

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

‘Novel is a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized series of events and settings’ (Shaw, 1972:257). One of the reasons why the present writer chooses novel because ‘novel is the most widely practised and most widely read form of literature in the world today’ (Murphy, 1972:127).

The present writer has chosen Maya Angelou’s I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings to analyze. Maya Angelou is not only an accomplished writer, director, producer, autobiographer, singer, songwriter, lyricist, poet, historian, activist and filmmaker, but also a multilingual feminist. She has written many best-selling novels and poetry. She has also written the original screenplay and musical score for the film *Georgia, Georgia*, as well as a ten-part television series on African tradition in American life. She has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for poetry and has been a Poet Laureate for the United States.

The novel I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is the first of five volumes of Maya Angelou’s autobiography during 1930s until 1970s. The novel I Know

Why the Caged Bird Sings is the most popular one and critically acclaimed volume compared to other volumes. It is also considered to be an essential reading for young students, and is on many required reading lists. The present writer considers the first volume to be the most interesting one because it shows significant developments of the protagonist's characteristics from the age of three to sixteen.

The present writer has decided to discuss the portrayal of the protagonist. According to Dictionary of Literary Terms: portrayal is '...to draw forth, to depict, refers to the portrait (characterization) of individuals presented in literary selections....To portray somebody in a particular way, according to your opinion of them; to act the part of a character in a play' (Shaw, 1972:295).

From Shaw's explanation about portrayal, it is obviously clear that characterization is an important way to analyze the portrayal of characters. The present writer refers to the characterization techniques from M.J.Murphy's book, Understanding Unseen. The characterization techniques based on Murphy are personal description, character as seen by another, speech, past life, conversation of others, reactions, direct comment, thoughts, and mannerisms. The present writer will only refer to some of the characterization techniques which are dominant in portraying the protagonist.

In analyzing the portrayal of the protagonist, the present writer divides the portrayal into two stages of age, during childhood and teen period. This is done to portray the development of the protagonist's characteristics more clearly.

Statement of the Problem

In order to analyze the novel, the present writer states the problem as follows:

1. How does the author portray the protagonist?
2. How does the protagonist develop in the course of the story?
3. What causes the development of the protagonist's characteristics during her two stages of age?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this thesis are:

1. To analyze how the author portrays the protagonist
2. To find out the development of the protagonist in the course of the story
3. To show the causes of the protagonist's characteristics developments during her two stages of age

Method of Research

The present writer uses library research. She begins with reading Maya Angelou's I know Why the Caged Bird Sings. She also finds some books as references to support the topic. After that, she analyzes the primary text by using some references and materials from the Internet which can support the analysis and can help her in writing this thesis.

Organization of the Thesis

The present writer divides the thesis into three chapters. Chapter One contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of the Research and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the Portrayal of the Protagonist. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and the Appendix, which contains the Synopsis of the work and the Biography of the author.