

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In this thesis, I would like to analyze the suspense, surprise and plausibility in Robert Ludlum's novel entitled *The Bourne Identity*. I have chosen Robert Ludlum because he is best known for his thriller novels, such as *The Apocalypse Watch*, *The Gemini*, *The Bourne Trilogy*, *The Holcroft Covenant* and *The Osterman Weekend*. The definition of thriller novel is "a genre of fiction in which tough, resourceful but essentially ordinary heroes are pitted against villains determined to destroy them, their country, or the stability of the free world" (Bennett, par. 2). Some characteristics of a thriller novel are "fast-paced plots, numerous action scenes and limited character development" (Bennett, par. 6).

Ludlum wrote twenty-one novels published in thirty-two languages and forty countries, and most of his works have been internationally bestselling books. Most of his novels become major feature films and mini series, and there are more than 200 million copies of his books in print throughout the worldwide sales.

Ludlum is popular and has the “skill to capture the imagination of his readers from the first pages, and keep them absorbed in the story” (Liukkonen and Pesonen, par. 1). In his *Bourne Trilogy*, he uses “material from current events in international politics” (Liukkonen and Pesonen, par 1). which makes the story more interesting to read.

One of his bestselling novels, *The Bourne Identity*, is a thriller novel which really catches my interest. It uses everyday language as well as having an exciting plot. I have chosen the first book of Ludlum’s *Bourne Trilogy* because of his ability to make his readers absorbed in the process of reading it. This book has made his readers curious about the story and also made them surprised at the end of it.

I am certain that the main key for this novel to become interesting to read is the elements of suspense, surprise and plausibility in the novel. These three elements have been successfully presented in the novel and have caused millions of readers to feel amazed after reading the novel.

According to Perrine, “suspense is the quality in a story that makes the reader ask ‘what’s going to happen next?’ and impels him to read on to find the answer to these questions. Suspense is greatest when the reader’s curiosity is combined with anxiety about the fate of some sympathetic character” (45). Surprise is said to be “proportional to the unexpectedness of what happens; it becomes pronounced when the story departs radically from our expectation” (Perrine 47). The story also must have a plausibility to make the suspense

answered by logical surprise. “To say a story has plausibility is simply to say that it is convincing on its own term” (Kenney 20).

Statement of the Problem

Based on the Background of the Study, the statement of the problem in my thesis is formulated in the following questions:

1. Which events in the novel contain elements of suspense?
2. Which events in the novel contain elements of surprise?
3. Are suspense and surprise elements in the novel plausible?

Purpose of the Study

The Statement of the Problem leads to the purposes of the study, which are

1. to identify the events in the novel that contain the elements of suspense;
2. to identify the events in the novel that contain the elements of surprise;
3. to show the plausibility of the suspense and surprise elements in the novel.

Method of Research

I used library research in doing the analysis. Firstly, I read *The Bourne Identity* as the primary text. Secondly, I also read and compiled some information from the Internet and reference books to support my analysis of suspense, surprise and plausibility in the novel. Finally, I analyzed the elements of suspense, surprise and plausibility in the novel and drew some conclusions from my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into three chapters, which are preceded by the Acknowledgements, the Table of Contents and the Abstract. The first chapter is the Introduction, which 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. The second chapter presents the analysis of suspense, surprise and plausibility in Robert Ludlum's novel *The Bourne Identity*. Finally, the third chapter is the Conclusion. After the Conclusion there are the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the Synopsis of the Novel and the Biography of the Author.