

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In this modern era, many people talk about human right. There are also many institutions which are founded to protect human rights. But, the fact is that many people do not have their rights. A part of them are Indian women, who still have to struggle to obtain their own rights because they live in India, a country which is still strongly governed by traditional values. They find difficulties to gain their own liberation from the authority of the older generation.

In the two novels which I want to discuss for my thesis, I find out the experience of two Indian women who live in India during the mid to the late twentieth century. These novels portray two women who have unattractive appearances and lack of social skills. Those two protagonists in the novel also have to struggle for their life between the oppression from their own family and seek the opportunities to change their life. The two novels are Fasting, Feasting, by Anita Desai and Darjeeling, by Bharti Kirchner.

First, I choose Fasting, Feasting because Anita Desai, as the author, is an Indian so she can create a reliable portrayal of an Indian character better than any other non-Indian writer because she can “[feel] about India as an Indian” (Prono). Then, she has received many praises from reviewers because of “her intellectual rigor and vivid portrayal of India” (eNotes). She is a distinguished writer and has won Neil Gunn Prize in 1993 and Alberto Moravia Prize for Literature in Italy in 2000.

Fasting, Feasting is shortlisted for the 1999 Booker Prize and considered “a most beautiful novel, very moving, very funny, terribly illustrative of what happens to women in different parts of the world” (Randomhouse). The novel clearly shows the characteristics of the protagonist, who is an Indian woman. Besides, it vividly describes the protagonist’s appearance, condition of her daily life and the opportunity in struggling life facing the oppression from the protagonist’s own family.

For the comparison, I choose another Indian novel, Darjeeling which is also written by an Indian writer, Bharti Kirchner. This novel, like Desai’s Fasting, Feasting also portrays an Indian protagonist. Kirchner is also an Indian and she “does infuse her work with a genuine Indian spirit” (Dawson) so she can create a reliable character authentically. She is also a productive author and has won two Seattle Arts Commission literature grants, and an Artist Trust GAP grant.

Darjeeling is the third novel of Bharti Kirchner and it obviously shows the characteristics of the protagonist through the problem that she faces, the change of characteristic of the protagonist and also the protagonist’s relationship with the family. Compared to her other novels, it is also her only novel that gains much endorsement from another top national writer, such as Robert Clark, the author of the Edgar Award winning

Mr. White's Confession, says that “for her third novel, Bharti Kirchner has brought her considerable gifts—her radiant prose and understanding of human heart—to a story of India, ... Darjeeling is an enchantment.” (Bhartikirchner)

Finally, I decide to elaborate the portrayal of the protagonists in the two novels, Fasting, Feasting and Darjeeling because I want to investigate how far their characteristics are influenced by their family's point of view of Indian traditional values. It would be interesting to study the Indian traditional values that make Indian women trap and unable to develop themselves in this modern era because they do not have their liberation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to analyse the novel, I state the problems as follow:

1. How do the authors portray the protagonists in the two novels?
2. What are the authors' purposes in creating such characters in their novels?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is carried out to show:

1. How the authors portray the protagonists in two novels.
2. The authors' purposes in creating such characters in their novels.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method I use is library research. I start by reading the two novels, which are Fasting, Feasting by Anita Desai and Darjeeling by Bharti Kirchner. Afterwards, I

analyse those two primary texts by using formalism. I also look for some resources from the Internet and theory books, and then I use them to support the analysis which assist me to write the thesis.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I divide the thesis into four chapters, which which are followed by the Acknowledgement, Table of Content, and Abstract. In the first chapter, I present the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Methods of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. In the second and third chapters, I analyse the portrayal of the protagonists of the novels. In the forth chapter, I state the Conclusion of my analysis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendices.