

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

For many years, women or female have been considered as the second-class person, a part of nature that has always been in the second position after their fellow man. The patriarchy system, with its hierarchical relations between man and woman where the man is in the prior position than the opposite sex, has cause woman living in suffer. They do not get their own right to live the same life with their fellow men. This situation results woman's lack of ability in fulfilling their self-actualization.

Self-actualization, according to Maslow in his book *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1968), is the highest human need, a need that should be fulfilled in order to be a fully functioning person. Furthermore Maslow stated that self-actualization involved the continuous human desire to fulfill their potentials, to "be all that a human can be" or "be all that a human must be." They are a matter of becoming the most complete, the fullest human (<http://www.ship.edu>). Unfortunately, the patriarchy system that adopted by many countries, ethnics and societies existing in this world does not give support for women or female in their process of fulfilling their self-actualization. The system even make the process become more difficult since it allowed man in the position to dominate woman.

One of so many ethnics and societies existing in this world which adopting this patriarchy system is the Chinese society in Singapore. The Chinese tradition

custom, culture, and beliefs among the Singaporean Chinese, according to John Yang in *The Literature, Culture, and Society of Singapore*, are much adopting and reflecting the patriarchy system. For example parents always want to have male children and having female children is a sign of bad luck, and while there may be only two children per family, sons continue to be favored over daughters. Females are out of favor. The main purpose of living for the women is to get married and be a good wife and bear many sons. The doctrine that female citizens belong to the nation and practice citizenship has dictated that women will perform instrumental function in the time and space of production but they will truly belong only to the reproductive sphere (Yang 21). Consequently defining Singaporean Chinese woman's self-actualization is not a simple matter. On the contrary, it is a crucial matter. It deals with the continuance of Singaporean Chinese woman's existence under this patriarchy system. Many Asian authors have reflected the suffering condition of Chinese woman under this system into their books. One of so many Asian authors who put some reflections of this situation is Catherine Lim.

Catherine Lim is one of the most popular Singaporean writers at the moment. She is the author of various collections of literary works such as short stories, novels, and poems. She also contributes a lot of articles and social-political commentaries to local and foreign newspapers and magazines. She grew up in Malaysia but resides, lives and works in Singapore. Catherine Lim also known as an author that wrote novels using Chinese traditions and beliefs for the background of her novels (<http://www.geocities.com>).

Based on Ann Skea's research and observations on several books by Catherine Lim, it is obvious that Catherine Lim found to be a writer who has the style of putting ordinary thing, everyday situations into her plot lines and spinning a story out of normal scenarios to create a greater impact. She likes to use females as her primary characters in her novels. Lim likes to involve characters of different social status to show that her novel is applicable to different people of different status and not just based solely on one particular group of people. Being grown up in Malaysia and resided in Singapore for her work as a lecturer, Lim could extract her observations and experiences toward the problematic way of life in Singaporean Chinese woman into a very appealing story of her books. Ann Skea also stated further that Catherine Lim has become better known in Europe and the United States due to the series of her novels published from the mid-nineties. Lim set *The Bondmaid* (1995), *The Teardrop Story Woman* (1998), and *Following the Wrong God Home* (2001) in colonial Singapore. The plot of these novels typically involves a doomed romance destroyed by historical incident and social traditions. The main protagonists are female underdogs, suppressed women from a low or middle social background, which has given Lim a reputation as a feminist writer (<http://www.ecletica.org>).

Lim's *Following the Wrong God Home* which becomes the subject of this thesis tells about a Singaporean Chinese woman who has struggle in fulfilling her self-actualization. The story represents a romantic love story between a Singaporean Chinese woman and a visiting American exchange lecturer. *Following the Wrong God Home* set in an Asian society (Singapore) where

traditional values and duty underline modernity, wealth and stability. It is a modern love story in that the lovers are modern, well educated and independent. The story also happened in modern day Singapore, in the time of transition period of Singapore where the Chinese traditional way of life begins to change to a more modern one. The opposing forces, however, those afflicting the young women, Yin Ling, are the old-age dilemmas of family-ties and duties, dream versus reality, money and the expectations of the society.

The main character of this novel is Yin Ling. She is described as young, beautiful, sensitive, an outstanding student and a poet - all a traditional romantic heroine should be despite of the fact that she came from a poor, middle class family. She is engaged to, and eventually marries, Vincent Chee Wen Siong, a rich PhD student from a very traditional, upper-class family, one of Singapore's fifty most eligible bachelors and a politician who have outstanding political career in the future. Being Singaporean Chinese woman, family ties and duty, as well as her association with a wealthy and successful politician young man, mean that she is under great pressure to be conventional. To be conventional here means to do only things that Chinese society can accept, otherwise she can be considered as a rebel.

However, the mapping out of Yin Ling's future doesn't proceed smoothly. Through her poem, she meets Ben Gallagher an outspoken American professor, a visiting American exchange lecturer, radical, and divorced, who threatens to overturn everything. Yin Ling falls in love with this man. It soon can be found out that Yin Ling's love toward this man become the most desire Yin Ling ever want

to be fulfill. Apparently Yin Ling's love toward this man become the highest need, the self-actualization of Yin Ling that she desperately has to fulfill to be a complete person.

