic minority adolescents manage their overall positive identity. Thus, facilitating ethnic identity among young ethnic minorities is requisite. A simple study of ethnic identity development in adolescence is to observe ethnic minority adolescents’ lives directly. However, another form to study is investigating the stories of young ethnic minority characters and their ethnic identity development through the literary world.

Young adult (YA) literature is one of the most influential and valuable genres speaking for today's teens (Elmore, 2017). As commonly depicted in YA literature, characters mirror the lives of people in reality. For this reason, YA literature can be a great tool to study adolescent lives through fictional characters and stories, especially in YA novels. The theme of teens being different and struggling to fit in is the leading trend in YA novels (Koss & Teale, 2009). This means YA works reflect adolescent characters who are confused due to being different and alienated. These characters involve the ethnic minority adolescents who dwell on diverse cultural settings and cope with the clash of the original and the dominant culture. Therefore, studying ethnic identity development of young ethnic minorities through characters in YA novels can be an alternative to understand ethnic identity and its development.

Interestingly, there have been major efforts to study ethnic identity development among young fictional characters of different ethnic groups. Asian American characters, as well as other ethnic groups, have also been center of attention in YA novels. Noticeably, most Asian American YA novels portray young Chinese and Japanese American characters. The portrayal of young lives of other Asian American subgroups, like Southeast Asian Americans, is still ignored and much less mentioned than other Asian descents in YA novels. This is evident regarding to Southeast Asian American characters. This causes Southeast Asian Americans to be overlooked and unexplored to the extent that they continue to be recognized as ‘the others’ or ‘forever foreigners’ (Reyes, 2017). In this regard, studying ethnic identity development of young Southeast Asian American characters in YA novels can be another possibility to understand young Southeast Asian Americans and avoid pitfalls of generalization of all Asian American subgroups as one entity (Kobayashi, 1999; Tanujaya, 2019).

Among YA novels with Southeast Asian American characters in the late 2010s, *Something in Between* written by Melissa de la Cruz is one of the notable works that highlights being young member of ethnic minority groups and growing up as a Southeast Asian American. The novel

is about a story of Jasmine de Santos who is a young Filipino immigrant encountering the downsides of being an ethnic minority. Jasmine has to navigate a new outlook to identify herself while being caught amid questions as to who she truly is and where she belongs. In respect of the writer, De la Cruz writes several critically acclaimed books and award-winning YA novels and publishes short stories for renowned sources of reading for teens. On the grounds of the writer's credibility and the popularity of her works, *Something in Between* is selected to study ethnic identity development.

Ethnic Identity Development

Identity is the conscious sense of self that is developed through social interactions and experiences based on group membership (Tajfel, 1981). Erikson, viewed as the pioneer of identity theory, believes that identity is discovered during adolescence and the loss of identity can cause vulnerability and depression. Based on Erikson's theory, Marcia proposes four identity statuses of development. He agrees that identity occurs in adolescence but argues that identity is developed through individual experiences, exploration and commitment. Nevertheless, neither Erikson nor Marcia clearly relates their theories to sociological factors that influence the process of identity development in adolescence, such as ethnicity or multicultural facets. Accordingly, in connection with modern psychology and cultural diversity, it is drawn into consideration not to neglect the adolescents who belong to multiple ethnic groups and obtain culturally diverse settings. To overcome this limitation, there are many scholars proposing new concepts and models of ethnic identity development.

Ethnic identity can be defined as: feelings of belonging and commitment, attitudes towards one's group, or the sense of shared values and attitudes (Phinney, 1990). The development of ethnic identity has been studied widely. As a result, there are many proposed models of ethnic identity development. Most of the models share similarities with the early works, not independent from Eric Erikson's theory on identity and James Marcia's identity statuses. Among these models, Phinney's stages of ethnic identity development is the most broadly recognized in studies on ethnic identity development (Côté, 2009). Nonetheless, there is more subtle and discrete information in the subject of ethnic minority groups. Thus, more theories on each minority groups are proffered. In relation to Asian Americans, Jean Kim (1981) postulates five stages of Asian American identity development. The first stage is discovery of ethnic awareness; individuals are exposed to their ethnic values and activities. The second is white identification, which is realization of differentness and alienation from self and society. The following is gaining new political perspective about being ethnic minority, called "awakening to sociopolitical consciousness." The latter stage is redirection to Asian American consciousness; immersion in cultural values is built, and appreciation of ethnic experience is cultivated. The final stage, incorporation, is when individuals blend their identity with the rest of their identities.

