

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I have decided to analyse a novel for my thesis. I am of the opinion that novel is easier to read and to understand than the other literary genres and it also gives information in details. Moreover, there is no limitation to the number of words for the authors to express their ideas more freely. According to Peck in Literary Terms and Criticism, novel is ‘long work with a great amount of details on every page, they thus present all the complicating facts that need to be taken into account before we reach any of judgment’ (1984:103).

To make the readers keep on reading the novel, an author has to make the story as interesting as possible. In particular, for my thesis, I have chosen to analyse a very interesting work of Valerie Martine entitled Property. Property has won the Orange Prize for the fiction in 2003 and was praised by Ahdaf Soueif, Chair of the judges for the Orange Prize, 2003 who said ‘... The story is told through an unsympathetic narrator, yet the book is utterly clear about what its moral heart is. This is a terribly difficult thing for the writer to do.’

([www.orangeprize.co.uk/2003prize](http://www.orangeprize.co.uk/2003prize)). Based on the quotation, I am interested to analyse the protagonist of the novel. As Laurence Perrine mentions, ‘the technical term protagonist is preferable to the popular term “hero” because it is less ambiguous. The protagonist is simply the central character, the sympathetic or repulsive’ (1974:44)

In my thesis, I would like to present the portrayal of the protagonist, who is also the narrator, namely Manon Gaudet.

‘Manon Gaudet is one unhappy woman. She is pretty, bitterly intelligent, and monstrosly self-absorbed, who seethes under the dominion of her boorish husband... She misses her family but most of all she longs to be free of her suffocating domestic situation’ (<http://www.reviewsofbooks.com/property/>)

She experiences alterations based on the betrayal of her husband, and the government system at that time. Manon’s alterations of characteristics strengthen the history of white people who often oppress the black people and create the black people as property in Pre-Civil War Era. As Ronald L. F. Davis, Ph. D in his Slavery in America: A Historical Overview told that

American slavery was a brutal system based upon physical force, threats, torture, sexual exploitation and intimidation. Any black resisting overly the orders of a slaveholder or almost any white in the community could expect immediately and often brutal retaliation. Few laws prevented slaveholders from doing whatever they wanted with their human property. ([www.slaveryinamerica.org](http://www.slaveryinamerica.org)).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In order to analyse the novel; I state the problem as follows:

1. How does the author portray the changes experienced by the protagonist?
2. What is the cause of the changes experienced by the protagonist?

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study is carried out in order:

1. To show how the author portrays the protagonist in Valerie Martine's Property.
2. To show the author's purpose in creating a protagonist.

### **METHODS OF RESEARCH**

I use library research in writing the thesis. Firstly, I read the novel. Secondly, I choose the prominent literary aspect of the novel to be analysed. Thirdly, I search for the references from the library and the Internet, which can support the analysis and furthermore can help me in writing the thesis. Finally, I draw some conclusion about what I have analyzed.

### **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

I divide my thesis into four chapters. 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 Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. In the second chapter, I analyze the portrayal of the protagonist in Valerie Martine's Property. Later in the third chapter, I draw a conclusion of my

analysis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contains the Biography of the Author and the Synopsis of the Novel.