

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Family is usually called the first institution where one starts to grow because the relationship between parents and their children is one of the most basic human interactions. Therefore, the love between parents and child is very important because it nurtures each member in their self-development. Successful family life requires the cooperation of both father and mother because they both have specific roles. Yet, from the very nature of a mother's role, a mother can contribute more to the felicity of the home than the father because of her self-sacrificing generosity, her tenderness, and her maternal love ("The Role of the Mother in the Family"). The mother's role is significant not only in creating peace and harmony in the family, but also in strengthening the bonds among the family members.

However, according to a research published in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, the mother-daughter bond is stronger than any other parent-child relationship because of the symbiotic connection and the natural female liaison associated with this union ("Mother and Daughter Have the Strongest Bond, According to Science"). This means that women are likely to understand and relate

to the emotions of their mothers more than to anyone else, and vice versa. Indeed, Jennie Hannan, executive general manager of services at counselling provider Anglicare WA, states that, "How a woman sees herself, how she is in her adult relationships with partners, and how she mothers her own children, is profoundly influenced by her relationship with her own mother ("The Mother Daughter Bond"). Thus, a mother daughter relationship sets the stage for all other relationships.

Basically, each mother has an obligation to show and express love to all her children without exception. Unfortunately, many mothers do not express love toward their daughters, perhaps because of favoritism or cultural influences. That kind of situation can create a disruption in their relationship, also can create negative effects when the daughters grow up. Barbara Stuart, a Christian Counseling Psychologist, states that "... a mother is the most important individual in the life of her daughter and when the relationship is non-existent, the gap remains and many girls end up seeking for love in all the wrong places" ("The Mother-Daughter Relationship").

Jamaica Kincaid is a famous 20th century Caribbean-American novelist who explores the tenuous relationship between mother and daughter in her works. A native of the island of Antigua, Kincaid is considered one of the most important Caribbean women writers. Over a career that has spanned more than three decades, Kincaid has earned reputable place in the literary world for her highly personal, stylistic, and honest writings. Her distinctive voice makes her both one of the finest writers of her generation and of our times as well as one of the most

influential, both in English literature and in literature written by minorities (“Laureates 2017: Jamaica Kincaid”).

Kincaid’s writing style can be seen in one of her most successful works, *Lucy* (1991). It is an autobiographical novel, with an emphasis on the relationship between mother and daughter. This novel centers on the relationship between the protagonist, Lucy, and her mother, Annie. It also explores the ideas of love between them and its impact on Lucy’s characteristics. Lucy feels loved by her mother when she is an only child, but things become the opposite after the birth of her brothers. Feeling unloved, Lucy leaves her mother and seeks for love in America, her dreamland. Yet, she cannot achieve what she desires because the memory of her mother still haunts her.

As *Lucy* is often categorized as a bildungsroman, which means “a novel concerned with a person’s formative years and development” (“Definition of ‘Bildungsroman’”), focusing on the characteristics of the protagonist will help me understand Lucy’s formative years and personal development. Thus, I choose to analyze the portrayal of the protagonist because I think it is the most prominent aspect in the novel. Portrayal itself is defined as “a description of someone or something in particular way” (“Portrayal”). While Protagonist is defined as “the main character in a play, movie, or book” (“Protagonist”). By analyzing the characteristics of Lucy, we can see that her mother has a significant influence in shaping Lucy’s character.

In analyzing this literary work, I choose to use the formalism approach, as all the information needed to analyze the portrayal already existed in the text. Formalism itself is defined as “a style of inquiry that focuses, almost exclusively,

on features of the literary text itself” (“Formalism”).

Statement of the Problem

The problems I discuss in this thesis are:

1. What are the characteristics of the protagonist?
2. What are the purposes of the author in creating such a protagonist?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To show what are the characteristics of the protagonist
2. To show the author’s purposes in creating such a protagonist

Method of Research

In writing this thesis, I use library research. First, I begin by reading Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy* as the primary text. Then, I search for some references in the library and the Internet which might be relevant to the chosen topic. After analyzing the primary text using the references, I draw some conclusions from my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters, preceded by the Acknowledgements, the Table of Contents, and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the analysis of the protagonist’s characteristics in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*. The last chapter, Chapter Three, is the conclusion of what has been analyzed in the

previous chapters. This thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, consisting of the synopsis of the novel and the biography of the author.

