CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

I would like to analyse Mark Haddon's <u>A Spot of Bother</u> and Kim Edward's <u>The Memory Keeper's Daughter</u> for my major thesis. I have chosen Haddon's <u>A Spot of Bother</u> because Haddon's character is as lifelike as people we can find in life. "Haddon's craftsmanship is dazzling, his sense of character profound" (Wolff). The characters in this novel are excellently written; we see that Haddon succeeds in writing about children and adults with mental and physical disabilities since he has worked with them ("Biography of Mark Haddon").

Another reason is "Haddon artfully guides the Halls -- and the reader -- toward light at the end of a complicated domestic tunnel" (Wolff). Haddon provides the readers with a clue so that they finally understand his complicated plot. "Haddon's brilliant talent for showing his character's idiosyncrasies and faults while not rending the character unbelievable and ridiculous is again on display" (Wazny). Haddon creates realistic characters so that the readers believe

that they may be found in real life in spite of their idiosyncrasies and faults.

Although Haddon's <u>A Spot of Bother</u> has not won a literary award, I would like to analyse the major characters' conflicts in this novel because "Haddon introduces us to the very typical while very troubling family of the George and Jean Hall." (Wazny). The conflicts happen in this novel are typical conflicts which may happen in life.

I have chosen Edwards' novel <u>The Memory Keeper's Daughter</u> because this novel, which is her extraordinary debut, has won the 2005 Kentucky Literary Award for fiction. As an award-winning writer, "Edwards brilliantly explores her craft about family drama" ("From the Jacket"). <u>The Memory Keeper's Daughter</u> is a great novel which involves the readers' feelings. The readers are led in such a way that they are able to understand the characters' deep feelings and emotion.

The story of this novel is also very close to the readers' family life. "A rich and deeply moving page-turner, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* captures the way life takes unexpected turns and how the mysterious ties that hold a family together help us survive the heartache that occurs when long-buried secrets burst into the open." ("From the Jacket"). In other words, the story makes the readers understand the true value of a family. Whatever happens amongst the family members will have some effects on the whole family. When there is a strong relationship among them, no matter how complicated the conflicts are, they can face them together and find the resolution.

In an interview with Hore, Edwards says "I had never thought of doing it another way. I wrote the first chapter in a month and was very intrigued by the characters, who emerged fully formed. The event was like a stone dropped into

the water creating ripples. Narrative action flowed from the characters' action." (Hore). Edwards develops her plot through the characters' action, which later brings conflicts among all the major characters.

Since the major characters' conflicts in the two novels are very prominent, I have decided to analyse the inner and social conflicts of the major characters of the two novels. Inner conflict is conflict between desires within a man. Social conflict is conflict between man and man (Shaw 91-92).

Statement of the Problem

The problems I want to analyse in this thesis are:

1. What are the conflicts in the novels?

2. What are the causes of the conflicts?

3. How are the conflicts resolved?

Purpose of the Study

The study is conducted to show:

1. The conflicts in the novels.

2. The causes of the conflicts.

3. The resolution of the conflicts.

Methods of Research

The method I use is library research. First of all, I read Mark Haddon's <u>A Spot of Bother</u> and Kim Edwards' <u>The Memory Keeper's Daughter</u>. I then analyse the texts by referring to literary theories from some reference books and other

information from the Internet to support the analysis of the conflicts. Finally, I draw a conclusion from what has been analysed.

Organization of the Major Thesis

I divide the major thesis into four chapters, which is preceded by the Acknowledgement, Table of Contents, and Abstract. In Chapter One, I present the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Methods of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, I analyse the conflicts in Mark Haddon's <u>A Spot of Bother</u>. In Chapter Three, I analyse the conflicts in Kim Edwards' <u>The Memory Keeper's Daughter</u>. In Chapter Four, I draw a conclusion of my analysis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices.

Maranatha Christian University