

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Having analysed Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy and Sandra Cisneros' The House on Mango Street, I would like to present my conclusion by comparing the two novels and pointing out the similarities and differences in the two novels.

First of all, I would like to point out the similarities of the two novels. Both novels have the same main theme that is, "One's point of view affects one's understanding of one's true self." Both novels present a struggle of a young woman to define her true self or self-identity while she is in the process of maturity. Searching for self-identity is not easy, especially when our society gives many influences. In Lucy, the protagonist, Lucy, wants to search for her true self apart from her mother's domination and influence. In The House on Mango Street, Esperanza wants to search for her true self in order not to become like the woman in her surroundings.

I also find that both protagonists in the novels have a similar background. Both of them come from a poor family living in a poor area and feel incompatible

with their surroundings. Lucy lives in poverty, in a small island of the West Indies. Poverty has made her disappointed with her condition. In addition, Lucy also faces many difficulties in her past life. Since her early age, she has faced many problems: the problem with her mother, her dissatisfaction of the condition of her family and her surroundings. Those problems have caused dissatisfaction in her life and have made her determined to change her life. Lucy avoids the unpleasant situation in her life by running away to North America.

Esperanza also lives in poverty. Her parents cannot give her a suitable place to live because they cannot afford it. Poverty has made her determined to change her life; yet, she can accept her condition as she understands her parents' financial condition. She does not run from her unpleasant condition; she accepts her condition with a determination that one day she will get away from Mango Street.

In spite of the fact that both novels have an identical main theme, I find that both novels also have a significant difference. The difference of the two novels lies in the protagonists' reaction in coping with the unpleasant condition in their lives. In Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy, Lucy faces the unpleasant situation in her life through a negative attitude and point of view whereas in Sandra Cisneros' The House on Mango Street, Esperanza faces the unpleasant situation in her life through a positive point of view.

The authors reveal the theme through the portrayal and actions of the two protagonists. In Lucy, Kincaid portrays Lucy as a person who has a negative point of view. Lucy's negative point of view is affected by her background which influences her present life in North America. Lucy is portrayed as a person who is full of anger,

has a prejudice towards men, likes to run away from problems, is stubborn, cannot accept other people's advice and is full of denial.

In The House on Mango Street, Esperanza is portrayed as a person who has a positive point of view in facing the unpleasant situation in her life. She never confronts the unpleasant situation that happens around her; on the contrary, she observes her surroundings and takes a lesson from other people's lives. This behaviour of her enables her to see what she wants in her life and what she wants to be.

Esperanza is also critical in viewing her neighbourhood. She sees that there are many submissive women in her neighbourhood. From their experience she learns that a woman has to be independent, so that her life will not end up like them.

Esperanza's positive point of view enables her to understand her true self completely. Although Esperanza sees that her life is incompatible with her wish, she accepts her condition. Her acceptance allows her to understand what she truly wants in her life and what kind of person she wants to be.

Through Lucy's and Esperanza's characteristics and actions, I can learn a lesson that one's point of view affects one in understanding oneself. A negative point of view will limit our perspective and makes us unable to understand what we want in our life. Seeing the fact, I am of the opinion that we should see things from a positive point of view to enable us to understand ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses.

I find that Jamaica Kincaid reveals the theme more clearly because she reveals Lucy's characteristics through Lucy's story of her past life and her present life. Lucy tells the story in a plain and truthful way, which helps me to perceive the

protagonist's characteristics. The novel fully describes Lucy's feelings and thoughts of the event that happens in her life so that I can recognize Lucy's character that is full of anger and regret towards her past and present life.

In The House on Mango Street I also find that Esperanza tells the story from her perspective, which allows the reader to see things that happen around her and her feelings towards the event. Yet, the author presents the story through the view of a 12-year-old girl. Through Esperanza's point of view, the author presents the difficulties in Esperanza's life implicitly so that it is harder for me to perceive Esperanza's characteristics, her view of life and how she views herself. Still, I am of the opinion that this novel is more interesting because Esperanza describes the problems not in a gloomy way but with full of optimism so that in reading the novel, the reader does not feel depressed.

Having analysed the two novels, I conclude that one should not see the inconvenient condition in one's life through a negative point of view as it will be an obstacle in facing one's future life. The inconvenient condition that we face should trigger us to improve our lives. Thus, the theme of each novel is universal as it can happen to anybody at any time. I am of the opinion that both novels are worth reading and analysing.