In this study, Kim's Asian American identity development is a central framework applied to investigate Jasmine's ethnic identity development. In addition to Kim's Asian American identity development, two relevant concepts will be used to better explain Jasmine's ethnic identity development and ground this study firmly in theoretical constructs: Edward Said's Otherness and Homi Bhabha's hybridity concept.

Filipino American Identity Development in *Something in Between*

From the start, Jasmine acknowledges Filipino culture and traditions. Her positive awareness of being an ethnic minority is primarily raised by her family members and relatives, which is related to an early critical stage in Jean Kim's Asian American identity development. Jasmine primarily considers herself as an American as she grows up in California and vaguely recalls her toddler years in the Philippines. Though perceiving herself as an American, Jasmine is confident and comfortable in being an ethnic minority because she has her parents and relatives as the significant source of her ethnic awareness. Jasmine's parents often speak Tagalog to her and regularly cook traditional Filipino food for her with the intention to teach Jasmine about her original culture. As a result, Jasmine is well-aware of her Filipino origin as she assures herself: "Winning at the meritocracy is my American dream. A successful career and a handsome husband. A family. I'm old-fashioned that way, maybe because I'm Filipino" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 15). Jasmine feels positive and proud of her Filipino origin and the Philippines. She successfully paints a beautiful picture of her native country as she lingers on the Philippines, "I try to remind myself to not to be so negative about my native country. Despite the poverty and the government corruption, the Philippines is a place of such natural beauty" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 348).

However, Jasmine's confidence in being an ethnic minority is shaken when she has contact with white people. According to Kim (1981), direct effects in association with the White majority is the second stage in Asian American identity development, which leads to inner battles or identity crisis. This idea is shown in the case of Jasmine's contact with the White. At first, Jasmine is positive about being different among the White society. Jasmine is aware that she is physically different from the White majority, but she neither sees the difference as a problem nor feels inferior for being physically different. This can be because Jasmine is respected by the school's cheer squad. The squad fills Jasmine with admiration as they tease Jasmine at a cheer practice, "You're so perfect, Jasmine. You do everything right. You were junior class president. Cheer captain. Honor roll. Volunteering. Don't you ever get tired?" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 10).

Jasmine's attitudes toward herself totally changes after she learns that her family is undocumented immigrants. Jasmine finds out that all of the family members are not permanent residents nor American citizenship holders. Unprepared and confused by the truth, Jasmine suffers from her inner conflicts; she is unconfident about who she truly is and where she belongs. Her self-perception begins to shake. She thereafter reveals the truth about her family's immigrant status to her peers, "I'm not an American. I'm not here legally" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 177). The revelation leads to Jasmine's greater exposure to prejudices, which causes changes in her worldview.

The first encounter that weakens Jasmine's confidence is the incident at the immigration court. Jasmine is disrespectfully treated by Judge Reynolds. After Mr. Alvarado, Jasmine's family's lawyer, illustrates Jasmine's excellent academic performance and her leadership capabilities as a cheerleading captain to the Court, Judge Reynolds replies, "Yes, yes. You're right. Our country is in dire need of more cheerleaders" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 298). The Judge's satire and devaluation on cheerleaders send a negative message to Jasmine. She describes her feeling as 'ashamed' and 'belittled' for being disparaged as a cheerleader after the hearing at the immigration court. Moreover, Mason, Jasmine's boyfriend's brother, insults Jasmine and her family with demeaning labels such as 'boat people,' 'forever outsider' and 'unwelcome strangers.' In other words, Jasmine is perceived as 'the other' as in Edward Said's idea that the

West constructs certain negative images about the Orient (as cited in Mohrem, 2020). This is also evidently seen at the party as Isko, Jasmine's brother, are called 'FOB' or 'fresh off the boat' and told to go back to "the stupid island" with Jasmine (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 263). According to Goleman (2006), the phrase 'fresh off the boat' is a derogatory term describing immigrants who are unable to assimilate into the customs, the language, or culture of the host country. Among ethnic minority groups in the U.S., the term is considered politically incorrect and offensive (Sturgeon and Wilson, 2005).

Jasmine's painful experiences as above-mentioned provoke her sense of framing her world in terms of duality. In other words, Jasmine reflects her world in the mode of binarism, which sees the binary opposition in the case of Jasmine. Her views are shaped in a combination of binary opposites. The most obvious binary opposition is White/Non-White or Filipino/American as she is a Filipino-born American against those American Whites. Additionally, Jasmine finds the opposition of upper class/lower class, powerful/powerless and dominant/dominated in contact with the White majority. These binaries become clearer to Jasmine when she meets high-ranking Congressman Blakely, her boyfriend's father, for the immigration support. Jasmine describes the Blakely's world as the opposite of hers. While Congressman Blakely is likely to have political power to overturn the immigration Judge's decision, Jasmine and her family are powerless to persuade the immigration Judge to merely listen to them in the court. Meeting Congressman Blakely simply reflects the binary structure of domination, which is "one counting on the other one intricately" (Ashcroft et. al., 2007, p. 20). Undoubtedly, Jasmine is situated in the 'less' or 'inferior' position, hence 'lower' and 'powerless.' As Jasmine soliloquizes, "his dad is a congressman who thinks all documented immigrants should be deported" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 52). In addition, the conversation she has with Royce, her boyfriend, before the final deportation hearing confirms that she feels inferior and smaller as she says, "I feel like I'll be less of a person if I move back to the Philippines" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 342). In essence, the binary opposition in the eyes of Jasmine is that one term of the opposition transcends the other one (American over Filipino or White over Asian).

Another important aspect in Jasmine's binary view is that Jasmine polarizes people in her life in two groups. She frequently mentions 'like mine,' 'like ours' and 'like yours' when referring to the White and the Rich against herself, as she whispers to Royce, "my parents aren't like yours" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 205). Meeting Royce's family leads Jasmine to believe that she is inferior and viewed as the Other who is not a part of their American society. This is lucid when Jasmine talks to Kayla, her best friend, about Royce, "His family hates families like mine. I can't be with someone like that" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 182). Additionally, her sense of inferiority is clearer being rejected to stay in the U.S., "People like me pour out of it, spilling back over borders because of the way we are all criminalized. We feel like outsiders in our own community, in our own house" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 315). This 'I/You' binary perspective permeates Jasmine's mind and consequently renders the binary concept of Self/Other.

Udah (2019) notes that the perception of self and others is essential in defining oneself and locating one's place in the society. For Jasmine, she and the White majority revolves around the concept of 'Self/Other'—'Self' as the White majority and 'Other' as Jasmine who is the minority—that posits the former as superior and privileged and locates the latter in the inferior and strange position. This idea follows Said's concept of the Other. That is, based on Loomba's (2015) interpretation, Jasmine can be defined as 'the Other,' and the White majority is the 'Self.' With the preexisting notion of immigrants as the invading and unwanted Other (Sorvo, 2015), Jasmine's image of being 'the Other' becomes clearer. Once Jasmine is labeled as 'not

American' among her White American fellows, she feels othered. In this reason, an imaginary borderline between 'us' and 'them' to divide people in two groups in Jasmine's reflection is drawn.

Likewise, Jasmine's binary perspective places herself into another representation of the binary opposition. The Self and the Other within Jasmine's inner struggle can be translated to the Self as the American part and the Other as the Filipino part. In Jasmine's case, she otherizes the Filipino part, considering the part as something that she knows but never as a part of herself. As Jasmine proclaims,

I don't want to go to the Philippines to live. There's nothing there for me. My life is here. [...] I've been here most of my life. I can barely remember the Philippines. I used to think I belonged equally to both cultures, but I'm not really Filipino, and now I'm not quite American either (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 223).

This binary logic of Self/Other causes the overlapping of being Filipino and being American, leaving Jasmine in an obligation to choose between two options. For Jasmine, the fact that she is illegal and not American is a "torture" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 300). Jasmine sees being American as being herself and considers being Filipino as the other part that is not herself. After the court rules that the de los Santos family are aliens and rules in favor of deportation, Jasmine laments, "I know I belong here [America], but the government doesn't think I do. I may look like I belong in the Philippines, but they'll know I'm a fraud too. I can't even speak Tagalog or Ilocano. Neither country will want me" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 301). The frustration shows that Jasmine is caught in a dilemma. She is unable to identify where she belongs and which value she adheres. Her belief is fluctuated and divided into two different parts.

Frustrated and distressed in herself, Jasmine develops a negative evaluation of herself and alienates herself from her White peers because she feels the sense of not belonging. She mirrors herself negatively, "Ha! You thought you were so smart. and now look at you. You suck. You're no one. You're nobody. You're dirt. You're not from here! Go home! Go back to Asia or wherever you're from" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 273). She not only looks at herself negatively but also believes that her White friends and boyfriend thinks of her and her family unfavorably as "a bunch of amusing ethnic people" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 280). Consequently, Jasmine avoids socializing. She admits her own "insecurity about her background" as she confesses to Royce, "I was the one who was embarrassed to be who I was embarrassed about where I come from" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 289). At this point, Jasmine's positive perspective towards her Filipino part is shifted. Her sense of ethnic identity is shaken. According to Kim (1981), this is the result of the increase significant contact with the White society. In order to establish ethnic identity, Jasmine develops new attitudes on herself by eliminating the binary perspective and the vacillation in her mind.

