

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Narrative technique is generally defined as an author's way of telling a story. In telling the story, an author is influenced by the background of his culture and his environment. The novels I have chosen for my major thesis are The Mistress of Spices and Practical Magic, of which the authors come from two different cultures. The Mistress of Spices is written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, an Indian-American, while Practical Magic is written by Alice Hoffman, an American. India is considered to be part of the eastern world where the people are judged to have a very strong relationship within family and to take good care of ancient rules, whereas America is part of the western world where the people have individual freedom and high self reliance (Datesman 23). However, both The Mistress of Spices and Practical Magic tell about their female protagonists who have magic to heal people from broken - heart or being alienated.

The author of The Mistress of Spices, Divakaruni, is an award-winning author and poet. Through her work, The Mistress of Spices, she tells about the lives of Indian people in America. The book was chosen by the Los Angeles Times as one of the best books of 1997. It was also made into a movie and was short listed for the Orange Prize in England. I have the same opinion with Amy Tan that "The Mistress of Spices is a dazzling tale of misbegotten dreams and desires, hopes and expectations, woven with poetry and storyteller magic" (Cunepress 2007).

Practical Magic is Alice Hoffman's eleventh novel. She puts magic gently in her book; still, she writes it differently with lyrical prose inside. Practical Magic has been made into a film. I agree with the Publishers Weekly comment that "Her 11th novel is Hoffman's best..." (Amazon.com). Hoffman enables the world of the children's mundane magical tale to be fantastically enjoyed and makes people read it. Moreover, I also agree with Susan Scribner's writing in the Romance Reader that "Practical Magic is magic and a definite keeper" (Romance Reader).

In my major thesis, I will analyse which elements of narrative technique are employed in the novels and why both authors employ such narrative technique, and how the authors' national backgrounds exactly influence the way they tell the stories in The Mistress of Spices and Practical Magic by using formalism.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There are some statements of the problem in analysing these two novels (The Mistress of Spices and Practical Magic), they are:

1. What the narrative technique is employed in the novel?
2. Why do the authors use such narrative technique?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In this analysis, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show the narrative technique employed in the novel.
2. To show why the authors use such narrative technique.

## **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

I use library research in this study. I look for and read the novel I want to analyse for my major thesis. Then, I find information from the references in the library and from the Internet to help me with the analysis.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is divided into five chapters that are preceded by the Acknowledgements and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, consisting 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. Chapter Two is the Theory of Narrative Technique according to Richard M. Eastman. Chapter Three is the analysis of narrative technique in The Mistress of Spices. Chapter Four is the analysis of narrative technique in Practical Magic. Chapter Five is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendices, which consist of the summaries of the two novels and the biographies of the two authors.