

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The immigration of Indian people to America has started since 19th Century. The first immigrants arrived in early 1900, after that the population of Indian increased and in 1947 the American government granted them with citizenship. The reason for their moving is that they wanted to achieve happiness in the United States, which was known as The Land of the Free and the Land of Opportunity (Rangaswamy). The largest Indian communities are in California, New Jersey, New York, Texas and Illinois. Nowadays the Indians hold many important roles as teachers, writers, musicians and scientists in the United States of America.

Two authors who deal with the issue of Indian immigrants are Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee. Lahiri is a writer who has won the Pulitzer for her writing. Mukherjee is a Professor of English at the University of California Berkeley, and she won National Critics Book Award for her short stories. Both of the writers (Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee) are Indian Americans. Because of that they know the condition of the Indian immigrants in America.

Through the novels they want to show Indians' characteristics and how they are dealing with problems in a foreign country.

Lahiri's The Namesake is her first novel and it was published in 2003. It becomes The New York Times Bestseller and wins much applause from the media. Desirable Daughters is one of Mukherjee's six novels and through this novel Mukherjee achieves the "...most absorbing book to date". (New York Time Book Review)

In this thesis, I would like to discuss the major characters of the two novels. In both The Namesake and Desirable Daughters, the major characters are Indian wives who move to America in order to follow their husband. They are also involved in an arranged marriage by their father. In The Namesake, the wife is Ashima Ganguli. She is described as a wife who is very loyal and obedient. She always behaves and clothed as an Indian woman does, although she lives in America. Because of those behaviors, when the first time Ashima arrived in America, she feels uncomfortable and she always feels homesick. Meanwhile in Desirable Daughters the wife is Tara Chatterjee; she is portrayed as a person who likes to rebel. She can easily acculturate with American way of life. She manages to live in America and she can socialize well with the Americans. Although she is very American, later she faces a scandal case about her family and because of it, she realizes that she is still an Indian.

Since the novels have a similar subject matter that is the Indian immigrants who live in the United States of America, I would like to contrast the characters of

both novels. Thus, in analyzing these novels, I will use formalism approach because all the proofs about the major characters are presented in these novels.

Statement of the Problem

The problems are stated as follows:

1. How do the authors describe the major characters?
2. Why do the authors create such characters?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems above:

1. To show how the authors describe the major characters.
2. To show the reason of the authors in creating such characters.

Method of Research

In writing this thesis, I use the library research. First I read The Namesake and Desirable Daughters as the primary texts. I also search and read some texts that are taken from books and the Internet. Then, I analyze the novels and draw some conclusions.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. 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 portrayal of the major character in The Namesake. Chapter Three is portrayal of the major character in Desirable Daughters. Chapter Four is the Conclusion, followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the synopsis of the two novels and the Biography of the authors.