

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In writing this thesis, the present writer chooses to discuss a novel. According to Shawn, novel is ‘... a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized series of events and settings ... the novel has no actual maximum length. Every novel is an account of life; every novel involves conflict, character, action, setting, plot, and theme.’ (Shawn, 1996:51) As a result, novel is enjoyable to read because it has more detailed information to draw the readers’ interests and closeness to the story than any other genre like drama and poetry.

Every novelist uses narrative technique as his/her means to convey his/her ideas to the reader. ‘Narration, from a Latin word meaning “tell”, is also called “narrative”’ (Shawn, 1905:251). So, narrative technique refers to ‘... ways of telling the story.’ (Kenney, 1996:76) An author ‘.... can choose the angle from which the reader observes the order of presentation, the style of language, the closeness at which the reader is to be held.’ (Eastman, 1965:31) Consequently the novelist can present his/her expressive ideas to the reader freely to gain the reader’s total attention

The present writer has chosen a novel, A Gathering of Old Men written by Ernest J. Gaines, of which the subject matter is self-improvement. Ernest J. Gaines is one of the African-American writers who come from the South. Gaines presents understanding for readers of all colors, background, and class. His works tackle the issues of manhood for men of color.

A Gathering of Old Men is chosen because the present writer finds that this novel has a significant narrative technique and conveys the main subject of self-improvement. The most significant and influential aspect of narrative technique in this novel is the use of narrators. In A Gathering of Old Men, Gaines employs fifteen narrators, which are very appealing.

In discussing the narrative technique of the novel, the present writer will avail herself of the theory stated by Eastman in his book, A Guide to the Novel (1965). According to Eastman, narrative technique consists of four important elements; they are point of view, time and tempo, style and distance. In her analysis, she emphasizes the importance of point of view and its effect in conveying the author's idea.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. What kind of narrative technique is used in Ernest J. Gaines' A Gathering of Old Men?
2. What are the effects achieved by the use of such narrative technique on the readers?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To show what kind of narrative technique is used in A Gathering of Old Men.
2. To show the effects achieved on the readers by the use of narrative technique.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method that the present writer chooses is literary research. She begins with reading Gaines's A Gathering of Old Men. Then she reads some other books, which are relevant to the topic. After that, the present writer analyses the primary text by reading some information from some reference books as well as from the Internet that can support the analysis and help her in writing the thesis. Finally, she draws some conclusions on what has been discussed.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The present writer divides the thesis into five chapters. In the first chapter, the present writer presents 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, the present writer presents the theories on the narrative technique used in analyzing the novel. In the third chapter, the present writer analyzes the narrative technique of Gaines' A Gathering of Old Men. Later in the fifth chapter the present writer draws a conclusion of her analyses. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices.