

CHAPTER III

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND HER WORK

III.1 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ON ERICA JONG

Erica Jong was born Erica Mann in New York City, March, 26, 1942. She was the daughter of Seymour and Eda (Mirsky) Mann. She studied at Barnard Columbia Graduate Faculties and Columbia School of The Arts in 1963. She took her M.A. in Columbia University in 1965. Then, she entered the Faculty of English Department Columbia University of New York from 1964 - 1965, and from 1969 - 1970. While in 1966 to 1969 she lived in Heilderberg, Germany. She has taught workshops as well as literature and writing courses both in her country and Germany.

Erica Jong married twice. First, she married Allan Jong whose name is attached to hers. But this couple got divorce in September 1975. Second, she married Jonathan Fast in December 1977, less than three years of her first divorce. This marriage lasted six years, before it ended up on a divorce in January 1983. From then on, Erica lives as a widow, bearing her first husband's name Jong.

Erica Jong writes novels as well as poems. In fact, she is famous for her womanly poems and receives many awards. She has produced two volumes of poems entitled Fruit and

Vegetables (1971), and Half Lives (1973) which gives her Bess Hokin Prize Poetry Magazine in 1971, and a grant from The New York State Council on The Arts in 1971; Alice Faye di Costagnola Award Poetry Society America 1972; and National Endowment Arts Grantee 1973. Besides, she also produces many novels, among them are Fear of Flying (1973), How To Save Your Own Live (1977), and At The Edge Of The Body (1979).

Fear of Flying, Erica Jong's first novel, was her best selling as well as her most appealing work. This novel is talking about an intense neurotic New York woman in her thirties enjoying a lively sexual experience for two weeks with an existentialist Englishman. This book is full of descriptions on woman's desire and passion that is seldom satisfied or granted. Quite literally, Fear of Flying is the tale of Erica Jong's thinly disguised autobiographical heroine, Isadora Wing, on her journey from immaturity to maturity. The journey itself is portrayed on Erica Jong's own terms; namely, the awareness of the fact of being female and going beyond it.

Erica Jong is fully attuned to her own body. As a result, her prose as well as her poetry is vigorous and sensual and at one with the inner rhythms which she understands so well. In the complete physicality of language and image, she insists again and again that one's body is intimately related to one's writing. Besides, Erica Jong

also boldly incorporates certain private and female symbols, thought unmentionable in the past, into the artistic texture of her work. Erica Jong shows her effort of conveying the dilemmas faced by an artist; the Artist as Housewife/ the Housewife as Artist. As she says of herself in 1973: "Am I happily married feminist and very interest in the power of poetry to liberate women from all self-destructive patterns. And also to liberate men. Amen."

III.2 ABOUT THE NOVEL FEAR OF FLYING

Fear of Flying is a modern novel that is written by a woman writer. Yet, she is not a well-known writer, especially in Indonesia. In order to get to know the content of her work, there will be some elaboration on synopsis, plot, character, and setting.

III.2.1 SINOPSIS OF FEAR OF FLYING

Isadora Wing was a writer who married a psychiatrist named Bennet. She was also a very beautiful and passionate lady. Once she accompanied her husband to a Congress at The Academy of Psychiatry in Vienna. Here, due to her bad temper, she accidentally met an English psychiatrist named Adrian Goodlove. From their brief acquaintance Isadora felt that she had finally found a new man that could satisfy her fantasy. She suddenly fell in love with him.

During the ten-day Congress, Isadora could not escape herself from Adrian's charms. She began stealing time and chance to see and experienced sexual satisfaction from Adrian. All the time Isadora relled emotionally from lover to husband until the last session of the Congress was over. Eventually, Isadora decided to follow Adrian eventhough she felt guilty about leaving her husband.

Then, Isadora and Adrian made two-and-a-half week motor trip to London, Germany and France. Here, dealing with Adrian's manner and way of thinking, Isadora started questioning herself and her existance. Since Adrian was an extentialist he emphasized his opinion on finding one's self through ignorance to the future. He encouraged Isadora to express herself as one being and utilized all her talent and ability to live her life. On the other hand, she also asked her impulse to follow Adrian, a man who was no better than her husband. Adrian was even worse than Bennet for he never paid any attention about Isadora's need.

