

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The present writer chooses a novel to be analysed in her thesis because it provides complete and detailed information in describing characters, setting and plot. Harry Shaw in his book, Dictionary of Literary Terms, states that novel is ‘a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized series of events and settings.’ (Shaw, 1972: 257). Besides, ‘most novels are concerned with ordinary people and their problems in the societies in which they find themselves.’ (Peck and Coyle, 1984: 102.). Those facts make the reader understand and enjoy reading the novel more.

In this thesis the present writer would like to discuss Nadine Gordimer’s work. Nadine Gordimer is a South African writer who has won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1991. She has written eleven novels, including Occasion for Loving (1963), A Guest of Honour (1971), My Son’s Story (1990) and The House Gun (1998). July’s People (1981) is one of her latest novels. Her short stories have been collected in nine volumes, and her nonfiction pieces were published together as The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places (1988).

In this thesis, the present writer has chosen to analyse Nadine Gordimer's novel, July's People. Nadine Gordimer is one of the anti-Apartheid writers. She has kept the true face of racism in many of her works. July's People deals with the life of black community and their mindset towards the whites.

Therefore, the present writer would like to discuss the theme of the novel since she finds that theme is an important factor in fiction. Kenney states that 'Theme is the total meaning discovered by the writer in the process of writing and by the reader in the process of reading.' (Kenney, 1966: 94) and 'it is the reflection in fiction of the human desire to make sense of experience. Since it reflects so basic and universal a desire of mankind.' (Kenney, 1966: 99). By analysing the theme, the present writer can understand the meaning of the entire story of this novel.

In analysing the theme of the novel, the present writer focuses on the portrayal and actions of the characters because they help the present writer in finding the theme. 'Character is obviously of major importance for theme.' (Kenney, 1966: 94-95). By revealing the theme through the major characters, the present writer wants to show that the theme in this novel deals with one's mindset that cannot be changed because it has been rooted for a long time.

The present writer simply uses the historical-biographical approach in writing her thesis because it is very suitable: 'this approach sees a literary work chiefly, if not exclusively, as a reflection of its author's life and times or the life and times of the characters in the work' (Guerin, Wilfred L., et al., 1992: 22). The present writer will only deal with the historical issues on the Apartheid system.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In analysing the theme through the major characters in Nadine Gordimer's July's People, the present writer would like to state the problems as follows:

1. What is the theme in Nadine Gordimer's July's People?
2. How do the major characters help to reveal the theme?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To show the theme of Nadine Gordimer's July's People.
2. To analyse how the major characters help to reveal the theme.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method of research that the present writer uses in her thesis is library research. Firstly, she begins reading the primary text: Nadine Gordimer's July's People. Secondly, she collects data for additional information about her topic from some references. In addition, she looks for references from the Internet. Thirdly, she uses the selected data combined with the appropriate theories to support her analysis. Finally, she draws some conclusions from the research she has done.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is presented in three chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. It is

followed by Chapter Two, which contains the analysis of the theme of Nadine Gordimer's July's People. Chapter Three contains the conclusion of what the present writer has analysed in the previous chapter. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the synopsis of July's People and the biography of Nadine Gordimer.