

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **I.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Men always find literature essential, from the most primitive stages of society to the most advanced ones. This is because the literature of a people is the principal element of its culture (Little, 1966). This means that literature contains the record of the people's values, their thoughts, their problems and conflicts; in short, their whole way of life.

Since literature talks about human problems that can be found in real lives, those who like reading literary works will have the chance to develop their sensitivity about human problems and values. Therefore, readers who read literary works will be able to observe aspects of other people and of themselves that they had not observed before. And this will lead to understand people better. This sense of understanding furthermore will be very useful in the daily life especially in association with socialization.

People in this world are all the same. But the fact shows that we share different race, culture, and tradition. This variety can also bring problems for the people themselves, by the fact that "ethnicity and races have generated greater cultural diversity and

controversy "( Macionis, 1991: 72). Problem of cultural differences has always been interested to observe because it has occurred since the first time people live in this world.

This cultural problem is reflected well in Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club". That's why in this thesis the writer is interested in analyzing the cultural problem in this literary works.

There are several considerations why the writer is interested in the cultural problem in "The Joy Luck Club". This story tells about conflicts between Chinese immigrant mothers and their American-raised daughters, completed with the conflicting views and the stories of both sides. It shows us how difficult to raise children in other cultural environment, as the daughters try their best to be "Americanized" and at the same time casting off their heritage while their mothers watch on, dismayed. "The Joy Luck Club" also involves our feeling to imagine and to feel the fears of cultural identity; the difficulties in growing up as a Chinese-American and the problems in assimilating into modern society. Where the assimilation itself is "the process by which minorities gradually adopt patterns of the dominant culture" (Macionis, 1991:317).

And the most impressive reason that brings the writer to analyze this work is the characterization of the main character: Jing-Mei Woo. This character represents the vision of younger

generation which is willing to explore and appreciate the vision of others, especially in this case is the older generation. But then Jing-Mei Woo finds a difficult position ever since her mother's death. She discovers her mother's background before the immigration to United States that brings the fears of cultural identity. Here Jing-Mei's struggle to overcome her fears has impressed the writer much since it leads him to understand people better by appreciating the values of her struggle in the most difficult stage of her life.

In addition, this literature work is very interesting to be appreciated since the author could illustrate well the fears of cultural identity. Eventhough Amy Tan's life is very contrast with the characterization of Jing-Mei Woo, she can imagine the fears of cultural identity which may happen to others.

## **I.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In relation with the background of the study, this study is intended to find the answer of these following questions:

1. How is the cultural and generational gaps described in the novel?

### **I.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

In line with the statement of the problem, the purpose of this study is to figure out the qualitative information's and description of the struggle of the main character by:

1. To describe the cultural and generational gaps in the novel.

### **I.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

As the significance of the study, the writer hopes that this study will bring out a present discussion of a good literary work that can give useful information for the readers about the kinds of human characteristics. This study will also increase readers' sensitivity in understanding human characteristics, which is very important and useful in daily lives.

### **I.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION**

This study concentrates on the efforts to reveal "The struggle of Jing-Mei to maintain the mother-daughter bond across cultural and generational gaps"; considering and analyzing evidence and clues to bring out her struggles through characterization, setting, plot, and conflicts within story. The analysis of these intrinsic elements will help the writer to comprehend the story as an actual happening.

Since the writer has attempted to point out the meaning behind the struggle of the main character in a particular point of view, the analysis will also be presented in an interpretation with objective orientation from the work itself.

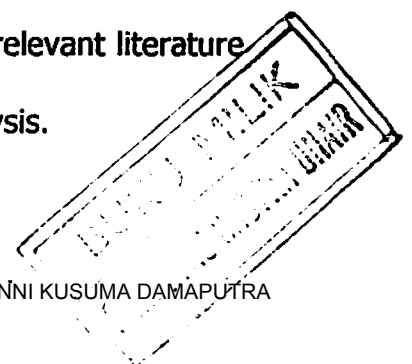
## **I.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The writer intends to use the intrinsic approach in this analysis, since this study only concerns with a subject matter that lies within the content. Then, this intrinsic approach serves as means to give an access to the elements of the story. The use of this approach is very appropriate to analysis of characterization, setting, plots, and conflicts.

For further consideration of carrying out the main character's struggle to transform the cultural bond in the story, the writer uses socio-cultural approach as means to analyze the subject matter.

## **I.7 METHOD OF THE STUDY**

The writer has collected some important data from the work itself as the main source of this study. The writer also needs to make a library research as means to provide relevant literature and theories that will be used to support the analysis.



In the process of finding the information of "The struggle of Jing-Mei to maintain the mother-daughter bond across cultural and generational gaps", the writer must carefully read the novel and classify the data that are important for further analysis.

In line with the subject matter of the study, the writer uses descriptive analysis to analyze the collected data. The result of the analysis will be explained by providing interpretation through actions, dialogues, and events that are available within the story.

## **I.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

- **Struggle** : 1. great effort 2. Fight

In this study the term "struggle" particularly refers to "effort to achieve, gain, or succeed something to get through any obstacles".

- **Maintain** : keep up; retain

The term "maintain" in this study particularly refers to "an action to keep up or retain something".

- **Bond** : 1. the state of being joined 2. Something that unites

The term "bond" refers to "the unity of feeling, ideas, norms, and tradition".

- **Cultural gap** : inconsistencies within a cultural system resulting from the unequal rates at which different cultural elements change
- **Generational gap** : the differences of views or ideas of parents and children

# **CHAPTER II**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**