

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I.1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Literature is one of human creative activities in order to express his feelings and opinions. Literature is very important because it is a culmination, a genuine means of realizing the major issues of its time. Through literature an author describes and illustrates his/her receptions and impressions taken from life and society.

On the other hand, the subject of discussion of this thesis is a novel ; a narrative prose that picturing a real life as it is, ( Baker, Anton ; 1979 ). Through novels we may have a vision of human being and his/her environment. Besides, the similarity of the elements of a novel to the real life enables us to identify ourselves to the characters or the problems experienced by them.

This thesis takes a novel written by a woman, Erica Jong. She is a contemporary American woman writer who utilizes her experiences as a woman within her work. Furthermore, she is also following the new trend of woman writing in the 1960's which was that women began writing and publishing description of sexual activity seen from women's point of view, ( The Female Form, 154 ). Therefore, Erica

Jong's work is frank and also sensual, full with femininity.

Furthermore, Jong is also very much influenced by the idea of feminism. She proposes that her works, especially her poems, are intended to liberate both men and women. Through her work she describes that being free from man's protection is the price of a woman's independent action. Yet, she also elaborates the difficulties that may come and prevent a woman in gaining her independency.

Through her striking novel, Fear of Flying, Jong elaborates her ideas and feelings about an independent woman and the dilemmas appear along with that wish. She aptly illustrates hard choices a woman may encounter whenever she desires her freedom. Even Christopher Lehmann-Haupt observed this novel as "sensitive to the ambiguities of growing up intellegently female these days," ( Fiction by American Women, 131 ).

Fear of Flying itself is a best seller novel. It illustrates an important part of Isadora Wing's life; a career woman who is married to a psycho analyst. She tries hard to understand her position as a whole human being, aside from her status as a wife. Isadora undergoes a very complicated and depressing situation before she comes to realize her own identity. She has to overcome many dilemmas before coming to a certain decision about herself.

This novel is a unique one for it reveals a woman's desire and a vivid descriptions of a woman's experiences in accordance to her dilemmas in gaining independency. Many things that seem trivial are persuasively presented as the cause of woman's denial to her new freedom. This novel helps women to realize her own nature and learn to get to know her own soul.

Fear of Flying belongs to modern fiction. Rosalind Miles in her book The Female Form points out that one distinctive feature of modern fiction is that it abandons the nineteenth-century concept of a female's duty to maintain moral standards in society through her position in the family. (The Angel of The House) ( 1990: 148) Isadora, a married woman and also a lady writer, leaves her husband to follow her lover. She pays no attention to any housekeeping, but she does her writing half-heartedly. It means that she is neglecting the traditional role, but she is not ready for the new position as a liberated woman. Obviously this novel showing a picture of a woman with dilemmas over her apt choice for living.

Yet, the first publication of Fear of Flying invited many comments and reactions both from male and female critics, since Erica Jong's frankness of describing woman fantasies and dreams is beyond question. No woman writer has ever dared to talk about it openly. John Updike commented

the release of this novel :

"a sexual frankness that belongs to, and hilariously extends the tradition of the catcher in the rye and portnoy's complaint... it has brass and sass, brightness and rye." (New Yorker 17 Dec. 1973 : 149)

Due to those daring and frank expression within Fear of Flying the writer is encouraged to learn about women through Isadora Wing. There will be an elaboration of Isadora, especially dilemmas she must endure in order to get her own independence.

## I.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Fear of Flying is a modern novel that talks about a lady writer who experiences many dilemmas in order to obtain an independency. Since this novel tends to disclose woman's experience, the point in doing the analysis is based on some questions.

1. What are the dilemmas faced by Isadora in accordance to her wish to be an independent human being ?
2. What is Isadora's concept of independence ?

## I.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This thesis will be focused on the major character, but there is no attempt to describe her personality or so

whatever. The primary objective of this thesis is Isadora's dilemmas and her effort to make the right choice so that she may gain her desired independency.

In addition, this thesis also notes the hindrances preventing women of becoming an independent person. The difficulties of growing up in the real world and of seeking self-actualization caused by the society and the women themselves.

#### I.4 SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

A woman is a very complex being. No research is able to explain what woman is. There are so many aspects influencing as well as shaping a woman. This thesis has examined one of many facets of woman, which is the wish to be an independent being. Through Fear of Flying the writer endeavors to draw the struggle of understanding one self. It is hoped to arouse women's consciousness of their true potentiality.

Thus, by doing this thesis the writer expects some apprehension about woman, as well as learning about her difficulties in getting an independence. Yet, the most important thing is that this thesis may contribute to the understanding of human being, man or woman.

On the other hand, the writer hopes that this thesis will encourage other students to learn about American fiction, especially written by women. Besides, this thesis is also meant to add up analysis of literary work, as well as to develop the writer's own knowledge in literature.

### I.5 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In doing this thesis the writer chooses expressive theory as the means to analyse the novel. Since a work of art is also the visualization of the author's mind, meaning that the novel Fear of Flying is one representation of Erica Jong's expression over a woman and her problems. She elaborates her subjective ideas and inspiration of woman's dilemmas in living her own life.

Besides, Jong uses first person point of view by using "I" that inevitably represents an overall thought and feelings of hers. In addition, Erica Jong creates a woman character as the main playrole within her novel that enables her to convey all her ideas about woman due to the sameness of gender. As Abram notes that some works of art is based on a dedication to the organic rather than the mechanical, to imagination rather than reason, to the spontaneity of nature rather than the artifice of culture, ( *The Future of Literary Theory*, 155 ). Thus, Fear of Flying is the outcome of Jong's thought and feeling about woman in new era of freedom.

## I.6 METHODOLOGY

In doing this thesis the writer utilizes library research. All data and theories applied to support the analysis of the topic, Isadora's struggle for independence, are taken from books and other printing material provided in library. The writer may quote or paraphrase some opinions or statements from books or critics or magazines concerning Erica Jong's novel Fear of Flying.

On the other hand, the method applied is descriptive analysis. According to Fredson Bower in The Art of Literary Research descriptive analysis is a technical investigation of a printing practice to get all the data by using methods of analytic to describe the content of a book given, ( 1963 ; 55). Therefore, all data taken from books and other material printing will be analysed and described orderly and systematically in this thesis.