During their trip Isadora could not help remembering her childhood. Her parents, especially Isadora's mother encouraged and discouraged their gifted daughter. Her early education of sex was marked by her first period and the subsequent case of anorexia when she almost starved herself to death and stopped menstruating for a year and a half because someone told her that "If I had babies, I'd never be

an artist". During her university career she could not help marrying a lunatic and abandoned her promising future. Her first marriage had caused her a great calamity for her husband was a crazy man who ended up in an institution.

Then, she met and married Bennet, a silent and sane man. Her second marriage was working fine until almost five years. Here, she found protection and regular life that enabled her to develop her talent in writing. She had even produced some poems and prose but she was reluctant to submit them to a publisher. Her career as a writer did not progress fast enough. She had bore no children.

All her memories helped her to get to know herself and her wasted potentiality. During her trip with Adrian, Isadora really forgot time and place. She accepted promiscuity system and neglected her future plans. She did not complain about Adrian's uncleanliness, his recklessness, even his temporary impotency as long as he kept her company. She devoted herself and her love to him. Unfortunately, when she was about gathering all her wit and courage to live as an "adult", she found out that Adrian had kept an appointment to join his wife and children somewhere near Paris. And worse enough, Adrian had left Isadora alone to face her own fate and loneliness.

Isadora was shocked and she could not believe her bad luck. After two and one half week of careening through

Europe in Adrian's Triumph, the beer drinking twosome reached Paris; and that was where Adrian abandoned her for his own family. Isadora was losing a sense of time as well as her heart. She was deserted in a strange hotel room and she had to overcome her fear of "the man under the bed". Finally she could manage to sleep alone and awakened the next morning to discover her menstrual period had begun.

That bright smear on her panty cancelled out the fear of pregnancy, so that she could face her future. In her word Isadora puts herself as being given another chance and decided to see her husband. After the overnight journey from Paris to London Isadora gained admission to her husband's hotel room and she met him when she was taking a bath.

III.2.2 THE PLOT

This story used partial flashback. It often breaks an event with a remembrance to the heroine's past or childhood. It also gives a separate chapter to elaborates the heroine's affairs. Thus, it plot is intermitten between present and past.

Isadora Wing is introduced as a neurotic woman who is afraid to fly, in real meaning and connotative one. She experiences many affairs, but she gets married twice. Her conflict appears when she has to choose between her husband and her own existance. She often gives herself to please

others, but she wants to have her own identity so that she prefers to choose herself. As when she is in love with an English man, she runs away with him. The climax of the story is coming when Isadora is abandoned by her lover. She experienced terrible fear, and she has to make an independent decision concerning her life. At last, she returns to her husband with a realization that she is capable of enduring life, alone.

III.2.3 THE CHARACTERIZATION

The significant characters in this novel is Isadora Wing. She is the second daughter of a Jewish family, but she is not a religious one. Besides, she considers herself as a multi-nationalist since all her sisters married to men from different races.

Isadora is a twenty nine years old woman. She has a talent on art and literature. She is a beautiful and sensitive woman. Furthermore, she is also a very educated woman. She is a lecturer and a part-timer journalist. Besides, she is also a writer who has already published two books.

On the other hand, Isadora is a regular patient of psychoanalists. She has a tendency to break her nerves easily. She is afraid of being a succesful woman and ends up lonely. She still hold the old idea of a good woman, but she

is reluctant to do so.

Isadora is a product of the fifties education in America. She believes that woman is supposed to make everyone happy and provided a reliable wife. But, she also receives new freedom imposed by feminist movement. Therefore, she is see-sawing between two opposites choices.

III.3 THE SETTING

The story is taking place in two different grounds. First, it uses America as the place when Isadora undergoes such foolness. Isadora makes series of affairs in America. And she lost herself there.

While the other place is in Europe. Isadora is careening with her lover to German, and France. And in Paris she found her ownself. In short, this novel is using America as a symbol of Isadora's immaturity, as America is a new continent with considerable rough culture. While the maturity of Isadora is symbolized with European land, the capital of culture.

