

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the study

A Chinese writer Ha Jin completed his novel *Waiting* in 1999. *Waiting*, his great novel won the National Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner Award. He lives in Boston area and is a professor of English at Boston University. Ha Jin left his native China in 1985 to attend Brandies University. He is the author of the novel *The Crazy* and *In the Pond*, the story collections *The Bridegroom*, which won the Asian American Literary Award, *Under the Red Flag*, which won the Flannery O'Connor Award for short fiction, and *Ocean of Words*, which won the PEN/Hemingway Award. And the three books of poetry. The thesis writer is interested in analyzing the characters in *Waiting*.

In Chinese tradition, divorce is taboo. According to Baylor, marriages were arranged to make a good match for the families. This meant that little attention was given to whether the pairing was suitable for the bride and groom. Men required marrying into wealthy or powerful families that could improve their social standing. As for women, their needs and desires were of no consequence. The bigger the gift a young wife brought to her new family, the better. It was the father's responsibility to approve the match, making sure that his daughter was marrying into a respectable family (on line)

The reasons why the thesis writer prefers Ha Jin, and his work *Waiting*, to be analyzed, because the novel is readable and the language is simple. Ha Jin, who is an English professor of poetry, short story writer, a Chinese immigrant, tells a remarkably simple story with all easy English. Besides being the winner of award, this novel is telling about Chinese culture. For me as a student whose English is not too excellent analyzing



this novel is very suitable. Further more, students of literature rarely analyze topics on divorce. The writer's condition as a married woman supports this study. For Lin Kong, waiting for 18 years for a divorce is a hard struggle and very difficult. Ironically after waiting for 18 years and remarried the protagonist feels that it is not best solution for his life. The remarriage causes ill feeling, guilt and that he finds himself a failure and useless. Analyzing the characters is interesting in this work.

*Waiting* is a story of long-suffering love between a dutiful married doctor, Lin Kong, and an unmarried nurse, Manna Wu whom he meets while working in a Chinese army hospital. Lin wants to divorce his wife, Shuyu, and marries Manna. He approaches his wife for the divorce several times, but each time she refuses. A loophole in Chinese law will allow Lin to divorce her, without her consent, if they are separated for 18 years. The "waiting" for Lin's divorce is the focus of the story.

According to Encarta encyclopedia, divorce or dissolution, as it is increasingly becoming known, a legislatively created, judicially administered process that legally terminates a marriage no longer considered viable by one or both of the spouses and that permits both to remarry. Baylor stated that until the divorce reform movement of the 1970s began to have an impact, the legal doctrines governing divorce could be understood only by reviewing the long history of English divorce law, which was dominated by concepts of canon law. Divorce is the ending of a marriage by an official decision in a court of law (on line)

In this novel, Ha Jin tells the readers that divorce has been asked since the beginning of the main character's marriage, a married man Lin Kong. In this case, Lin Kong wants to cancel the engagement, because he does not like his prospective wife.

Physically, his fiancé is not good-looking, limp, has a tiny body and much older than him. He is not interested in her at all, but behind those reasons, he does not hate her. He accepts her as his sister, but the pressure of his parents to marry her becomes the main problem for him. His parents need a woman to take care of them with the reason that Lin has been studying out of the village and his parents are old and sick. A hard worker, Shuyu, as her fiancé is needed, because they think that she can help them work in the field and take care of Lin's mother who is dying.

So the marriage is performed. After getting married, he never does what a husband should do to his wife. Lin should go back to the town to work as an army's doctor. Despite the loveless marriage Lin has a child, a daughter, from Shuyu. Once a year, Lin goes back to see his wife and his daughter for only two weeks. Every year during the 18 years of marriage, he always asks for the divorce. Shuyu does not agree because the Chinese culture in China does not allow a divorce to happen. The court does not allow a divorce no matter what the reasons. Usually, the people who want to get a divorce would give up in the middle of their effort. This couple, Shuyu and Lin, is one of the couples who fail. Shuyu never agrees. Lin's eagerness to get divorce is stronger when he meets his dream of love in the town.

