

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In this thesis, the present writer decides to analyse a novel because novel is more interesting to read and easier to understand than a play or a poem. Although a novel is usually very long, it provides complete and direct description of the characters, setting, and the plot. According to Harry Shaw in Dictionary of Literary Terms, 'Novel is a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized series of events and setting. Every novel is an account of life. Every novel involves conflict, characters, action, setting, plot and theme' (Shaw,1972:257). All information in the novel could make the readers get the idea of what the story is about.

One of the twentieth century American writers who make use of novel to present an account of life of certain people is David Guterson. His masterpiece is Snow Falling on Cedars, for which he was given the PEN Faulkner Award in 1995. In this novel, he vividly portrays the life of a Japanese immigrant in the United States of America, named Kabuo Miyamoto, one of the major characters, who play a very important role in the story. Kabuo is accused of being

the murderer of a man named Carl Heine. He suffers from the discrimination by American people towards immigrants in America.

According to Lauren Kessler in her Internet journal, discrimination against the Japanese intensified on 7th December 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Shortly after the attack, the United States declared war on Japan and formally entered World War II. Following the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese who lived in America for thirty years were accused of spying for their native land. The day after Pearl Harbor, the United States ordered all Japanese-owned businesses to be closed and all their bank accounts frozen.

(www.Randomhouse.com/vintage/read/snow)

The present writer is interested in analysing the portrayal of the major character in Guterson's Snow Falling on Cedars. In Dictionary of Literary Terms it is said that 'Portrayal, which comes from Latin words meaning, "to draw forth," "to depict," refers to the portrait (characterization) of individuals presented in literary selections' (Shaw, 1972:295). In analysing the portrayal of the major character, the present writer focuses on the characterization of Kabuo as the major character in the novel. "Characterization is the *use* to which each character puts the traits with which, he or she is endowed" (Meredith, 1972:106). According to M.J Murphy in his book, Understanding Unseens (1972:161-173) there are several characterization techniques which can be used by an author to portray his character. They are personal description, character as seen by another, speech, past life, conversation of others, reaction, direct comments, thought and mannerism.

Portrayal of a character is very important in a novel as it supports the development of the plot and theme. The present writer also agrees with Harry Shaw's statement about the importance of characterization in his book Dictionary of Literary Terms, "Without characterization, no thesis, no plot and no setting can develop genuine interest for a reader or cause him to care what happens or does not happen, to whom and why" (Shaw, 1972:71). The present writer would like to analyse the portrayal of the major character in Guterson's Snow Falling on Cedars as it helps the readers to understand the story and to know the character better. She will also focus on character as seen by another, past life, thought, speech, conversation of others and reaction of the character, the techniques Guterson has used to portray Kabuo Miyamoto.

Statement of the Problem

In analysing one of the major characters in David Guterson's novel, the present writer would like to state the problems as follows:

1. How does the author portray the major character?
2. What is the author's purpose of portraying the character in such a way?

Purpose of the Study

1. To show how the author portrays the major character.
2. To show the author's purpose in portraying such a character.

Method of Research

The method of research used in the study is library research. The present writer begins the study by reading the primary text, David Guterson's Snow Falling on Cedars; secondly, she finds some information from the references in the library and the Internet. The information that has been gathered is then used to analyse the text and finally, the present writer draws some conclusions from the research she has done.

Organization of the Thesis

To make the process of writing easier, the thesis will be presented in three chapters, preceded by the Preface, the Table of Contents, and the Abstract. Chapter One as the introduction consists of 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, the present writer presents her analysis of the portrayal of the major character of David Guterson's Snow Falling on Cedars, and Chapter Three, the last chapter, is the conclusion, in which the present writer sums up her analysis. This is followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices, which includes a synopsis of the novel and the biography of the author.