

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Earlier in chapter I we have known that Fear of Flying is talking about a woman's life. It is a thinly disguised autobiography of the major character, Isadora Wing. Therefore, the subject of analysis in this thesis is the major character. Isadora Wing plays the major role within the novel and Jong herself puts many thoughts and opinion through her heroine. The aim of focusing the attention to Isadora Wing is to follow the author's idea and feelings toward independence.

II.1. BIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH

In order to come to the subject of analysis, this thesis employs biographical approach. Biographical approach is intended to look at the biography of the author to explain and illuminate the actual product of art. As the ideas and feelings of the author are going to be explored in this thesis, this approach is suitable for that aim. Furthermore, this approach gives way to analyse the content of the novel and elaborates the very ideas of the author.

Since the focus of the discussion is about the ideas and feelings conveyed through a novel, this thesis also employs expressive theory. As Abram stated in his The Mirror

and The Lamp :

The central tendency of the expressive theory may be summarized as: A work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. (1962, p 22)

This theory looks at a piece of work as the reflection of its author in which the artist himself becomes the major element generation both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged. We look at the life of the author to use any insight so gained to shed fresh illumination on the work.

All the impression he or she gets from the real world is elaborated into a certain literary work based on his or her thought and feelings. This view signalled that the author is more or less influenced by the real situations or facts he or she experienced. Thus, a literary work is inseparable from its era, its time and especially its author.

Fear of Flying is taken as one expression of Jong as a female writer in viewing woman's dilemmas. She reveals the struggle of Isadora in understanding herself. She describes the problems, the source of difficulty, perplexity or worry, Isadora must face because of her wishes to be a whole human. Using monologue, Erica Jong presents the important part of Isadora's life along with her expectation and fear of being a beautiful and succesful woman.

Isadora Wing is described as a woman who has passion and desires, and she is seen through a woman's eye. It is a new description over a woman as a character in a story. Since for a few decades the image of a woman in literature is always on two opposite poles. As Leslie Fiedler has pointed out that literary portraits of women in American fiction have always been polarised, with few realistic female characters to bridge the gap between "Fair Maiden" and "Dark Lady", (*Perspective of The 70's*, p 312). Obviously Jong tries to give the new image of a woman as a human being, with her goodness and evil one.

One significant phenomenon of this novel is the revelation of dilemmas. In short a dilemma is defined as a choice or a situation involving choices between equally unsatisfactory alternatives, (*Webster Dictionary*, 1985). Thus we may expect that Isadora Wing undergoes such difficult time in deciding her choice. Furthermore, we may also note her considerations over her problems in relation to her wish to be an independent person.

Jong describes Isadora as a promising lady writer. It is a difficult profession for a woman since the roles of 'writer' and 'woman' are in some way incompatible, (*Writing as a Woman*, 160). Jong plainly shows the mixture of a fear of inadequacy and a knowledge of Isadora's superiority that becomes one source of her dilemmas over her life. Isadora

has succeeded in publishing books, yet she feels sorry because she does not prove herself a good wife. Furthermore, her family resents her work because of its sensuality and frankness in celebrating female sexuality. They do not approve her writing. This kind of resentment is predicated by Virginia Woolf, in her statement :

'Outwardly, what is simpler than to write books? Outwardly, what obstacles are there for a woman rather than for a man? Inwardly, I think, the case is very different; she has still many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome.' (Profession for Women, The Death of Moth p 152-153)

In relation to the statement above, we can also note that Isadora experience the same difficulty in cultivating her writing. Thus the feeling of inadequacy and uncomfortable in the role of a writer haunt the major character throughout the novel. Even Jong herself has reported her disconcerting discovery that writing was a masculine noun.

The visiting author went on and on about how women couldn't possibly be authors. Their experience was too limited... they didn't know blood and guts and fucking, whores, and puking in the street. (The Artist as Housewife, 1973)

Obviously, Jong shows the inferiority feeling of a woman toward men's profession. She can accurately describes the inequities of a female writer because she is also a woman writer. She illustrates the hesitation and regret over a woman who tries to live differently from average women.

Despite Isadora's talent and cleverness and her success in publishing some books, she always doubt about her existence. She wants to be an independent being, but something beheld her from achieving it. She feels that she has neglected her duty as a 'woman'.

The concept of a woman presented in this novel is one that Nora Caplan mentioned in her book The Myth of Woman Masochism :

The real women are patient, selfless, and able to give whatever it takes to make a relationship or job successful. A real woman nurtures, a real woman never stops giving, a real woman does not get angry, or blame others for her problems, (1986, p 10-11)

To become a real woman meaning that a woman has to devote her life to others, and forget her own existence. She has to surrender herself and to be without self-preservation. Isadora is reluctant to become this 'real woman' because she desires independency.

In one term, independence is generally defined as acting more in accordance with one's own needs, perceptions or judgements than in response to the demands of the environment or the influence of other person. Furthermore, independence as a motive is associated with seeking the rewards of freedom to act without interference from others, (Encyclopedia of Psychology, p 193).

Isadora Wing struggles to be an independent being. She wants to be able to determine and take responsibility for her own's life, to be able to become a whole human being. Yet, in a number of ways Isadora is prevented from making decision about things that crucially affect her life. She is directed by her inner tendency to seek men's protection, and her longs for men's body. Thus, Jong has captured perfectly the dilemmas of the modern woman, the ironies of liberation and independence, (Fiction by American Women, p 131).

Still, the anxiety of a dilemma might be reduced by the capability of the decision-maker. He/she is allowed to make a better choice if at least he/she meets two requirements. First, the agent must be aware of the power he/she has to make his/her own life choices. Second, the agent must take the responsibility for him/herself. These two condition is about to be analysed in the presence of Isadora Wing. She is the one who experience all dilemmas in accordance to her wish to be an independent being.

On the other hand, Jong worshipped freedom. In fact, she is a feminist writer who tries to liberate women and men through her work. She always attributes her heroine as a free woman, a woman who is able to live as an adult and to be responsible to her own life. She celebrates the female sexuality within her novel and makes her heroine realizes these femininity. Yet, her heroine is not totally free, or

at least does not want to be free of men.

There is no doubt that Jong has succeeded in exploring the impact of the new freedom given to women nowadays, through her novel Fear of Flying. She is also plainly showing the difficulties of leaving the old role of a woman as a mother and the awkward feelings of stepping into new role as an adult, takes all the responsibilities of life. Those expressions are about to be found in her work, through her spokeswoman, Isadora Wing.

II.3. RELATED STUDY

Women are always becoming an inspiration for art and literature. Literature always talks about men and women, and their relationship. Yet, there are not many whom analyse women's problem, especially for thesis in literature. The centre of the analysis usually given to male characters instead of female.

Among many thesis found in the library, there is only one book that analyse woman's problem ; Woman's Defense of Human Rights Against the Social Attitude And Notions. It talks about woman's defense against social pressure, and it takes male's drama as the subject of analysis. While the other thesis are not talking about woman.

On the other hand, this thesis is talking about a woman's problem in gaining her independency. It reveals the dilemmas experienced by a modern woman. This is a topic which is not explored, yet. Besides, there is no single book talking about woman's dilemmas, especially in relation to independency. Therefore, it is the first thesis that analyse woman's dilemmas presented through a novel.