Yin Ling struggles with her conscience, she must make her choice between head or heart. The head means Vincent and the Chinese society since Vincent is the man to whom she is actually engaged with and Vincent's generosity (money) is essential, for her mother has cancer and they cannot abandon a faithful old servant, Ah Heng Cheh. It comes to the understanding that it was her duty to repay the Vincent's kindness to her family. The Chinese society also consider as the head since they consider her love to a foreigner as a forbidden thing and inappropriate. The heart is of course refer to Ben Gallagher, a man that she truly love. The birth of a son from her marriage with Vincent makes her moral dilemma even more agonizing.

The remarkable character in all this, however, is Ah Heng Cheh, an old family servant whose devotion to her ancient Chinese God shapes the story. Ah Heng Cheh is irascible, stubborn, selfish, cunning and smelly. Her ancient, deformed, nameless, and homeless God needs to find his home, and she will not die until she has found it for him. Yin Ling cannot leave her; Vincent generously supports her and accepts her into his home, thus binding Yin Ling to him; Ben uses her as an excuse for meeting Yin Ling; and she, in her stubborn-ness eventually holds a big business between a giant American company and the Singaporean government to release over a piece of land she owns.

The writer is interested in choosing this novel due to the fact that it was written in a quite different view in seeing the problematic life of a Singaporean Chinese woman. The writer is interested in analyzing Yin Ling's attempt in fulfilling her need of Ben's love that obviously becomes her self-actualization. The writer considers that it is important to discuss the problem through the analysis on the setting, plot, and character. Therefore the writer will apply the intrinsic approach for discussing the problem. Furthermore the writer is also interested in revealing Yin Ling's struggle in the psychological approach point of view. The psychological approach applied in this study is the personality development theory from Abraham Maslow. By applying the personality development theory from Maslow the writer hopefully wants to get a better understanding in revealing Yin Ling's attempt in fulfilling her need of self-actualization and in completing the analysis.

B. Statement of the Problems

Considering the background of the study above, the writer formulates the problem statements as follow:

1. How does Yin Ling struggle in fulfilling her need of self-actualization?
2. How does she finally achieve her self-actualization?

C. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to find the answers for the proposed problems through the analysis. Thus, this study is intended to:

1. To reveal Yin Ling's attempt in fulfilling her self-actualization.
2. To reveal how she finally achieved her self-actualization.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is an attempt to give deeper insight for the reader into Singaporean Chinese women's problems in the process of fulfilling self-actualization through the observation of literary works. By analyzing Catherine Lim's *Following The Wrong God Home*, the writer would like to know about certain situation in the story, the conflict that appear and the struggle of the main character to resolve the problem. The writer consider that the significance of this study will give consideration toward the reader who wish to understand about how and why human need to fulfill their need of self-actualization. This study also tends to enrich the reader's knowledge about the literary work, in this case the novel by Catherine Lim entitled *Following The Wrong God Home*.

Furthermore, it will hopefully be an input for other further studies concerning this work.

E. Scope and Limitation

In this study the writer gives a major attention to Yin Ling's character. In other words, this study is concern with Yin Ling character only, through the intrinsic element of setting, plot, and character. Even though the novel is entitled *Following The Wrong God Home*, the story of an old family servant with her

ancient and homeless Chinese God who needs to find his home, the writer still feels more interested in examining Yin Ling's character.

F. Theoretical Background

This study is intended to analyze Yin Ling's character as the major character of the novel *Following the Wrong God Home*. Her struggle in the attempt of fulfilling self-actualization is captured by the writer as the subject matter in this study. The writer considers that it is important to discuss the problem through the analysis on the setting, plot, and character. Therefore the writer will apply the intrinsic approach for discussing the problem. The setting is used because it plays an important role in revealing some symbols that describe the atmosphere of the story. The plot is used to show the trails of the main character's life together with the conflicts. The characterization is used to know the characteristic of the main character.

The writer decides to apply the psychological approach due to the fact that the analysis of Ying Ling's attempt in fulfilling self-actualization is viewed from the personality development theory. Personality development theory applied in this study is the personality development theory from Abraham Maslow. The writer applies this theory since it help the writer in understanding Ying Ling's struggle in fulfilling her need of self-actualization and in completing the analysis.

G. Method of the Study

In doing this study, the writer uses the library research to support the analysis of the problems. The research here means, as a process of finding information, which is useful to help the writer to go direct in his or her research.

The first stage is constructed by collecting information from many books, articles, encyclopedias, internet with its web-sites and other printed materials related to the work of Catherine Lim, particularly *Following The Wrong God Home*. The writer also tries to get information from any particular book dealing with literary theories and approaches that will be used in the analysis.

The method of literary research is aimed to reveal the object of analysis under three principles: validity, reliability and. Therefore, this study will become a worthy and reliable piece to any other readers who wish to make a certain study on the work.

This study is using descriptive method that is based on the analysis principal of description and analysis (Jabrohim 165). The process will cover: describing data from the novel or theory and approaches used or other related data and then making an analysis as the accumulation of those data obtained earlier. It will result in the interaction of understanding between the writer and the literary work itself.

H. Definition of Key Terms

Duty: something that one has to do because it is part of one's job, or something that one feels is the right thing to do.

Potentiality: power or quality that exist but has not been developed.

Self: the individual as the object of his own reflective consciousness, the self, the I, is recognized in every act of intelligence as the subject to which that act belongs, personal interest, or love of private interest.

Self-actualization: fulfilling one's potential, be all what a human can be, being or reflecting the essential or genuine of character, existing in act or reality, when an organism is motivated to enhance itself and its functions.

Struggle: to experience difficulty and make a very great effort in order to solve the difficulty and made its way with great effort.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
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