

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Narrative technique is one way novelists convey their ideas to the reader. It deals with point of view, time and tempo, style, and distance (Eastman 31). It tells how a writer chooses particular ways of telling a story to give certain effects to the reader. A writer has a specific way of telling the story to generate a certain understanding from the reader (Bernstein 23). Moreover, authors can use different narrative techniques to convey a similar purpose.

Two novelists who use different narrative techniques to convey the same purpose are Joyce Carol Oates and William Faulkner. Joyce Carol Oates is considered one of America's leading female writers. She is an American writer whose narrative technique plays a big role in her works. She has a gothic theme in most of her works, which deal with dark and tragic events (Mary). However, what interests me is the narrative technique Oates uses to explore this theme

(Andersen). She narrates the story with a profound and sharp style of writing. Nevertheless, this particular writing style can be easily understood by the reader. She makes the reader enjoy the story even though the story itself is dark, depressing and upsetting.

William Faulkner is also an American writer and one of the Southern gothic writers. He is internationally acclaimed for several awards he has obtained. He is considered a model for many modern writers (“William Faulkner”) who follow his gothic or writing style. Faulkner’s writing style is full of sharp and detailed descriptions of characters and scenes. Despite revealing the gothic theme, just like Oates, Faulkner has his own uniqueness. He created an imaginary place, Yoknapatawpha County, which becomes the background setting of many of his works.

In this thesis, I would like to analyze Joyce Carol Oates’ *Black Water* and William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*. *Black Water* delivers a story about Kelly Kelleher’s last moments of life, when she is involved in a car accident. Nevertheless, what makes the book so special is the author’s unique style of narrating the story. The reader will surf through thought, memory, and even hallucination of the dying Kelly. Oates comments that the reader must become mesmerized by the thought of the young woman trapped in a car submerged in water, waiting, waiting, and stilwaiting to be rescued (Oates). More than that, it is not only a story about death. She wants to tell the reader that life is precious. It is very interesting to see the way Oates uses death to deliver her message about life.

William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* tells a story about the Bundren's family on their way to bury the mother. Faulkner uses fifteen different narrators, each of which has their own perspective towards the deceased. They also have their own uniqueness in characteristics and expressions. The reader will become an active party in constructing the story by looking into the story from fifteen different perspectives. This book definitely has a different narrative technique from that of *Black Water*, but both of them convey the idea of life.

Statement of the Problem

I state the problems as follows:

1. What kind of narrative technique is used in the novels *Black Water* and *As I Lay Dying*?
2. What effects are achieved through the use of the narrative technique?

Purpose of the Study

This study has the following purposes:

1. To show the kind of narrative technique used in the novels *Black Water* and *As I Lay Dying*.
2. To point out what effects are achieved through the use of the narrative technique.

Method of Research

The method I use is library research. I begin by reading Joyce Carol Oates' *Black Water*, then William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, and several books which are relevant to the topic to be discussed. After that, I analyze the primary texts by using several theories from some references and materials from the Internet which supports the analysis and can help me in writing a thesis on this topic. Finally, I draw some conclusions from what has been discussed.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters, preceded by the Acknowledgements, the Table of Contents, and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains 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. In Chapter Two, I present the theories on narrative technique used in analyzing the novels. Chapter Three is the analysis of narrative technique in Joyce Carol Oates' *Black Water*, while Chapter Four is the analysis of narrative technique in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Chapter Five is the Conclusion, which contains the comparison between the narrative techniques used in both novels. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendices, which consist of the synopsis of the two novels and the biography of the authors, Joyce Carol Oates and William Faulkner.