New positive perspective on being an ethnic minority is essential to enable Jasmine to tackle her ethnic identity crisis and remove binary views to progress to the next stage of Kim's Asian American identity development to form her ethnic identity. Kim (1981) states that political understanding and participation in political activity can be important factors facilitating change in self-concept as being a minority. She also notes that there is no one prescribed way to learn from political involvement; being a part of a political action and hearing stories of social-political affairs can be tools to gain political understanding of being an ethnic minority. This idea can be seen in Jasmine's changes in attitudes towards herself and her view on being an ethnic minority. Initially, Jasmine's attitude change is made from understanding being an

undocumented ethnic minority through Mrs. Garcia's, the school's collage counselor. She helps Jasmine see a clearer picture of being undocumented in the U.S., as she says, "There are lots of kids who go to this school—and thousands of kids in LA alone—who are undocumented. The sheer number makes it impossible for ICE to deport everyone. You're a good kid. They're not going to bother you" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 246). Mrs. Garcia's words spur Jasmine's realization on being an immigrant. Jasmine opts for positivity and expresses her optimism about her situation after talking Mrs. Garcia: "And talking to Mrs. Garcia is the first time that I really understand there are a lot of people out there facing what I'm going through. I'm not the only one. Or the first. And definitely not the last" (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 246). Clearly, for Jasmine, a proper understanding of political circumstance can help make a change in attitude towards herself.

However, major changes in Jasmine's attitudes toward being an ethnic minority occurs because of Millie. She is a prestigious Stanford University alumna and a patient at the hospital where Jasmine works part-time. Millie enlightens Jasmine on being different through her storytelling as an activist in social political activities in her youth. The story of Millie's engagement in political activities in her juvenile is Jasmine's opportunity to feel relevant and connected to herself in the lens of the other person's experiences. As storytelling enables listeners to understand the core of perplex concepts and ideas (Suzuki et al, 2018), hearing those political acts alerts Jasmine to be positive on herself. She understands that her race is unchangeable, and racism only exists if she allows.

On the grounds of Mrs. Garcia's counselling and Millie's storytelling, Jasmine gains new perspectives on herself as an ethnic minority. Jasmine's self-concept on being an ethnic minority changes from negative to positive, which leads her to defuse her ethnic identity crisis. That is, Jasmine stops resenting herself as an ethnic minority and appears to be proud in herself for being an ethnic minority as well as an immigrant. At this stage, like Kim's ideas, her logic vision on being an ethnic minority finally changes from personal to social perspective. Ultimately, Jasmine is aware that she is an ethnic minority with a mix of Filipino and American essence. She clearly understands and willingly accepts her ethnicity as well as being American to be who she truly is.

Jasmine finally identifies herself as a Filipino American. She is immersed in both Filipino and American parts, which is connected to Kim's idea of redirection to Asian American consciousness. After refocusing on her minority experiences, Jasmine realizes that being Filipino is as important as being American to her but neither leans towards Filipino part nor American part. On the contrary, Jasmine decides to associate herself with both Filipino and American parts. She learns that she belongs to both cultures and consequently works towards defining herself, which is finding a way out of the tension between having to single out one way or another. To find escape from uncertainty, creating her own bicultural identity can be the solution. Having multicultural upbringing and undergoing changes in her attitudes, Jasmine can balance and blend two cultures to make her own place or space. According to Homi Bhabha (1994), living in between two cultures can be referred to hybridity, which is the in-between stage where minorities and immigrants are indeed.

Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity can be accounted for Kim's idea of immersion in two significant cultures, which is the state where Jasmine discovers her Filipino American identity. This is shown in her speech on the graduation day in which Jasmine addresses, "No one—not the law, not a college admission officer, not your friends, not your teachers or parents or any other people, can define who you are. The only person who can do that is you" (De la Cruz,

2016, p. 409). From this perspective, Jasmine allows one space in between her two cultures to create her own place. She clearly develops a full sense of her ethnic identity and represents herself as a Filipino American—the hybrid—who is inseparably positioned between American and Filipino standpoint. Hybridity, at this point, provides Jasmine a way out of her binarism and allows space to structure her Filipino American identity. Jasmine becomes a young confident Filipino American immigrant, who is proud of her rich ethnic history and her uniqueness. She incessantly pursues her American dream and keeps her Filipino tradition. Like the title of the story *Something in Between*, Jasmine finds herself embraced with both Filipino and American identities and firmly places her belief between two values with confidence and certainty. This reflects in a line from her speech at the graduation as she says, “we’re all unique creatures” (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 408).