Lin really wants to get divorce in order to marry with the woman whom he met and fell in love with. Finally, they could get divorce after waiting for 18 years. Lin marries his girlfriend. Ironically, he does not get the life, which he has been dreaming for a long time. His life is destroyed. Manna, a girl whom he married, becomes a harsh woman and does not appreciate her husband. Her mind is full of jealousy. Lin got difficulties in facing his life. He feels guilty, after waiting for 18 years he only gets this sorrow.

## **B. Statement of the Problems**

Based on the background of the study above, the writer is interested to analyze the three major characters. The protagonist is facing two problems whether he has to choose the wife without love or another woman he loves in 18 years.

The research questions are:

1. What are the characteristics of the three main characters in the novel?
2. What are the points of view of the Chinese society on divorce portrayed in the novel?

## **C. Objective of the study**

1. To identify the main characters Lin Kong, Shuyu and Manna Wu in the novel.
2. To know the concept of divorce according to the Chinese Society

## **D. Significance of the study**

This study is generally to give something valuable in the study of literature and to improve capability in analyzing literary works. Particularly, it is expected to give a description about divorce in Chinese Society. I hope, by reading this thesis, the students of English Department will be encouraged to know and learn more about Chinese Literature, especially about the works of Ha Jin. Therefore, after reading this thesis, the writer hopes more students are encouraged to choose Ha Jin's other works for thesis.

## **E. Scope of Limitation**

The writer of this study finds many issues and problems that can be analyzed in this novel. In order to concentrate on the analysis, the writer focuses on the character analysis.

She wants to analyze the flat character, closed character and round character in the novel.

The focus of the study is the meaning of divorce for each character.

## **F. Theoretical Background**

The thesis writer uses close reading or new criticism approach in revealing the characters in the novel. According to Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today*, in interpreting a literary work, new criticism looked at the text itself. He said that the text itself became the battle cry of the New Critical effort to focus our attention on the literary work as the sole source of evidence for interpreting it. (Tyson 119)

Since the analysis uses close reading by intrinsic approach. It uses intrinsic approach because the study of literary work should be based on the interpretation and the analysis of the literary work itself. Applying the intrinsic approach is processing of analyzing the intrinsic elements based on internal elements of the work. Wellek and Warren also said that the first and the most prominent concentration on this study should be directed toward the work itself (Tyson, 157)

Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* suggests that the text itself sometimes mentioned in new critical readings of literary text, and focus of analysis. And writer's intention a given my interpretation actually represent s the text meaning is to carefully examine or closely reading, all the evidence provided by the language of the text itself: its imagery, symbols, metaphors, rhyme meter, point of view, setting characterization, plot. Close reading operates New Criticism meant by "the text itself", because their definition of the literary work is directly related to their beliefs concerning the proper way to interpret it (Tyson, 119)

## G. Method of the study

The thesis writer uses descriptive method, as the way in finding sources, which supports the research. She also uses library research in collecting the data. The primary data of this thesis was gotten from collecting books from library, reading magazines, journal and newspaper to learn about Chinese culture, society, arts, marriage, and then browsing internet. She also cites some criticism about Ha Jin's work *Waiting*. The technique of collecting data: the data collected for qualitative research can be defined as empirical information about the world, not in the form of numbers and is analyzed by using descriptive method. Therefore, it tries to give an elaborate explanation from the data taken from the text of the novel, plot, dialogue and action. However, in acquiring the latest and complete information, electronic sources taken from the internet also used.

## H. Definitions of Key Term

*Divorc:* Divorce or dissolution, as it is increasingly becoming known, a legislatively created, judicially administered process that legally terminates a marriage no longer considered viable by one or both of the spouses and that permits both to remarry.

### *Representation of Chinese Society*

A description, account or statement of something real or alleged concerns the ethnic Chinese.

*Court* Meeting where legal judgments are made a session of an official body that has authority to try the cases, resolve disputes, or make legal decision

*A Loophole*                    Out of tradition, a Chinese law that allows a man to divorce his wife without her consent, if they are separated for 18 years.

*Society*                        A grouping of individual which is characterized by common interest and may have distinctive culture and institution. Members of society may be from different ethnic groups. A society may be particular people, such as Chinese society as nation state.

*Chinese Society*            Chinese citizen and their social live. Native Chinese characteristic of belonging to relating to indigenous inhabitants of China, particularly those with a tradition culture.

# **CHAPTER II**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**