

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature, in the widest sense is just about anything written or it can be said that "literature is a kind of art, usually written, that offers pleasure and illumination" (1966: V), it is told by Kennedy in *An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. Each person who reads a literary work has his own goals, such as: to get pleasure, to enrich and to add his knowledge about literature.

Literature is an expression of human life and man is the object of literature, as Wellek and Warren (1956: 83) in *Theory of Literature* say "literature is an expression of society at any times because it mirrors the current situation". It means literature cannot be separated from society even it is very close to social life".

According to Hudson (1965:10) in *An Introduction the Study of Literature*, he states as follows:

Literature is a vital record of what men have been seen in literature, what they thought and felt about those aspects of it, which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of live through the medium of language.

It means that literature is one mean to record the expression of life, therefore writers express their feeling, ideas, thought, problem and describe their society by means of literature. Further, Jones (1968: 1) in *An Outline of Literature* says "literature is simply another way, we can experienced the world around us through our imagination".

There are three literary genres: Prose (short stories and novels), Poetry, and Play or Drama. The study of this thesis concerns with novel. According to Kennedy (1966: 231) in *An Introduction of Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* he says, "Novel is book length story in prose, whose author tries to create the sense that, while we read, we experienced actual life".

Another opinion about novel is quoted from Kettle (1961:2) in *An Introduction to The English Novel* he says: "Novel is a living thin, all one and continuous, like other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, that in each of parts there is something of the parts".

In its broader sense, novel is a literary work which can make it as if it is alive as human being, therefore novel is called living thing. Novel contains something which is interesting and makes it alive. The writer is interested to choose one of Chinese American author. She is Amy Tan.

Amy Tan's mother comes from China and her father comes from America whose is a Chinese American authors. When Tan's mother was suffering from serious illness, Tan resolved to take a trip to China with her mother if she recovered. After her mother returned to health, they traveled to China. The trip provided Tan with fresh perspective on her mother, and it served as the key inspiration for first book, *The Joy Luck Club*. *The Joy Luck Club* contains four sections. Each begin with a vignette depicting a stage in the life cycle. The four stories in each section explore the relationship between the mothers and the daughter at the same stage. In the first series of stories focuses on Suyuan Woo who comes to America in 1947, as the effect of war she loses her family

including twin daughters. She has remarried and has a daughter, her name is Jing-mei (June). Jing-mei always has troubled relationship with her mother, so when Suyuan Woo dies, she has to deal with her grief, frustration, and her many question. She never understands why her mother was never satisfied with her. She never knows the whole story of her mother's previous life in China. She does not speak Chinese fluently, and she tries to reject Chinese culture and even, for a while, believed that she is not Chinese at all. Jing-mei and her mother struggle to understand one another but it is not easy to do it because both of them have different point of view in the life style.

The second series of stories focuses in An-mei Hsu, she is one of the members of Joy Luck Club. She has learned important lesson about the dangers of passivity and necessity of speaking up herself, but she notes with pain, she has not passed on these lesson to her daughter Rose. Rose is the youngest of An-mei's children she often feel guilty and powerless. She thinks that was responsible for the youngest brother death. She accepts the blame that Ted heaps on her for the failure of their marriage. At the first, she believes that her mother does not understand her, and wants her to stay in her marriage even if she is unhappy. But then she realizes that all her mother wants is for her to be strong. She finally stand up toted and suddenly realize how powerful she really is. Then she feels connected to her mother in a way she has never done before.

The third series focuses on Lindo Jong, she teaches the power of invisible strength to her daughter Waverly, instilling in her skill that contribute to Waverly's talent chess. She fears that in trying to give Waverly American

opportunities, she may have undermined her daughter's Chinese identity. Waverly Jong is the youngest of Lindo Jong's children. She has always been a model of success, winning chess tournament as a child and eventually building a lucrative career as an attorney. Much Waverly's talent chess stems from her ability to hide her thought and channel invisible power. Waverly fears what her mother will say about her white fiancé. From her mother, Waverly inherits her "invisible strength", her ability to conceal her thought and strategize. Although she applies these to chess as a child, she later turn them on her mother, Lindo, as well, imagining her struggles with her mother as a tournament. When she sits trough dinner with her parent and Rich, she become distraught a she imagines her mother's growing hatred her fiancé. Yet, later on, she realize that her mother in fact like Rich.

The fourth series focuses on Ying-ying, she was born a rich and spoiled girl. Ying-ying end up relatively poor and meek. She believe her haughtiness curse her because she thinks she is too good for any man, she forced to marry a bad man. From then on, she believes that she can see things before they happens, and she gives this power to her daughter Lena. She decides to show her daughter how to be strong. Lena St. Clair is the only Child of Ying-ying, Lena has always known that her mother was fragile, and she spent her childhood fearing that their family could apart at any moment. She thus became fragile and easily frightened herself. Today, she allows her husband to bully her, but is slowly realizing how angry with him. She is disappointed with her mother and never understands her farther very well. Even though she looks English-Irish like him. She always felt

Chinese. She seems to believe, like Ying-ying that she and her mother have the same spirit.

The writer chooses Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* to be analyzed. The writer is interested in the mothers' dark background and its influence on daughters. Besides, there is some reason why the writer chooses *The Joy Luck Club* as the subject matter of her analysis. First, the writer is really interested with the background of the four mothers, those are Suyuan Woo, An-mei Hsu, Lindo Jong, Ying-ying St. Clair. The background means the family, religion, setting, cultural life, and experience. The second reason, the writer is amazed with the struggle of the mothers in raising their daughters. The writer is amazed with the struggle of the mothers to make connections between past and present, it can be seen in raising their daughters, their background influences them in such a way they raise their daughters.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are two problems that occur in the novel which are interesting to be analyzed by the writer, they are:

1. What are the mothers' dark backgrounds in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*?
2. How do the mothers' dark backgrounds influence on the daughters in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*?

1.3 The Limitation of the Problem

The analysis of this novel is limited on mothers, background. Those mothers are Suyuan Woo, An-mei Hsu, Lindo Jong, Ying-ying St. Clair. Besides, the writer would like to explain about the influence of mothers' background to the daughters, and those daughters are Jing-mei Woo, Rose Hsu, Waverly Jong, and Lena St. Clair.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This analysis has purposes to answer the problem which are stated in statement of problem. The purposes are to explain:

1. To figure out the mothers' dark backgrounds in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*.
2. To explain the bad influence of the mothers' backgrounds on the daughters in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

In reading Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, the writer can get knowledge and information. Those knowledge and information are about the mothers' backgrounds and the influence of mothers' backgrounds to the daughters.

The writer hopes that the research can give some significance for the writer and the reader, this research is useful and interesting for the writer and the reader, it conduct many problems about the influences of mothers' backgrounds to

the daughters and the way to solve those problem in Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club. Hopefully, this analysis will helpful the reader who choose the same topic