As Jasmine develops a clear sense of her Filipino American identity, she can relate herself to all areas in her life without losing sight of her Filipino American identity. This is the final success of Kim’s developing Asian American identity development. In this stage, Jasmine is determined to inspire others through her experiences and to evolve as a grown woman with certain and positive attitudes towards being Filipino American. She not only treats experiences as valuable lessons but also attempts to pass on her inspiration found upon minority and immigrant experiences to others. The indication of Jasmine being able to relate herself to different groups of ethnic minorities is first shown after she receives Congressman Blakely’s political support:

My mind turned back to the millions of illegal immigrants in this country, waiting and hiding. Trying to stay in American is a game of cat and mouse, a life of working under the table, for less than minimum wage, with no way to report workplace abuses and transgressions. What happens when they get sick? What happened if they’re hurt? The sacrifice they are making is enormous. My story is one of many. I feel connected to everyone who has ever tried to move to the United States in search of a better life (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 314).

Her thought reflects that she has compassion and develops a sense of connectedness with others. In addition, Jasmine’s strength and confidence in her Filipino American identity is ensured to be rewarding to others as mentioned by Millie who is responsible for Jasmine being awarded a patron grant at Stanford University: “I wanted them to choose an incoming female student who would use her education to give back to the world. The grant committee chose you. You earned it all on your own” (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 396). In Millie’s faith, Jasmine is a matured young woman whose strong sense of Filipino American identity empowers her to provide love and support for others.

Another compelling evidence is at the end of the story that Jasmine, as a valedictorian of the graduation class, urges her classmates to find their passion, “we need to figure out how to help others too. We have to ask ourselves: what can we do to better ourselves and our country? what can we do to be remembered? who do we want to be?” (De la Cruz, 2016, p. 409). Benefitting from the disfranchised deportations, Jasmine passes on her own profit as a motivation to her schoolfellows to pursue their path of life for personal success and for the prime purpose like the U.S.

Conclusion

The study reveals that Jasmine’s approach to Filipino American identity is in relation to Jean Kim’s Asian American identity development and in line with Homi Bhabha’s hybridity

concept, in that she perceives the need of hybridity in regard to defining herself. As seen in the case of Jasmine, she resolves her ethnic identity conflict by forming hybrid identity. Her family plays a vital role in fostering ethnic awareness for Jasmine. Although association with the White majority is likely to distort Jasmine's ethnic pride, her intuitive ethnic awareness and acquiring political understanding are the key factors for her to resort to embrace both American and Filipino elements. She then creates her own space or third space by engrafting upon her two cultures. The space that Jasmine creates is a unique form of ethnic identity located in-between her two influences. The in-between space enables Jasmine to celebrate the difference and diversity and provides her a chance to feel connected with others.

According to Domínguez and López (2003), the third space is “the blending of difference into a whole that does not dissolve the parts” (p. 36). In the study, Jasmine is a good example of a person whose third space or combination of her two parts offers herself the possibility to escape from utter confusion and construct the adaptability to live confidently and interculturally. Clearly for Jasmine, the third space or the creation of a new hybrid entity can help deal with confusion and complication in herself. This can also be beneficial for everyone as all is living in plural worlds these days. Her story proves that ethnic identity—hybrid identity—not only serves as an asset of young ethnic minorities but also functions as a meaningful quality for living in cultural and racial diversity for all individuals.

The findings of this study also show the power of learning through young adult literature. The engaging stories in books stimulate imagination of the lives of others and allow the readers to learn about people as individuals (Rochman, 1993). In other words, young adult literature can be a reminder for readers to explore the lives of others and uncover the feasible ways to master and fulfill lives. Through *Something in Between*, the portrayal of Jasmine can be used as guidelines to teach adolescents. Jasmine can be a role model encouraging young people to discover themselves and form a strong sense of self because it can lead youngsters to have a more fulfilling mindsets and lives. Additionally, young adult novel like *Something in Between* can be added in the classroom of young adult students to teach about diversity and heighten their knowledge in diverse young adult literature. In this way, students can learn through reading the characters' experiences and interpretations of events and characters. Students can apply what they learn to their daily lives.

Notwithstanding that this study focuses on ethnic identity development in a young Filipino American, there are still gaps left for future studies. The further study could focus on other Southeast Asian American groups or other minority groups in other countries. In addition, it will be interesting to study ethnic identity development among different genders to deepen understanding the differences and similarities. Finally, the results and the effects of using diverse young adult literature in classrooms to educate students in diversity should be examined.

Acknowledgement

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